Minnesota State University Moorhead

CAREER DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

Your guide for developing your professional self

Career Development Center
Our mission is to help you grow professionally, now and into the future. We provide one-on-one guidance, workshops, and events to support you throughout your journey from exploring student to prepared professional.

To access our services stop by, give us a call, send us an email, or use your Handshake account.

Flora Frick 151 | careers@mnstate.edu | 218-477.2131
www.mnstate.edu/career

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Handshake

On your Computer

• Log in.
  We've already set up a Handshake account for you. Just go to
  https://mnstate.joinhandshake.com
  Use your StarID and password

On your Phone

• Download the App.
  Download Handshake Jobs & Careers on the AppStore. Use
  your first.last@go.mnstate.edu email address to log in
YOUR ROADMAP FOR PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

ASSESS
Career readiness is measured by more than your just educational and professional experiences. Take time to identify your interests, skills, abilities, and values as you finalize your career goals.
- Set up an appointment with the Career Development Center. Meeting with a staff member for career coaching can help you define transferable skills that will be important as you get closer to graduation.
- Clarify your self-knowledge. Begin to ask yourself the following questions:
  - What type of work settings do I prefer? What type of values would I like my future employer to have? What types of positions will allow me to engage in work activities I enjoy? What skills do I possess that will allow me to succeed as a professional?

EXPLORE
Whether you've decided on a major and career path or are still looking for the best fit, the Career Development Center can help.
- Take the FOCUS2, a free assessment available to all students. This web-based major & career exploration tool helps you explore options that align with your work interests, personality, values, and skills. Then, set up an appointment with our office to discover how to use this information to plan for your future.
- Visit O*Net and Career One Stop and other online career exploration tools to help you get a better idea of how to use your education as you enter the workforce.
- Get a part-time job. Regardless of what the job is, you will begin to gain valuable real-world skills necessary for being successful in the workforce. Employers are looking for more than just a degree, they want employees who are critical thinkers, good communicators, have a firm understanding of technology, possess leadership skills, have a strong work ethic, understand one’s strengths and weaknesses, and demonstrate inclusiveness.
- You can find more information and links to the sites we mentioned above on our website, www.mnstate.edu/career

CONNECT
It is imperative that you begin building your network as soon as you arrive on campus. From the faculty teaching your courses to the business representatives you'll meet at the Career Fairs, connecting with others will help set you up for success in your future.
- Connect with your advisor. They are not only a great resource to help ensure you’re staying on track academically, they can also help you through the graduate school application and job search process.
- Join a student organization. Organizations allow you to develop a myriad of skills that employers find necessary in those they hire.
- Attend events that connect you to those outside of our campus community. Mark your calendar for Internship & Career Fairs, Meet the Employer events, workshops, etc... These events allow you to broaden your network while gaining valuable skills.

EXPERIENCE
Your education is only part of the puzzle. Experiences outside of the classroom provide an excellent way to get real-world experience while preparing you for your career.
- Obtain an internship. Although not all majors require an internship in order to graduate, the Career Development Center encourages all students to seek one out. They give you an unparalleled experience in your field and can help open doors like a professional.
- Seek out leadership opportunities on campus. Whether you are elected to a leadership role in a student organization or apply for a student leadership position, these opportunities can help set you apart.
- Think of every opportunity you’re offered as a chance to develop new skills. Part-time jobs, studying abroad, and taking part in research projects are exceptional ways to gain valuable experience outside of the classroom.
FOUR-YEAR CAREER ACTION PLAN

FIRST YEAR
- Start taking LASC coursework as well as foundation and core courses related to your major. If you find yourself struggling with a class, check out tutoring options with the Academic Success Center.
- Participate in a learning community, or get involved in your residence hall.
- Join a major or interest-related student organization.
- Explore the community and connect with a non-profit organization to volunteer.
- Understand your interests, skills, and values and learn about career readiness competencies by taking the FOCUS 2, a free online assessment.
- Create your Handshake account to assist in your on and off-campus job search.
- Begin working on the Student Life Pathways.
- Schedule an appointment with the Career Development Center to discuss your career action plan and to assist in creating a resume.

SECOND YEAR
- Take a deeper dive into your major and begin to consider a minor or a certificate.
- If you didn’t find one your freshman year, search for an on-campus or part-time job in the community - research shows that students who work 10-20 hours per week actually have higher GPAs than their peers who don’t work. Additionally, those who work on-campus graduate at higher rates than their peers who don’t.
- Continue working on the Student Life Pathways.
- Join LinkedIn and begin building your professional network.
- Look into faculty-guided research opportunities.
- Explore career paths on O*Net or the Occupational Handbook.
- Meet with a Career Coach to start learning about transferable skills and ways you can best prepare for your future career.

THIRD/FOURTH YEAR
- Schedule an appointment with your academic advisor to make sure you’re on track for graduation.
- Take inventory of your professional goals and decide if your future will need to include graduate school. Take the necessary exams and begin submitting applications to programs that will help you achieve your goals.
- Develop leadership skills by applying for a Student Leadership Position or running for an officer position in a student organization.
- Continue working on the Student Life Pathways.
- Focus on networking. Attend on-campus events like Job Fairs and Meet the Employer and community events such as Start-Up Brew, Creative Mornings, TedX, Chamber of Commerce Events, etc... to connect with potential employers.
- Find an internship or major-related part-time job in the community to learn the ins and outs of your chosen career.
- Schedule an appointment with the Career Development Center to prepare your internship applications.

FOURTH/FIFTH YEAR
- Take the last few classes needed to complete your degree.
- Make sure to submit your application for graduation.
- Assess what experiences or skills are areas of growth for you and fill in gaps with volunteering, organizations, research, presentations, internships, or part-time employment.
- Finish up your Student Life Pathways and be sure to add your accomplishments to your resume and LinkedIn.
- Join a professional organization related to your field to gain access to research, continuing education, job boards, and message boards.
- Network relentlessly by attending on and off-campus employer and networking events.
- Schedule a final appointment with the Career Development Center to review your resume and cover letters, participate in a mock interview and ask any other career-related questions.

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When choosing what to do after graduation, it's essential to gather information about job titles, responsibilities, day-to-day tasks, how to enter the field, and what types of companies employ people like yourself. While simply researching job titles online is helpful, connecting with professionals currently in the field can be even more impactful.

An **INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW** is an informal or formal conversation you can have with someone working in an area of interest to you. It allows you to gain firsthand, relevant information about the realities of working within a particular field, industry, or position. Through these interviews, you can find out about career paths you did not know existed, get tips and insider knowledge about how to prepare for and land your first career position, learn what it’s like to work at a specific organization, initiate a professional relationship, and expand your network of contacts in a specific career field. A word of warning, informational interviews are **not** an appropriate time for you to ask for a job.

**SIX STEPS OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING**

**Research Career Fields**
- Start your initial research on career fields using tools like O*Net and the **FOCUS2**

**Identify People to Interview**
- Sort through your own contacts. People you already know, even if they are not in fields of interest to you, can lead you to people who are. This includes family, friends, professors, former employers, and organization members.
- Check with the Career Development Center. Staff at the CDC are connected to many organizations and businesses through the community. If you’re struggling with figuring out whom to reach out to, set up an appointment with a career coach to narrow down your choices.

