



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* NORTH CAROLINA  
*at* CHAPEL HILL

# **BSPH CAREER SERVICES RESOURCE MANUAL**

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# CAREER RESOURCES MANUAL

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Welcome to the HPM Career Services Office. We offer a variety of services for undergraduate, graduate and alumni to help students connect the dots between their interests and their future. We are pleased to offer the 2016-17 Career Guide as a resource that will provide ideas, recommended steps, and examples for your career planning and job search efforts. The topics in this guide can also be discussed personally with any of the CSO staff. We look forward to working with you during your time in HPM and helping you launch your career.

As you begin planning for your internship or full-time job, HPM Career Services can help you different ways including:

- \* Career advising
- \* Interview Prep for internships and full-time positions
- \* Resume and Cover Letter Prep
- \* Job Search Techniques
- \* Career/Professional Development Workshops

### **BSPH TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

#### **Junior Year:**

- Make sure your resume is in the HPM format.
- Meet with your faculty advisor to discuss job search strategies.
- Meet with HPM Career Services to talk about your career interests.
- Register for or update your Careerolina account including your resume.
- Pursue leadership positions on campus through student government, clubs/organizations, fraternities and sororities, etc.
- Utilize both University Career Services and SPH events.
- Meet with Seniors who have similar interests as you to ask questions.
- Begin to research graduate school programs. Make plans to take necessary exams. Set up a timeline to apply.
- Create a professional LinkedIn profile and begin connecting with others.
- Network, network, network.

#### **Senior Year:**

- Add your internship information to your resume.
- Update your Careerolina account.
- Meet with your faculty advisor to discuss job search strategies.
- Meet with HPM Career Services to talk about your career interests.
- Monitor application and on-campus interview deadlines of positions in Careerolina.
- Utilize both University Career Services and SPH events.
- Practice both case and behavioral interviewing.
- Network, network, network.

## **CAREER SERVICES OFFICE**

The Career Services Office is pleased to welcome you to the Department of Health Policy and Management. Our office has developed a set of standards and policies to help guide and govern the recruiting process of the students in this department. We expect students to be professional in conduct and demeanor at all times and encourage you to read carefully the standards and policies listed below and address any questions to our office.

### **Student Professional Standards**

- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.
- Students are expected to obey and support the enforcement of the University Honor Code at all times.
- Students are expected to abide by the Career Services Office guidelines regarding job and internship search policies.
- Students are expected to provide accurate and truthful information to recruiters and organizational representatives. This includes any form of written communication, information presented during an interview or other organizational interaction, and information on a resume.

### **Student Policies**

- Students are expected to arrive for an interview on time, in business attire, and fully prepared. This applies to both on- and off-campus interviews. Students may not cancel an interview less than 48 hours prior except for a medical or other valid reason. If a student accepts another position, a scheduled interview should be cancelled. Students who fail to appear for a scheduled interview will lose their interviewing privileges with the Career Services Office. To reinstate these privileges, students must meet with the Career Services Coordinator to provide an explanation and write a letter of apology to the interviewer.
- Students are expected to accept internship and permanent employment offers with integrity, avoiding all situations involving a renege on an offer that has been accepted. In the event of a difficult situation regarding a job offer, students should talk with their advisor, the Director of Professional Development or the Career Services Coordinator before taking any action. If a student reneges on an accepted offer of employment with an organization, the Career Services Office should be notified immediately. Students who renege on an employment offer will lose all privileges associated with the Career Services Office. The Career Services Office considers renegeing on accepted offers as unethical behavior and not acceptable.

### **Career Services Policies**

- The Career Services Office does not give out personal information regarding students. This includes such restricted information as grades, test scores, and face books.
- The Career Services Office will not be held responsible for false information or representation provided by a student during the recruitment process, either by way of a student's resume or during the interview process.

### **University Honor Code**

It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing, when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity. It shall further be the responsibility of every student to abide by the Campus Code, namely to conduct oneself so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community. (Source: UNC-CH Student Government Code, Article II Section 1)

# DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

## THE MOST EFFECTIVE JOB-SEARCH STRATEGY—NETWORKING

Studies reveal that at least 75% of jobs are acquired through networking. Networking may strike you as a formal process, but it is often nothing more than a conversation with daily contacts.