**Prepare for the Interview**
- Be able to confidently introduce yourself and have an answer for the question "tell me about yourself"? We recommend following this formula when developing your answer: Past + Present + Future.
- Prepare a series of open-ended questions. Here are a few ideas:
  - What are your main responsibilities as a...?
  - What is a typical day (or week) like for you?
  - What do you like most about your work?
  - What do you like least about your work?
  - How does your position fit within the organization/career field/industry?
  - What current issues and trends in the field should I know about/be aware of?
  - What are some common career paths in this field?
  - What related fields do you think I should consider looking into?
  - How did you become interested in this field?
  - How did you begin your career?
  - How do most people get into this field? What are common entry-level jobs?
  - What kind of education, training, or background does your job require?
  - What skills, abilities, and personal attributes are essential to success in your job/this field?
Initiate Contact

- Contact the person by email or phone. Check out this template:

  SUBJECT LINE: Request for Informational Interview

  Dear Mr. Smith,
  My name is [first and last name] and I'm a current student at Minnesota State University Moorhead majoring in [major]. I'm currently exploring opportunities in [industry/field] and [person who recommended you reach out to this person] recommended I reach out to you to learn more about your professional path and to ask a few questions to gain more insight as I prepare to enter the field.

  I'm hoping you might have 15 to 30 minutes to meet with me in the next few weeks. Please let me know if this might be possible and what dates and times are most convenient for you. Alternatively, I'd be happy to send my questions via email if that works better for you.

  I look forward to hearing from you.

  Thanks,
  [first and last name]

- Given the current climate, be open to connecting with them via Zoom, Teams, or another virtual platform.

Conduct the Interview

- Dress neatly and appropriately, as you would for a job interview.
- Arrive on time.
- Bring your list of questions and take notes.
- Restate that your objective is to get information and advice, not a job.
- Give a brief overview of yourself and your education and/or work background.
- Be prepared to direct the interview, but also let the conversation flow naturally, and encourage the interviewee to do most of the talking.
- Respect the person's time. Limit the meeting to the agreed-upon timeframe.
- Ask the person if you may contact them again in the future with other questions.
- Ask for names of other people to meet so as to gain different perspectives.

Follow-Up

- Keep records. Write down what you learned, what more you'd like to know, and what your next steps should be.
- Send a thank-you note or email within 1-2 days to express your appreciation for the time and information given.
- Keep in touch with the person, especially if you had a particularly nice interaction; let them know that you followed up on their advice and the outcome. This person could become an important part of your network.
For new college graduates, career readiness is key to ensuring successful entrance into the workforce. Career readiness is the foundation upon which a successful career is launched. Career readiness is, quite simply, the new career currency.

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Act equitably with integrity and accountability to self, others, and the organization

Maintain a positive personal brand in alignment with organizational and personal career values

Be present and prepared

Demonstrate dependability (e.g., report consistently for work or meetings)

Have an attention to detail, resulting in few if any errors in their work

**DEFINITION**

**SAMPLE BEHAVIORS**

- Inspire, persuade, and motivate self and others under a shared vision
- Seek out and leverage diverse resources and feedback from others to inform direction
- Use innovative thinking to go beyond traditional methods
- Serve as a role model to others by approaching tasks with confidence and a positive attitude
- Motivate and inspire others by encouraging them and by building mutual trust

Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.

- Act equitably with integrity and accountability to self, others, and the organization
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- Be present and prepared
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- Have an attention to detail, resulting in few if any errors in their work

Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

- Listen carefully to others, taking time to understand and ask appropriate questions without interrupting
- Effectively manage conflict, interact with and respect diverse personalities, and meet ambiguity with resilience
- Be accountable for individual and team responsibilities and deliverables
- Employ personal strengths, knowledge, and talents to complement those of others
- Exercise the ability to compromise and be agile
- Collaborate with others to achieve common goals

Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

- Navigate change and be open to learning new technologies
- Use technology to improve the efficiency and productivity of their work
- Manage technology to integrate information to support relevant, effective, and timely decision-making
- Quickly adapt to new or unfamiliar technologies
- Manipulate information, construct ideas, and use technology to achieve strategic goals

**DEFINITION**

**SAMPLE BEHAVIORS**

- Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
- Inspire, persuade, and motivate self and others under a shared vision
- Seek out and leverage diverse resources and feedback from others to inform direction
- Use innovative thinking to go beyond traditional methods
- Serve as a role model to others by approaching tasks with confidence and a positive attitude
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Employers want to hire college students and graduates who know how to use their talents, strengths, and interests. By mastering these career-readiness competencies, you will be prepared for a successful transition from college to career.

*These competencies were developed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.*
Think of your resume as your well-crafted personal marketing document. It’s designed to catch the interest of a potential employer and highlight experiences and skills related to your career interests. It connects your story to future employers and includes your academic achievements, volunteer experiences, extra-curricular activities, job history, and internships. Follow these simple suggestions and how-to's to ensure you'll have a well crafted and effective resume.

THE 5 STEPS OF RESUME DEVELOPMENT

**Step 1: Brainstorm and Generate a List of Accomplishment**
Create a detailed list of all your accomplishments. Think back through your education, jobs, volunteer experiences, projects, and involvement in student and community organizations. Don’t sell yourself short, and remember, every experience you've had has allowed you to develop at least one skill. There's no such thing as a "pointless" job.

**Step 2: Categorize and Expand Upon the List of Accomplishments**
Now that you've finalized your list of accomplishments, group them into categories such as Professional Experience, Education, Involvement, Achievements, Related Coursework, Internships, Licensures, and Research. These categories will help guide you once you’re ready to choose headings for your resume.

Now that you're skills and experiences are categorized, it's time to focus on the ones that are most relevant to the position(s) you're interested in and elaborate. Focus on the outcomes of your efforts, especially the skills you've developed and the positive impact you had. Quantify your results if possible. Set a goal of developing three to five bullet points for each accomplishment you want to highlight on your resume.

**Step 3: Choose a Format**
You've done all the hard work, now it's time to put everything together. Focus on developing a one-page, focused, succinct marketing document that clearly communicates your value and relevant experience and skills. The two resume formats we suggest using:

**(Reverse) Chronological:** This format puts emphasis on work experiences and starts with the most recent position, followed by the second most recent, and so on. This is the most common format and is great for individuals whose work history aligns well with the position they’re applying for, or for students applying for their first full-time job.

**Combination:** This format focuses on the most relevant experiences and skills, rather than concentrating on a professional timeline. This format is great for individuals looking to make a career change, students applying for their first full-time job, or for those going into technical fields.

**Step 4: Analyze the Position Descriptions of Jobs You're Applying for**
Your resume needs to be targeted to the position you’re applying for. Never assume that the individual reading your resume knows anything about your skills and abilities. Use the position posting as a guide and update your formatting or bullet points as necessary. If an employer is looking for someone who is innovative, attentive, and a team player, be sure to use those words throughout your resume.