### YOUR NETWORKING INTRODUCTION

An introduction developed for networking situations may also be suitable as a response to the popular interview request, “Tell me about yourself.” Remember that the goal is to be conversational and less formal, so practice your introduction until it flows naturally.

### INTRODUCTION EXAMPLE

I am a \_\_\_\_\_ at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at UNC-Chapel Hill, majoring in \_\_\_\_\_. I chose HPM because \_\_\_\_\_. Recently, I have been (involved in, worked at, volunteered at, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_, allowing me to strengthen my skills in \_\_\_\_\_. Through classes and projects, I’ve learned \_\_\_\_\_ and I believe I can contribute to the \_\_\_\_\_ of an organization. I’m eager to take the next step in my career and I appreciate having this opportunity to talk with you.

### EXAMPLE OF NETWORKING WITH DAILY CONTACTS

1. **Contact a professor:** “Hi, Dr. Lecture, this is Pat Student—I’m in your Environmental class.”
2. **Ask for help:** “I need some assistance and thought you might be able to help.”
3. **Specify what you are seeking:** “I’m looking for a summer internship with the Water Institute.”
4. **Ask if the professor knows of any possibilities or contacts:** “Do you know of anyone in the Institute that I can talk with about an internship?”
5. **Get the contact information OR ask if the professor will keep you in mind:** “Is there a specific person you suggest I contact?”
6. **Express your gratitude:** “I appreciate your time and help. I will let you know how things go.”

### NETWORKING WITH PEERS

Casual conversations can lead to sharing information about job opportunities around the world. You may hope to move to San Francisco, and a peer who prefers another city may have leads on jobs in that part of California. It’s also good to keep in mind that your classmate today may be in a position to hire you tomorrow. The student organization you’re involved in may be full of potential employers or references.

### NETWORKING WITH PROFESSIONALS AND PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

1. Career Fairs in Fall and Spring, Employer Panels or Guest Speakers in Classes,
2. Employer Information Sessions, Job Shadowing and Informational Interviewing

For information on additional networking opportunities, visit the University Career Services website ([career.unc.edu](http://career.unc.edu)).

### EXAMPLE OF NETWORKING WITH EMPLOYERS

1. **Introduce yourself to the employer:** “Hi, Mr. Gates, I’m Pat Student. Thank you for taking time to come to UNC/HPM to speak with us.”
2. **Show your interest in the field or organization:** “I am very interested in learning more about the internship program you mentioned. Is there an internship coordinator in your organization with whom I might speak?”
3. **Get the contact information and, if appropriate, a recommendation:** “May I say that you referred me to her?”
4. **Express your gratitude:** “Thank you very much, Mr. Gates. And again, thanks for taking time to speak with us.”

## **EFFECTIVE ONLINE NETWORKING**

The following sites are among those recommended for developing your online presence and social networking strategies.

**LINKEDIN (linkedin.com)** Get started by creating your professional profile. Include what you can from the following:

Photo (professional attire, plain background) Education Projects  
Headline (What is your field? What do you want to do?) Skills & Expertise Organizations  
Summary (overview of skills and professional interests) Volunteer Experiences Recommendations  
Experience (jobs held and accomplishments from each) Honors & Awards Photos/Videos that illustrate your work

The LinkedIn site provides a Help Center with information on features and best practices. You might also research ways to use LinkedIn effectively through **linkedintelligence.com**.

**TWITTER** Use a professional-looking avatar and follow potential employers. In your bio, include a link to your online resume or LinkedIn profile where more detailed information can be viewed. By searching keywords on search.twitter.com, you can easily connect with others who share similar interests including people who have the potential to hire you. Follow those recognized as leaders in your field and/or companies that tweet job postings.

**FACEBOOK** You can like employer pages and post appropriate updates about your job search. Visit the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) social jobs partnership: **facebook.com/socialjobs**

**Online networking opportunities have increased, but the essential elements of networking have not changed:**

- Engage in networking activities often (weekly Twitter chats, discussion boards, etc.)
- Keep it from being all about you. Offer to assist someone with a project or provide them with useful information.
- Follow up. This can make or break the relationship and social networking platforms provide convenient opportunities.
- Commit to continuing your networking activities even during stretches that seem unproductive.

## YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Your personal brand is created through your actions, appearance, and words. When interacting in person and online, think about the image you're presenting. Employers look for people who demonstrate professionalism including having respect for themselves and others.

Your brand also includes your unique talents, skills, values, interests, and the contributions you would like to make as a student and professional.

The following questions provide a starting point for you to assess and, if need be, improve your brand. This is not simply an exercise about marketing yourself, but a way to reflect on who you are and the value you can add to society.

What are your natural abilities?

What skills have you developed into strengths?

What are you eager to accomplish or interested in doing?

What are your top values?

How do you demonstrate respect for yourself and others?

How are you viewed by peers? Faculty? Supervisors?

What do your social media/online activities say about you?

What does your body language say about you?

What does your verbal communication say about you?

What are your goals for the next year?



## International Students<sup>1</sup>

International students are permitted to work on-campus as part of their immigration status. However, in order to engage in off-campus employment, students must apply and be approved for employment authorization. There are different types of authorization depending on the purpose of employment and the student's immigration status.

### CPT Information

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a benefit of F-1 immigration status that permits off-campus employment which is an integral part of an established curriculum or which is required for graduation for all students in a particular educational program.

**CPT is typically authorized to allow a student to complete an internship, practicum or field experience that is necessary for degree completion or that will help the student satisfy the academic objectives of the program. An internship which is not required by a student's degree program but may be completed on an elective basis will be approved for CPT only if all of the below criteria are met:**

- You receive academic credit which will be applied toward meeting degree requirements.
- It is related to your major field of study
- It is an integral part of your studies

### Other important guidelines to consider about CPT:

- Students in F-1 status are not eligible to begin any type of off-campus employment, whether it is paid or unpaid, without prior authorization.
- Employment is a "benefit" and available only to students who maintain valid F-1 status prior to the application and through the duration of authorized employment.
- ISSS will authorize CPT only for periods beginning and ending prior to completion of the student's course of study.
- CPT will be approved for one semester at a time; should the student need to participate in an internship or practicum longer in duration than one semester, the student must reapply for another separate CPT authorization for an additional semester.

Students who do not qualify for CPT can look at information regarding Optional Practical Training (OPT) as another option for off-campus employment authorization.

### Eligibility Requirements

Students must be in valid F-1 status at the time of application.

The student must be in good academic standing with UNC-Chapel Hill to be eligible for CPT. Students who are currently on a leave of absence or who are academically ineligible to continue their academic program are not eligible for CPT.

The student must have been lawfully enrolled as a full-time student for at least one full academic year (9 months) with the exception of graduate students enrolled in programs that require participation in training prior to the completion of one full academic year. In limited circumstances, authorized part-time study may count

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<sup>1</sup> All information in this section can be found on the International Student and Scholar Services web page <http://iss.unc.edu/student-employment/on-campus/>

towards this eligibility requirement. This situation should be discussed with an advisor at International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS).

The internship or practicum must be an integral part of an established curriculum and either:

- **required for graduation by all students in a particular educational program OR**
- **required by a course offered in the student's program (in the student's major field of study), in which the student will receive academic credit.**

Qualifying curricular practical training courses MUST:

- carry academic credit that will be applied towards graduation requirements.
- be listed in the school's regular bulletin of course offerings.
- have a faculty member assigned to supervise the course.
- be clearly designated as an internship or practicum course either in the course title or course description.

NOTE: It is particularly important that any employment experience required by the course be instrumental to achieving a curricular academic objective. The following courses do NOT qualify for CPT authorization:

- Independent study courses.
- Internship courses offered within a student's minor.
- Master's or Doctoral level internship courses when the student has already completed coursework. Ph.D. students and students enrolled in a Master's with thesis option are typically INELIGIBLE for CPT if they have completed all coursework and have been approved to register for thesis or dissertation credits only. These students may be eligible for CPT in rare cases where the employment experience is absolutely essential to the completion of thesis or dissertation research.

If CPT authorization is based on a course, the student must enroll in the internship or practicum course during the term in which they plan to complete the training. The period of CPT authorization cannot extend beyond the dates of the semester that the student registers for the course. For example, CPT for a summer internship can only begin after the completion of the spring semester and must end before classes start for the following fall semester.