**Step 5: Review and Get a Second Opinion**
Read over your resume multiple times to check for spelling and grammatical errors and schedule a resume review appointment with the Career Development Center.
**Leadership Skills**
administered
analyzed
appointed
approved
assigned
attained
chaired
consolidated
contracted
converted
coordinated
developed
directed
departmentalized
determined
dependent
developed
directed
drawn
drawn
established
evaluated
executed
fostered
generated
governed
handled
hired
hosted
improved
incorporated
increased
initiated
inspected
managed
organized
originated
oversaw
planned
presided
prioritized
produced
reduced
genitalized
steered

**Communication Skills**
advertised
arbitrated
arranged
authored
clarified
collaborated
communicated
composed
condensed
conferred
consulted
contacted
conveyed
corresponded
debated
defined
described
devolved
directed
discussed
drafted
drafted
edited
elicited
enlisted
explained
expressed
formulated
furnished
incorporated
influenced
interacted
interpreted
interviewed
involved
joined
judged
lectured
listened
marketed
mediated
moderated
negotiated
observed
outlined
participated
persuaded
presented
promoted

**Teaching Skills**
adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
conducted
coordinated
developed
directed
drew
entertained
established
fashioned
formulated
illustrated
integrated
invented
modeled
modified
originated
performed
photographed
planned
shaped
solved

**Data Skills**
administered
adjusted
allocated
analyzed
appraised
assessed
audited
balanced
calculated
computed
conserved
determined
devolved
determined
downgraded
forecasted
managed
measured
planned
programmed
projected
reconciled
realized
reduced
researched
retrieved

**creative skills**
acted
adapted
began
combined
conceptualized
created
customized
designed
developed
directed
drew
entertained
established
fashioned
formulated
illustrated
integrated
invented
modeled
modified
originated
performed
photographed
planned
shaped
solved

**Helping skills**
adapted
advocated
aided
assessed
assisted
cared for
clarified
coached
collaborated
contributed
demonstrated
discouraged
demonstrated
discouraged
demonstrated
discouraged
demonstrated
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demonstrated
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demonstrated
discouraged
demonstrated
discouraged
facilitated
familiarized
furthered
guided
helped
insured
intervened
involved
joined
judged
lectured
listened
marketed
mediated
moderated
negotiated
observed
outlined
participated
persuaded
presented
promoted

**Technical Skills**
adapted
assembled
built
calculated
computed
conserved
converted
debugged
designed
determined
developed
directed
drawn
drew
drew
drew
created
customized
designed
developed
directed
drew
drew
drew
drew
drew
drew
fashioned
formulated
illustrated
integrated
invented
modeled
modified

**Organization Skills**
approved
arranged
cataloged
categorized
classified
charted
classified
coded
collected
compiled

**More verbs for Accomplishments**
achieved
completed
expanded
exceeded
improved
pioneered
reduced
resolved
simplified
supported
volunteered

9
RESUME HEADING SUGGESTIONS

- education
- related coursework
- special courses
- relevant courses
- course highlights
- significant courses
- study abroad
- licensures
- certificates
- concentrations
- area of concentrations
- internship
- areas of expertise
- related experience
- professional development
- organizational development
- work experience

- professional organizations
- professional involvement
- professional activities
- professional workshops
- special projects
- college activities
- achievements
- national honors
- professional recognition
- research
- research experience
- thesis topic
- leadership experience
- leadership skills
- leadership roles
- technical skills
- related work experience
- skills
- volunteer involvement
- civic engagement
- community involvement
- youth experience
- community service
- languages
- other experiences
- other employment
- additional experiences
- additional employment
- involvement
- awards
- honors
- leadership
- accomplishments
- additional work experience

LAYOUT BASICS

- Name: 18-22pt, bolded or ALL CAPS
- Professional Email

No abbreviations

Lead with the most important information

Non-header text should be 10-12pt font. Use fonts that are easy to read. Most popular are Arial, Calibri, Cambria, Garamond, Georgia, Helvetica, Times New Roman

Resume should be one-page in length with limited white space

.5-1 inch margins
BUILDING BETTER BULLET POINTS

Aside from your contact information, the bullet points, or the information listed under each of your experiences, are the most important. Bullet points convey a concise yet complete description of experiences, transferable skills, and accomplishments. Use the simple template below to create quality, informative, and effective bullet points to add to your resume.

Job/Internship/Volunteer/Leadership Title, Company or Organization Name, Dates Employed/Involved

List all responsibilities

List all skills developed in this role or skills needed to be successful

Action Verb + Skills/Task = Result

Example: Established strong customer relationships by providing excellent customer support in regard to navigating the company website and updating or canceling client reservations

Build your own bullet points
EDUCATION

Master of Science in Counseling, Emphasis in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Anticipated May 20XX
Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), Moorhead, MN
- The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) Accredited
- President, Member, Counseling Student Organization
- Vice President, Member, Chi Sigma Iota (Chi Sigma Alpha, MSUM Chapter)

Bachelor of Science in Psychology May 20XX
Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), Moorhead, MN

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Graduate Assistant, MSUM Career Development Center August 20XX-Present
- Supported individual students through resume and cover letter reviews, mock interviews, career exploration, graduate school preparation, job search support, and social media reviews
- Strengthened networking skills by representing the Career Center in the planning and execution of events
- Collaborated with colleagues to ensure the center was running successfully for all students we served

Student Services Advisor, Trollwood Performing Arts School June 20XX-August 20XX
- Built and maintained friendly, approachable relationships with the students to ensure that all felt connected, accepted, and safe in a creative environment
- Coordinated and supervised the Student Leader and Students at Risk (STAR) Programs
- Assisted teachers with student classroom behavior issues

Emotional Behavior Disorder Paraprofessional, Moorhead Public Schools June 20XX-January 20XX
- Provided support to students in multiple environments throughout the school day
- Oversaw student behaviors daily and documented data as needed
- Aided students in the de-escalation of their behaviors and how to cope if to arise again

Behavioral Health Services Program Coordinator, Anne Carlson Center June 20XX-January 20XX
- Provided administrative support for families served by our department
- Generated and updated plans with client’s treatment teams and met deadlines established by the state
- Assisted my team by stepping in as a Behavior Technician when needed

Site Coordinator, YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties July 20XX-June 20XX
- Organized parent events that showcased children’s unique talents and strengths
- Generated relationships among children, parents, staff, coworkers, and school personnel
- Provided one on one behavior management and accessed resources for at risk children

School Age Assistant, YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties April 20XX-August 20XX
- Ensured a healthy and safe environment for children to grow and learn in
- Mentored children in lifelong skills such as leadership, teamwork, and empathy
- Oversaw both recreational and academic activities year-round
Scorch Dragon
218.555.5555 | scorch.dragon@email.com | www.linkedin.com/scorchdragon

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in **Communication Studies**, Minor in **Community Health**
Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), Moorhead MN
- 3.55 GPA; Dean's List two semesters

PROFESSIONAL SALES & MARKETING EXPERIENCE

**International Reservation Sales Specialist**
Airports International, Fargo, ND
- April 20XX-Present
  - Develop excellent communication skills by booking routine to complex corporate
domestic and international air, lodging, and car reservations by phone and email
  - Established strong customer relationships by providing excellent customer support in
regard to navigating the company website and updating or canceling client reservations
  - Gained problem-solving skills through communicating with airlines to assist clients with
reservations

**Customer Care Associate**
Jade Systems, Grand Forks, ND
- May 20XX-April 20XX
  - Demonstrated strong organization skills by assisting health care providers in updating
and verifying insurance information
  - Communicated effectively with patients and pharmacists by phone and email to answer
insurance questions

SALES & MARKETING INTERNSHIPS

**Marketing and Promotions Intern**
Bob's Corner Grill, Moorhead, MN
- January 20XX-April 20XX
  - Distributed promotional event material to local businesses
  - Photographed events to update the company website and create a company newsletter
  - Updated daily event information on company website using BrightEyes software

**Account Management Intern**
Altru, Grand Forks, ND
- August 20XX-January 20XX
  - Gained communication skills observing sales executives and account managers in sales
presentations and client visits with employees and brokers
  - Developed knowledge of the insurance industry by completing projects in large group
tracking system and broker certification process
  - Obtained knowledge of internal and external communications through observing
marketing and public relations departments
  - Observed corporate departmental responsibilities including pharmacy, corporate
communications, and human resources

COMPUTER SKILLS

- GDS travel agency software including BobsUncle and FaydieKat
- Photoshop, Adobe, PowerPoint, Excel and Word
**Scorch Dragon**  
218.555.5555  
scorch.dragon@email.com  
www.linkedin.com/in/sorchrdragon