Training can be authorized either part-time or full-time according to the following scenarios:

- **Part-time training:** Employment for 20 hours or less per week. Students who are enrolled for classes can only be approved for part time CPT. The amount of time authorized for part-time CPT does not impact a student's eligibility for other practical training benefits such as Optional Practical Training (OPT). The student must be simultaneously enrolled and careful to limit work to no more than 20 hours per week in order to maintain lawful F-1 status.
- **Full-time training:** Employment for more than 20 hours per week. In general, students are eligible for full-time CPT during the school's annual vacation (summer or winter break) if the student intends to register for the next semester. Students are ineligible for OPT if authorized for more than 12 months of full-time CPT at the same education level.

F-1 Exchange Students and other non-degree students at UNC-Chapel Hill are **not eligible** for CPT.

## Application Process

We recommend that students submit completed applications to ISSS as early as possible, at least 2-3 weeks in advance of the employment start date. Students may **not** begin employment until the CPT has been approved in SEVIS and a new I-20 has been issued.

Students must submit application materials to ISSS during [walk-in advising hours](#). After submission to ISSS, if approved, ISSS requests 2-3 weeks processing time to issue the new Form I-20 authorizing CPT. The student will be contacted via email once the document is ready and will be expected to come to ISSS to sign the new I-20.

## OPT Information

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a benefit of F-1 status that permits off-campus employment for the purpose of gaining practical experience in the student's major field of study as indicated on the Form I-20.

OPT authorization allows the student to work for any employer in the United States, so long as the job duties are directly related to the student's major area of study and commensurate with the student's educational level. Practical training experiences that are unpaid are also permitted within certain limitations.

OPT is recommended by an ISSS advisor but authorization is granted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Official authorization comes in the form of an ID card known as an **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)**. It may take up to 3 months or longer for USCIS to issue an EAD (OPT approval). Students may **not** begin employment until they have received the EAD and until the start date indicated on the EAD.

An F-1 student completing an Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral degree in the U.S. is eligible to apply for a total of 12 months of full-time OPT at that degree level. Once a student has been authorized for 12 months of OPT at a particular educational level, that student only becomes eligible for another 12 months of practical training when he or she changes to a higher educational level. For example, students who use 12 months of OPT during a Master's program are eligible for another 12 months of OPT if they move on to a Doctoral program, but not if they move on to a second Master's program or Bachelor's program. Students who have been authorized for 12 months of OPT based on terminal degrees, such as PhD, D.D.S. J.D., PharmD, etc. are not eligible to receive additional OPT since all terminal degrees are considered equivalent in level.

OPT work authorization may be used either before or after degree completion, or a combination of the two, but eligibility for Pre-Completion OPT and Post-Completion OPT combined is limited to a total of 12 months of authorization.

To be eligible for OPT, a student:

- Must be in valid F-1 status at the time of application.
- Must have been lawfully enrolled as a full-time degree-seeking student for at least one full academic year (9 months).
- Must be in good academic standing with UNC-Chapel Hill. Students who are currently on a leave of absence are not eligible for OPT.
- Must not have engaged in 12 months or more of Curricular Practical Training (CPT). If a student has engaged in a total of 12 months of full-time CPT during a program of study, the student is not eligible for OPT for that program.

**NOTE:** F-1 exchange students and other non-degree students at UNC-Chapel Hill are **not eligible** for OPT.

A job offer at the time of application is not required. However, any OPT period approved by USCIS will count against the total standard 12-month period of OPT allowed per educational level, regardless of whether the student ever secured an employment position.

There are two types of OPT:

- **Pre-Completion OPT** is training that will be completed before graduation, either during the academic year (fall and spring semesters, when a student may be authorized to work 20 hours or less per week) or during school vacations such as summer or winter break (when a student may be authorized to work full-time).
- **Post-Completion OPT** is full-time training that will commence after the student has completed their program.

Post-Completion OPT may be extended beyond 12 months in only two ways:

- **STEM Extension:** Students who have graduated in eligible STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) may be eligible to apply for a 17-month extension of OPT.
- **Cap-Gap Extension:** Students with a receipted or approved H-1B change of status application filed with USCIS by a cap-subject employer may be eligible for an extension of OPT from their original OPT expiration date to the effective date of their H-1B status.

Please review application information for OPT and CPT that can be found at <http://iss.unc.edu/student-employment/on-campus/> and speak to an advisor at International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) if you have any questions.

**YOUR RESUME  
MADE SIMPLE**

## BUILDING YOUR RESUME

Begin with a comprehensive resume and then tailor it for each position you apply for.