**EDUCATION**
Bachelor of Science in Paralegal from ABA-accredited program  
Emphasis in Litigation and Transaction  
Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), Moorhead MN  
- 3.87 GPA; Dean's List five semesters  
  Expected May 20XX

**RELATED COURSEWORK**

**Civil Procedure**, MSUM  
- Studied procedures, documents, and techniques used in trial practice  
- Drafted Complaint, Answer, and Motions based on Minnesota Law

**Debtor-Creditor/Bankruptcy**, MSUM  
- Studied laws on the extension of credit, debtor/creditor rights, and bankruptcy including liquidation, business reorganizations, and adjustment of debts  
- Drafted Chapter 7 Bankruptcy using BestCase software

**Elder Law**, MSUM  
- Studied public benefits programs that provide economic maintenance and financing of health care for elderly citizens  
- Prepared Health Care Directives for senior citizens in the community

**Legal Ethics**, MSUM  
- Studied laws governing professional ethics of attorneys with emphasis on Rules of Professional Conduct and their implications for paralegals

**Legal Research and Writing**, MSUM  
- Developed skills using the United States Code, North Dakota Century Code, Minnesota Statutes, and Westlaw

**INVOLVEMENT**
**President**, Minnesota State Paralegal Association Moorhead (MSPAM)  
20XX-20XX  
- Nominated and elected by peers  
- Raised $1,000 for the Women's Center through event and fundraising activities  
- Participated in Children's Book Fair; Hornbachers Community Day  
- Team Captain for 20XX Relay for Kids

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**
**Dragon Swim School**, MSUM  
- 20XX-Present  
- Acquainted children ages three to eight with water and life-saving swimming skills  
- Informed and discussed with parents concerning progress of children’s skills

**Cumberson Family Restaurant**, Fisher, MN  
- 20XX-Present  
- Enhanced leadership abilities through supervising and training new employees  
- Communicated effectively with customers to resolve concerns

**SUMMARY**
Self-motivated university student obtaining Bachelor’s of Science in Paralegal Studies with strong organization skills and a keen attention to detail.
EDUCATION
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Inclusive Education
Minor in Teaching English as a Second Language
Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), Moorhead MN - 3.95 GPA May 20XX

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE
ELL Student Teacher, Fargo North High School, Fargo, ND Spring 20XX
- Initiated and designed team-building/language enhancing activities for students to gain language skills and build personal connections
- Planned and implemented summer curriculum through collaboration and teamwork with cooperating teacher and other summer school teachers

ELL Tutor, Lincoln Elementary School, Fargo, ND Fall 20XX
- Tutored caseload of seven students, three days a week, to help students reach academic goals
- Collaborated with classroom teachers to enhance student success

ELL Tutor, Fargo South High School, Fargo, ND Fall 20XX
- Helped students with homework while maintaining a positive and welcoming environment

PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE
5th Grade, Ellen Hopkins Elementary School, Moorhead, MN Spring 20XX
- Integrated fluidly into 5th-grade classroom as student/co-teacher for three weeks
- Gained experience with Everyday mathematics, differentiated reading groups and reading recovery

2nd Grade, Madison Elementary School, Fargo, ND Fall 20XX
- Collaborated with two student teachers to create meaningful, hands-on inquiry-based lessons
- Became familiar with the school-wide discipline plan, "Nurtured Heart" including positive reinforcement, praise, and being proactive with student behavior

6th Grade, Fargo South High School, Fargo, ND Spring 20XX
- Created an interactive game for ELL students to review test material and highlight language skills
- Observed, interacted, and taught students in five sheltered instruction classes including; Economics, Western Civilization, U.S. Government, Political Science, and Intro to Social Studies

1st Grade, Cheney Middle School, West Fargo, ND Fall 20XX
- Executed hands-on social studies lesson plans that utilized PowerPoint and Smart Board

5th Grade, Reinertsen Elementary, Moorhead, MN Spring 20XX
- Observed specialized classroom that focused on behavior and etiquette

RELATED EXPERIENCE
Recreation Leader and Coach, Parks and Recreation, Underwood, MN Summers 20XX-20XX
- Planned curriculum six consecutive summers for children ages 3-12 in a day camp environment
- Co-created and implemented Tiny Tots Sports Program; coached ages 3-4

Student Orientation Counselor, First Year Programs, Moorhead, MN 20XX-Present
- Assisted incoming students to enable a welcoming transition to MSUM
- Provided individualized support for a group of 20-30 college freshmen throughout the academic year
SCORCH DRAGON
scorch.dragon@mnstate.edu | 218.555.5555 | 1104 7th Street South, Moorhead, MN

EDUCATION
Bachelor of Fine Arts
Emphasis in Photography
Minor in Art History
Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, MN

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Center for the Arts Darkroom Assistant
Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, MN
- Assist students and patrons in developing, processing, and printing analog film
- Guest lecturer on darkroom technology and techniques in Photography 101 course

MHD Photography Studio Technician
MHD Photography, Moorhead, MN
- Attend all meetings with clients to estimate costs and develop a budget
- Capture and edit photographs for weddings, events, portraits, and magazine shoots
- Collaborate with the curator on design and installation of photography exhibitions

Fargo Monthly Magazine Photography Intern
Fargo Monthly, Fargo, ND
- Completed a 5-month internship at a leading Fargo Monthly photography team.
- Provided retouching services, image optimization, color conversions/corrections, and other digital support for commercial clients.

Freelance Photographer
Fargo, ND
- Established recognized freelance photography business and a large group of faithful customers.
- Set up personal photography equipment and created the best environment for aesthetically pleasing shots.
- Received recognition from multiple local newspapers and magazines for outstanding work.
- Mastered photography basics over five years of consistent work.

SKILLS/COMPETENCIES
Adobe Creative Cloud, Action Script, Final Cut Pro X, QuarkXPress, Capture One Pro, Microsoft Office, HTML, Google AdWords, Google Analytics

AWARDS
- 2nd Place, MHDPrint Competition, 20XX
- 3rd Place, Contemporary Photograph, MHD Arts 20XX
- Honorable Mention, LensFirst, Still Life, 20XX

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT
Professional Photographers of America
Stock Artists Alliance

instagram.com/scorch  twitter.com/scorch  linkedin.com/scorch  www.scorchedphoto.com
An Applicant Tracking System (ATS) is a software application that collects and sorts through documents submitted by applicants. Frequently, these systems scan documents to find keywords, making sure the only candidates that make it to the desk of a hiring manager have the minimum skills necessary for success in the role. Because of this, it is imperative that you individualize your resume and cover letter to each unique position you apply for. Follow the tips and tricks below and you’re one step closer to landing an interview.

1. Include the right keywords
On a very basic level, applicant tracking systems are programmed to read application material, scanning for keywords and specific pieces of information to decide if you’re a good match for the position you applied to. So, how do you know what those keywords are? Look through the position posting and find the skills, qualifications, experience, or qualities listed.

If a company states they are looking for an individual with a bachelor’s degree in business, is a good team player, and has three years of experience working with CRM’s, it is imperative that you address these three topics in your resume and/or cover letter.

2. Choose the right file type
When it comes to saving and submitting your application documents, you have two options: .docx or .pdf. Documents saved and submitted as PDFs are your best bet to ensure your information stays intact, but it’s been found ATSs have an easier time reading documents saved and submitted as .docx.

While there is no definitive right or wrong way, keep these tips in mind. And always, ALWAYS, follow directions. If a listing asks for a certain file type, do as they say.

3. Make your documents easy to read
Whether the company or organization you’re applying to utilizes an ATS or not, you need to format your resume in a way that is easy to read. Both humans and ATSs typically read left to right, top to bottom, so format your resume in that way. The most important information should be at the top - your contact information. Then list your education, employment or internship, volunteering and involvement, additional skills, and so on.

4. Avoid over-formatting
While fancy templates and heavily designed resumes may look nice at first glance, they can cause a number of issues. They are just more difficult to read - both by humans and ATSSs. In order to scan your resume, ATSSs will likely convert your documents to a text-only file. At best, your design and formatting will be lost. At worst, the ATS won’t be able to read your document. It won’t matter if you’re the most qualified candidate or not, you won’t make it on to the next round.

Things to avoid
- Tables and text boxes
- Logos, images, graphs, or other visuals
- Columns
- Headers and footers
- Less common fonts

Other things to think about when creating your resume
- Apply for jobs you’re qualified for
- Include a skills section
- Use basic language
- Write out acronyms/avoid abbreviations
A cover letter serves as a bridge connecting your resume to the specific job opportunity you’re applying for. Each letter you submit should be unique, addressing specific requirements that are listed in a job posting, and should clearly explain why you are interested in that job at that company. While every cover letter you submit will vary in content, the following topics should be included in each:

**Header**
When submitting your cover letter, either via mail, email, or attach as a document on an online application site, your cover letter heading should match your resume. Consistency between documents is important. Be sure to use the same style and format on both your resume and cover letter. You should also include the following:
- The date you’re submitting the letter
- The address of the company, including the specific department, and, if known, the individual responsible for hiring the position
- An address line to a specific person. After researching, if you’re unable to find an individual to address the letter to, use a non-gendered title such as "Hiring Manager" or "[Company Name] Team"

**First Paragraph - Why them?**
The main purpose of the first paragraph is to introduce yourself and explain why you are writing. You want to grab an employer’s attention by telling them why you are interested in this position and/or why this organization. If someone has referred you to the organization (a current employee, friend, family member) include their name in the first paragraph.
When crafting your opening paragraph, ask yourself these questions:
- Who are you?
- How did you find this position?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Briefly, why are you qualified for this position?

**Middle Paragraph(s) - Why you?**
In the middle paragraph(s), you should describe your qualifications for the type of position you seek using specific examples from academic, work, volunteer, and/or co-curricular experiences. Connect your accomplishments, skills, and knowledge directly to the type of position, organization, and/or field. Avoid repeating the facts outlined in your resume by focusing on key concepts. When crafting your middle paragraphs, ask yourself these questions:
- Why are you the most qualified candidate for this position?
- What specific experiences have you had to show this?
- What specific skills do you possess, where/how did you learn them?

Make sure you use the position posting as a guide for deciding what skills and experiences you choose to highlight.

**Last Paragraph - Next steps**
When crafting your closing paragraph, make sure to do the following:
- State what you want. Are you looking for an interview? Would you like to discuss this opportunity further? Be explicit with your intentions.
- Reference other attachments you have submitted.
- Thank the individual or team that you are writing your letter to. Express excitement in the opportunity.
May 27, 20XX

Ms. Johnson, President
National XYZ Nonprofit
123 4th Street South
Moorhead, MN 56563

Dear Ms. Johnson

I am writing to apply for the position of Communication & Events Coordinator with National XYZ Nonprofit, which I found on DragonJobs powered by Handshake. As a soon-to-be graduate majoring in communication studies with an emphasis in event planning & promotion with three years of experience managing communication and events for multiple student organizations on campus, I believe that I am an ideal candidate for this role.

During my time as a student at Minnesota State University Moorhead, I have developed a strong background in communications and event planning. As a communication studies major, I held multiple internships, including Communications Intern at XYZ Company and Events & Media Intern at ABC Company. I also served as president of the Communicators in Action at school. We successfully developed and launched a fundraising campaign, including social media, press, and a large-scale fundraising event for a local nonprofit, which helped increase donations to the nonprofit by 22 percent.

You state in your job listing that you are looking for someone with strong writing skills and attention to detail. In addition to my internships and student involvement, I also held the role of communication lead in the Office of Student Activities. This job required great attention to detail in writing and editing blogs and social media posts. I would love to bring these skills, and more, to National XYZ Nonprofit.

My strengths, skills, and experiences have prepared me to make a strong and immediate impact with National XYZ Nonprofit. I am excited about the opportunity to join the team as it continues to leave a lasting impact on the Fargo-Moorhead community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Scorch Dragon
September 1, 20XX

Internship Department
Dragon Outdoors
123 4th Street South
Moorhead, MN 56563

Dear Internship Department,

I am writing to apply for the scientific research summer internship position that was listed on DragonJobs powered by Handshake site. I believe my research and conservation experience make me an ideal candidate.

I have had a great deal of research experience in chemistry, biology, and geology, both in the lab and in the field with the majority of my experience in environmental field studies. I am currently conducting research in our school's outdoor laboratory to assess the water quality of a nearby pond. Knowing that water quality assessment is a component of this internship, I know my previous experience makes me a prime candidate.

Last summer, I worked as a conservation assistant at the Minnesota State University Moorhead Regional Science Center. Along with trail maintenance and building, I also served as a research assistant for the research organization at the park. I conducted an analysis of soil samples, and input data from various research projects. I received a special commendation from the director of the research organization for my attention to detail and dedication to research.

I believe that I would be an asset to your program. This internship would provide me with the ideal opportunity to assist your organization and expand my research skills. I will follow next week to ensure you've received all the necessary documents to complete my application. I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Scorch Dragon
September 1, 20XX

Dr. Johnson, Principal
Moorhead West Elementary School
123 4th Street South
Moorhead, MN 56563

Dear Principal Johnson,

As a recent graduate of the Elementary Inclusive Education program at Minnesota State University Moorhead, I am incredibly excited to begin my career as an elementary school teacher. With experience working at both the elementary and high school levels, as well as in activities outside of the traditional classroom, I have a diverse background with much to offer.

My first classroom teaching experience was during high school when I served as a volunteer elementary school religion teacher at a local church for three years. In addition, I worked for several summers at Red River Arts Camp teaching theater, coordinating and staging a play each season.

I have student teaching experience at the first- and fourth-grade levels in both large and small school districts. During these experiences, I particularly enjoyed working with at-risk children. My careful preparation of lessons allowed me to break down complicated concepts into simple examples that my young students could grasp, which was rewarding for both my students and for me.

Last year, I worked as a Literacy Tutor through the America Reads program at Ellen Hopkins Elementary School. Managing the difference of abilities among my students proved to be a difficult, but gratifying, challenge. I tailored my interactions to maintain the interest of high-level students without intimidating less-skilled readers to great success. I was recognized by my lead teacher for the improvements my students made in their abilities which lead to me being offered an after-school support position which I happily accepted.

My resume and references are enclosed and I am forwarding an official copy of my transcript. I will reach out to you next week to discuss employment opportunities; in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 218-444-4444 or scorch.dragon@email.com. I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Scorch Dragon
HOW TO PREPARE FOR A CAREER FAIR

Review the companies on Handshake to determine who you want to talk to
Know what they do! Know their history, customers, and/or clients
Visit their company website to review job description & required skills
Plan your time wisely. Select your top five companies and make sure you see them first

CREATE A STANDOUT RESUME
Think of your resume as a well-crafted marketing document for yourself. It’s designed to catch the eye of a potential employer and highlight experiences and skills related to your career interests. It connects your story to future employers and includes your academic achievements, volunteer experiences, extra-curricular activities, job history, and internships. Make sure to print enough copies to hand out to recruiters you connect with.

PERFECT YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH
How would you answer the question "So, tell me about yourself"? While it may seem like a simple question, it’s actually much harder than it looks. It should be brief, professional, and make the person you’re speaking with want to continue the conversation. Still at a loss for what to say? Follow this simple equation:

Past + Present + Future/Goals + Why This Company/Job = Your Elevator Pitch

DRESS FOR SUCCESS
- Professional dress is required
- Hygiene is important. Avoid strongly scented cologne and perfume
- Be mindful of piercings, tattoos, and what accessories you choose to wear. Some businesses/organizations are more conservative than others
- Nails should be well-kempt as should nail polish if you choose to wear it
- Hair should be polished but worn in a comfortable style
- Bring a notebook or portfolio/padfolio to write down company information, recruiter information and to hold printed copies of your resume
FOLLOWING UP

Whether you send a snail mail thank you or a quick email, it is imperative that you follow up with the individual(s) whom you connected with at the fair within 24 hours. This helps them keep you top of mind and allows you to continue the conversation you started the day before.

Dear [Representative’s Name],

It was great connecting with you at the MSU Moorhead Career Fair yesterday. I enjoyed learning more about your company/organization/team, and I’m very excited about the [title of the role you plan on applying to] position we discussed. I plan on submitting an application by the end of the week.

I look forward to hearing about the next steps in the hiring process. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if you would like additional information on my education, skills, and previous experiences.

Best regards,

[Your Name]
PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Your hard work on your resume and cover letter has paid off. You've been offered an interview for a new position. Below you will find tips, tricks, frequently asked questions, questions to ask the employer, and more. Follow these suggestions and you'll be as prepared ever for your first interview!

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW?

- The INTERVIEWER wants to determine if the candidate is able to successfully do the job if the candidate is the right fit for the company, and what kind of skills the candidate will bring to the team.
- The CANDIDATE wants to determine if they are still interested in the position if they are able to successfully do the job, and if the company and the role are a good fit for them.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

- Behavioral Interview: The most common type of interview. The interviewer is looking to learn about behavior, personality, character, qualifications, problem-solving skills, adaptability, leadership potential, conflict resolution, communication, etc... Questions asked in these interviews could be "Tell me about a time when..." or "Tell us about a project you worked on where...". To answer, talk about your personal experiences.
- Panel Interview: This interview will have more than one individual conducting the interview. Some participants may include future coworkers, management, and human resource representatives. Questions will be similar to those asked in behavioral interviews.
- Phone Interview: These interviews are frequently used as a first-round screening tool. Questions will be similar to those asked in behavioral interviews. When you take the phone call, make sure you are in a quiet, secluded location. Make sure your voicemail message is professional.
- Virtual Interview: Treat this interview as you would an in-person interview. Make sure you troubleshoot prior to the interview to ensure you won't run into any technical difficulties.
- Case or Puzzle Interview: During these types of interviews, you will be asked to solve a problem related to the business. They are looking to see how you perform under pressure, how quickly you can think on your feet, and measure your critical thinking ability. Keep in mind, there may not be one correct answer. This interview typically also includes a more traditional set of interview questions before or after you complete the case or puzzle.
- Working Interview: This type of interview is used to see the candidates' skills in action. Some tasks candidates can be asked to do include a presentation, portfolio presentation, programming, designing a logo, etc... This interview typically also includes a more traditional set of interview questions before or after you complete the task.
- Lunch Interview: These interviews are often scheduled to get to know more about the candidate in a more laid back environment. These interviews also assess how well you handle yourself in social situations.
- Group Interview: These interviews are made up of three or more people interviewing for the same role at the same time. They may be held for internships, graduate school, or when company is hiring multiple people for the same role.

WHAT DO EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM CANDIDATES?

- Candidates should be professionally dressed.
- Punctuality is critical. Candidates should arrive about 5-10 minutes early.
- Candidates are expected to be cordial and refer to the interviewers as they have introduced themselves.
- Candidate's communication styles should be confident and they should be sure of themselves.
WHAT DO EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM CANDIDATES continued...

- Eye contact is important when interviewing.
- Self-disclosure is expected throughout an interview, but keep it professional.
- Candidates will be asked about their personal descriptions of experience, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Be confident in discussing your future. Be able to openly discuss personal and professional accomplishments and goals.

COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- What makes you a good fit for this position?
- Why are you interested in working for the company in this role?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
- What role do you typically take on when working in a team?
- What are you passionate about?
- What are your greatest strength and greatest weakness?
- Tell me about a time that something did not go as planned. How did you handle it and what did you learn?
- Why should we hire you?

S.T.A.R. METHOD OF ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The STAR technique provides a concise and thorough framework for organizing responses to behavioral interview questions. Practice your responses to typical interview questions by using this technique to share your stories clearly and precisely directed to the interviewer’s questions.

- **Situation** – Describe the event or situation that you were in
- **Task** – Explain the task you had to complete
- **Action** – Describe the specific actions you took to complete the task
- **Result** – Close with the result of your efforts

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

- How will my work objectives be determined?
- Can you tell me a little bit about the training associated with this position?
- What characteristics best describe individuals who are successful in this position?
- How is job performance evaluated?
- How would you describe the culture of your organization?
- What is a typical work week for a (position title) in your company?
- Does your organization encourage its employees to pursue additional education? Service opportunities?
- Describe the three top challenges that I’ll face in this job.

FOLLOWING UP

Whether you send a snail mail thank you or a quick email, it is imperative that you follow up with the individual(s) who interviewed you within 24 hours of your interview. Below is an example of a well-written thank you.

Dear [Interviewer Name],

Thank you so much for meeting with me today. It was such a pleasure to learn more about the team and position, and I’m very excited about the opportunity to join [Company Name] and help [bring in new clients/develop world-class content/anything else awesome you would be doing] with your team.

I look forward to hearing from you about the next steps in the hiring process, and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information.

Best regards,

[Your Name]
Salary negotiation may seem like a skill necessary only for seasoned professionals who have a wealth of knowledge and experience under their belt. In reality, having the confidence to negotiate earnings and benefits is something that EVERYONE should possess, especially if you're female-presenting and/or a person of color. So, do your research, define your value, and practice your pitch and you will be primed to negotiate with confidence.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY AND BENEFITS

Congratulations! You've been offered a job at your dream company. While you may be inclined to say "yes" to any salary and benefits package you're being offered, this is the perfect time to utilize your negotiating skills to ensure you're getting a compensation package your comfortable with.

- The salary and benefits you receive from your first position outside of college are setting the stage for the rest of your professional life. Negotiating just a few thousand dollars can lead to hundreds of thousands of dollars more over your lifetime.
- The wage gap is real. Women on average are paid just 80% of what men are paid. Factor in race and the difference is staggering. If you identify as a woman and/or are a person of color, negotiating your salary and benefits package can help you decrease the wage gap, not only for yourself, but others as well.

PREPARING TO NEGOTIATE

- **Understand your experiences and develop a value proposition.** It's easy to think that the part-time jobs, volunteer experiences, and classes you've taken won't matter once you've graduated and entered the workforce, but we're here to say that just isn't the case. Every single experience you've had is valuable and can help set you up for success when it comes time to discuss wages. Be confident in your past and help educate the hiring manager on your value to the company while negotiating your salary and benefits package.

- **Research similar positions.** Having an understanding of what others are making in comparable positions can give you a leg up during the negotiation process. There are a number of websites and organizations that can help.
  - US Department of Labor - [www.onetonline.org/](http://www.onetonline.org/)
  - [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com) or [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)
  - The MSUM Career Development Center
  - Your local Economic Development Corporation or Chamber of Commerce

Once you've finished your research, decide on a target salary, a target salary range, and your walking away point. Always keep your budget, debts, and savings goals in mind when defining your targets.

**It is important to understand the local economy of the city you're looking to be employed in. If you're choosing to stick around the FM community, don't use statistics from individuals living in New York City.**

- **Think beyond salary.** An offer for employment is more than just a salary. It will also include benefits and perks. Healthcare and other insurance plans, retirement match, paid time off/vacation, flexible working hours or the ability to work remote, professional development funds, parental leave, etc... are all ways employers can increase your benefits package and can reduce living costs, making it easier for you to be more flexible with your minimum salary. Employers will often use the term "total compensation" or "total reward" when discussing an offer that includes both salary and benefits. Be sure to clarify salary vs. benefits. They may say your total reward is $75,000, but your salary is only $55,000.
• **Practice Makes Perfect.** First and foremost, don't assume that the negotiation process will be negative or combative. There is no way to know how it will end, so go into the conversation positive and open-minded. That being said, it's OK to prepare for different scenarios.

Pretend you've just been made an offer 20% below your target salary. While this would fall within your target salary range, you're hoping to increase it by at least 10%. How would you respond to that initial offer?

"**Thank you for that offer. Based on my previous experience in the field and my education as well as the research I've done on compensation packages for positions similar in the region, I was hoping to make $XXX-$XXX per year.**"

The hiring manager responds well and agrees to increase the offer by 12%. You could simply say thank you and begin talking about your start date, but we encourage you to inquire about other benefits.

"**I appreciate you being flexible in your offer. While it's not at my target, I am comfortable with that salary. I'm also interested in discussing other benefits available for this position. Do you offer opportunities for professional development? Continuing education is important to me and I'm looking to work for a company that is interested in supporting their employee's growth.**"

At this time, be sure to reiterate your thankfulness for their flexibility and request the offer in writing.

• **Negotiating a raise and/or a change in benefits once you're in the role.** Negotiation isn't just a skill for those who are seeking a new position. It can also come in handy when you've made significant contributions to your employer's success, you've taken on additional responsibilities, your role has changed, or you've been sought out by another organization.

Follow the same tips and tricks listed for those who are being offered a position with a new company/organization, but focus your value statement on the positive changes you've made in your current role. Be specific. Have you increased sales, increased usage of your product or service, or saved a sizable amount of money? Being able to discuss the impact you've made will play in your favor.

• **Be realistic.** Are you looking for a job in the non-profit or government sector? Understanding the financial capacity and limitations of the organization you're looking to work for will help you have a more fruitful and less frustrating conversation. As we've stated previously, do your research on comparable positions locally or regionally, but keep your mind open to other benefits and perks.

• **Know when to walk away.** If the employer is unwilling to budge on salary or benefits, ask yourself if it would make sense financially to accept the offer/stay with the company.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- Career Development Center - [www.mnstate.edu/career](http://www.mnstate.edu/career)
- Your academic advisor and other faculty members
- American Association of University Women Work Smart Program - [www.salary.aauw.org](http://www.salary.aauw.org)
- Company Reviews and Salary Calculator - [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com)
- LinkedIn Salary Tool - [www.linkedin.com/salary/](http://www.linkedin.com/salary/)
- Salary Calculator - [www.jobsearchintelligence.com/salary-calculator-intro-etc](http://www.jobsearchintelligence.com/salary-calculator-intro-etc)
- Cost of Living Comparison - [www.foundationsu.com/college/](http://www.foundationsu.com/college/)
- Transparent Career - [www.transparentcareer.com/](http://www.transparentcareer.com/)
Continuing your education is not something that should be taken lightly. Graduate and doctoral degrees cost money and take time, so before you start submitting applications, we encourage students to answer the following questions.

- **Do you have a clear purpose and goal for attending graduate school?**
  - What are your long and short term goals?
  - What is necessary for you to achieve these goals?
  - How will a graduate degree add or enhance my career path?

- **What are your values, interests, and priorities for your career and life?**
  - What kind of work and experiences do you find meaningful?
  - What skills do you already have? Do you need to expand upon these to land a meaningful job in your chosen field?

- **Have you researched all of your graduate school options?**
  - Do you know all of your options when choosing a graduate program?
  - If you have mentors, ask them for their perspectives and advice.
  - Do you have the capacity to take on additional time and financial investments for a graduate degree?
  - What is your potential for success in a graduate program?
  - Is it necessary for you to continue your education to be employed in your field?

SO, YOU'VE MADE YOUR DECISION. YOU'RE GOING TO CONTINUE YOUR EDUCATION.

You've weighed the pros and cons and have decided that continuing your education is the right fit for you. Now it's time to start researching universities to find the best fit. A few things to consider when determining your top choices:

- Reputation of faculty
- Quality of the program
- Financial cost & Financial Aid
- Admission requirements
- Available course offerings
- Employability of graduates
- Facilities
- Geographic location
- Student life

After you've decided on your top three to five universities/programs you intend on applying to, you will need to get familiar with the unique admissions requirements for each program. Typically, requirements include:

- Application
- Application fee
- Official transcripts from all colleges/universities you've attended
- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution
- A minimum GPA
- An essay, personal statement, or letter of intent. Some programs will list questions you must address in your personal statement, while others simply ask why you're interested in the program
- Professional resume that discusses employment, involvement, and possibly related coursework. Make sure to target your resume to the program you're applying to
- Test results (GRE, GMAT, LSAT, etc...). Keep in mind, not every program will require tests results
- Letters of recommendation
- Application deadline

This information can be found online on graduate school admission's pages or by contacting program representatives.
WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT OR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE- A graduate school personal statement or similar type of application essay is your opportunity to show the admissions committee what you’re made of. The statement serves two basic purposes:

1. To showcase your ability to write clear, coherent content that is logically written and free of grammatical errors
2. To answer the questions why you want to continue your education and why you should be accepted into the program

**Statement of Purpose General Content:**
- Academic and professional background
- Skills
- Accomplishments
- Research interests
- Academic and career goals
- Why is this program a good fit for you?

**Personal Statement General Content:**
- Your personal motivations for applying to the program and why you would be a great fit
- Your accomplishments and success stories
- The challenges you’ve faced and overcome
- Your passion for the field of study

*These are typically more formal than personal statements. Length is typically 1-3 double-spaced pages*

*These are typically less formal than statements of purpose. Length is typically 1-3 double-spaced pages*

**RESOURCES**

- **Career Development Center**
  The Career Development Center is here to help you be a prepared professional. Whether that is assistance with your resume and cover letter, or helping you in the graduate school application process, there are many ways their experienced staff can provide support.

  Connect on Handshake | Flora Frick 151 | careers@mnstate.edu | 218-477-2131

- **MSUM Library**
  The MSUM Library offers ample resources for students who are interested in continuing their education including test preparation books to check out as well as online practice tests and resources for the GRE, GMAT, and the MCAT.

  Click for [Online GRE resources](#)
  Click for [Online GMAT resources](#)
  Click for [Online MCAT resources](#) (enter MCAT info the search bar. Sign in using your StarID & password))

  Livingston Lord Library | refdesk@mnstate.edu | 218-477-2922

- **Advisor & Faculty**
  Your faculty and advisor are all great resources when it comes to education and career planning. They have first-hand experience in your chosen field and can offer insights into your specific profession.

- **University Writing Support Center**
  The University Writing Center is run by student tutors—undergraduates with a strong background in writing and formal training in tutoring. They offer valuable feedback on a wide variety of writing issues, ranging from content to organization to style and mechanics. They are a great resource for your personal statement.

  Livingston Lord Library room 111 | [https://mnstate.mywconline.com/](https://mnstate.mywconline.com/)
# Components of Typical Graduate & Professional School Applications

This list is intended to help you plan for graduate school however it is imperative that you check with each program you intend on applying to to learn the details of their specific requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Academic MA or PHD Program</th>
<th>Graduate Certificate Program</th>
<th>Professional Degree</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Medical or Dental School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadlines</td>
<td>Nov - Jan</td>
<td>Rolling</td>
<td>Nov - Jan</td>
<td>Late Oct - Nov</td>
<td>Nov (rolling)</td>
<td>June (rolling)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centralized Application</td>
<td>Not Common</td>
<td>Not Common</td>
<td>Not Common</td>
<td>Not Common</td>
<td>CAS (LSAC)</td>
<td>AMCAS (AAMC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Form</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcript</td>
<td></td>
<td>Official Transcript</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance Exam (not all programs require an exam)</td>
<td>GRE</td>
<td>GRE or Other Relevant</td>
<td>GRE or Other Relevant</td>
<td>GMAT or GRE</td>
<td>LSAT</td>
<td>MCAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Statement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Personal Essays</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes and Essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>Typically 3</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Typically 3</td>
<td>Typically 2-3</td>
<td>Typically 3</td>
<td>Typically 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume or CV</td>
<td>CV</td>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>Varies, Typically Resume</td>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>Resume</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Specific Writing Samples</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Fee Per School</td>
<td>$50-125</td>
<td>$30-125</td>
<td>$30-175</td>
<td>$100-265</td>
<td>$50-100</td>
<td>$75-100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fill out your Handshake profile. Get the job.

APP.JOINHANDSHAKE.COM

Fill out your Interests today.

Job Type
Looking for an internship, part-time job, or full-time job? You can choose more than one.

Location
Select the cities you would like to work in, and Handshake will show you jobs in that area.

Job Role
Choose at least three jobs you would like to explore, like marketing associate or software engineer.

Log in to update your Handshake profile
app.joinhandshake.com

DID YOU KNOW?
80% of students who share their interests receive a message from a recruiter on Handshake.
LinkedIn Profile Checklist

☐ PHOTO: It doesn’t have to be fancy - just use your cellphone camera in front of a plain background. Wear a nice shirt and don’t forget to smile!

☐ HEADLINE: Tell people what you’re excited about now and the cool things you want to do in the future.

☐ SUMMARY: Describe what motivates you, what you’re skilled at, and what’s next.

☐ EXPERIENCE: List the jobs you held, even if they were part-time, along with what you accomplished at each. Even include photos and videos from your work.

☐ ORGANIZATIONS: Have you joined any clubs at school or outside? Be sure to describe what you did with each organization.

Continued >>
**EDUCATION:** Starting with college, list all the educational experiences you’ve had — including summer programs.

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE & CAUSES:** Even if you weren’t paid for a job, be sure to list it. Admissions officers and employers often see volunteer experience as just as valuable as paid work.

**SKILLS & EXPERTISE:** Add at least 5 key skills - and then your connections can endorse you for the things you’re best at.

**HONORS & AWARDS:** If you earned a prize in or out of school, don’t be shy. Let the world know about it!

**COURSES:** List the classes that show off the skills and interests you’re most excited about.

**PROJECTS:** Whether you led a team assignment in school or built an app on your own, talk about what you did and how you did it.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Ask managers, professors, or classmates who’ve worked with you closely to write a recommendation. This gives extra credibility to your strengths and skills.

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**University of California, Berkeley**  
**Economics, B.A.**  
2010 – 2014 (expected)

**Big Buddy**  
**Skyline High School**  
September 2012 – May 2015 (9 months)  
Education

Mentored an Oakland high school student through the college application process, helping him get into his dream school.

**Skills & Expertise**

Most endorsed for...

- Economics
- Start-ups
- Due Diligence
- Venture Capital
- Management

**Honors & Awards**

**The Achievement Award Program**  
UC Berkeley  
Four-year scholarship awarded to community-minded students with a proven track record of academic success.

**Courses**

**University of California, Berkeley**

- Microeconomic Theory (Econ 101A)
- International Monetary Economics (182)
- Public Economics (290A)

**Projects**

**Venture Capital Financing in India**  
May 2013

For our International Monetary Economics course, Paul and I decided to study the emerging venture capital industry in India. By looking at data from the World Bank, we were able to understand the challenges and opportunities facing this nascent sector. And we developed a series of recommendations for overcoming these challenges, which we delved into our professor in a final term paper.

- 5 team members
  - David Xiao  
    Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Analyst
  - Paul Smith  
    Student at UC Berkeley

**Recommendations**

**Venture Capital Internship**  
**Berkeley Ventures**

- **Tim Lee**  
  Partner

David spent the summer with us at Berkeley Ventures and made an immediate impact. He showed us a brand new technique for firm analysis that he had just learned in school and came through with recommendations that opened our eyes to a unique set of opportunities.

We don’t normally hire undergrads as interns but after working with David, we will again!

November 13, 2013, Tim managed
Using LinkedIn to Find a Job or Internship

LinkedIn is the place for students and recent grads to find jobs and internships. Here are some tips to get started.

1. Become an expert.
   Want to stand out and learn about industries you want to get into? Check out LinkedIn Today’s news dashboard and Influencer posts for the top daily headlines, join Groups, and follow new industry-specific “Channels.”

2. Have a strong headline.
   Get noticed.
   Your profile is not the place to be shy! Write a concise but descriptive headline like “XYZ University honors student & aspiring PR associate,” “Entry-level creative professional,” or “Finance major seeking investment banking internship.”

3. Include keywords.
   Recruiters search LinkedIn for candidates. Use the key words and phrases they use. Find examples from job descriptions you’re going after, or profiles of people who have the jobs you want, and pepper them throughout the Summary and Skills & Expertise sections.

4. Take advantage of student profile sections.
   Be sure to complete the profile sections designed just for students, such as Courses, Projects, Languages, Certifications, and Organizations. Keywords are good here too. Complete profiles get 40x more opportunities!

5. Talk about all your relevant experience.
   Experience doesn’t have to be paid or full-time to be on your profile. Your Experience section can include internships, extracurriculars, part-time jobs, volunteer work, or projects that have given you real-world skills. You never know what might catch an employer’s eye.
Build your network.
Grow your network by sending personalized LinkedIn connection requests to everyone you know – friends, family, neighbors, teachers, colleagues, classmates, and more.

Ask your network for help.
70% of jobs are found through networking. Once you connect, send customized messages (no mass emails!) to say you’re job-hunting. Ask for advice, an informational interview, or if they know anyone in your desired field. Connect one-on-one and others will be willing to make the effort for you.

Find “ins” where you want to work.
Heard of LinkedIn Company pages? Visit them for organizations you want to work for and see if you’re connected to anyone who works or has worked there. And check out LinkedIn's Alumni Tool to see what grads of your school are up to.

Search the Student Jobs Portal.
The Student Jobs Portal is just for you: It has all the entry-level job and internship postings on LinkedIn. Search by job role or review postings from featured companies. Apply for positions and the employer will be able to see your full LinkedIn profile.

Get gutsy.
Don’t be afraid to reach out directly to a recruiter on LinkedIn. One strategy is to first apply to a position you want and then send a message to the recruiter who posted the opportunity (you can often find this information in the job posting). Good luck!

Get a job.
Get going at www.linkedin.com