### Purpose of a Resume

- A resume is a summary of professional and educational qualifications designed to show an individual's suitability for a desired position.
- A resume is not meant to detail every aspect of your academic or work experience.
- An effective resume is developed after a self-appraisal to determine which past and present accomplishments should be stressed in order to indicate potential to future employers.
- **The intended result of a resume is not a job, but to receive a job interview.**
- Employers will most likely skim through your resume, so it is imperative that it be well organized with an emphasis on your most important/relevant successes and related experiences.
- Remember that a good resume will not get you a job and that a bad resume will not get you an interview!

### HPM GUIDELINES

Below is a list of guidelines to follow when developing your resume. Please adhere strictly to these guidelines, as they are generally specific to healthcare and/or necessary for the purposes of our resume book.

- Select your most impressive achievements (step one for paring your resume down to **one** page).
- **One page only** (no exceptions).<sup>2</sup>
- At least a 0.8-inch margin on the left and right side of your paper – equal white space all around.
- Reverse chronological format:
  1. Education (Scholarships and Academic Honors or Societies—may be included in this section)
  2. Experience (use month and year in the dates)
  3. Skills: computer, language, and professional certifications
  4. Activities & Interests or Activities & Honors (avoid overt religious/political activities always!)
- **NOTE: Bachelor of Science in Public Health not Bachelors of Science**
- We are the Gillings School of Global Public Health, Department of Health Policy and Management.
- No font can be smaller than 11 pt for first years/juniors and 10 pt for second years/seniors.
- Use bullets rather than paragraphs (when possible, have two to four bullets).
- Avoid vertical and horizontal lines, graphics and boxes.
- Avoid fancy treatments such as italics, shadows, and reverse (white letters on black background).
- Use standard typefaces such as Times New Roman, Garamond, Arial, etc.
- Undergraduates should minimize high school entries and graduates should minimize early undergraduate entries.
- Internships or elected positions (paid and unpaid) may count as experience items.
- Never include the phrase, "*References available upon request.*"
- Try to avoid lengthy gaps in time (have explanations for interview).
- Do not include non-relevant personal information such as names of children, maiden name of spouse, hometown, etc.
- Have a third party critique the resume for errors and gaps (get as many eyes on it as possible- spell check is unreliable).
- Use good quality **white or cream** paper, **not** printer paper.
- Be truthful and accurate (you are marketing yourself!).

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<sup>2</sup> After graduation, a 2 or 3 page resume may be appropriate to help you present your additional skills and accomplishments.

## RESUME GUIDELINES

### FORMAT

- \_\_\_\_\_ One page
- \_\_\_\_\_ Name at top of page and bolded
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11-point font minimum, Times New Roman preferred.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Even margins all around - ample white space, well balanced.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Formatting consistent throughout the resume
- \_\_\_\_\_ Headings and statements evenly spaced

### EDUCATION

- \_\_\_\_\_ The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill, NC at the right margin) bolded and all caps. Be sure to check spelling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor of Science in Public Health, degree expected 20xx.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Current activities/awards/honors included.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other degrees should follow. Formatted the same as UNC information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ GPA can be included if above average (3.5/4.0).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure blend of leadership, scholarships, academic honors, study abroad

### EXPERIENCE

- \_\_\_\_\_ Company/division in bold, city and state flush with other city/state combinations. Company name in all caps.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide brief company description if necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Title in italics (not all caps).
- \_\_\_\_\_ General job description follows title. Provide "overview" of responsibilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bulleted phrases are accomplishment/achievement oriented. Focus on result and action (bullets are stronger when the lead with the result).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each bullet should start with a verb, be clear and be truthful. Use words meaningful to the reader. Avoid technical jargon. Quantify with numbers when possible.

### SKILLS

- \_\_\_\_\_ List all computer skills and language skills. Put proficiency level if possible.

### ACTIVITIES/ORGANIZATIONS

- \_\_\_\_\_ Include involvement in professional rather than personal organizations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include any charitable involvement or fundraising work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Note several personal items to demonstrate well roundedness, but focus on activities that show action, i.e., "Enjoy running, biking, skiing, cooking." (look for balance)

### MISCELLANIOUS

- \_\_\_\_\_ Verb tenses in present tense for current jobs or past tense for previous jobs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Objective statement is clear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure resume is free from spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.

## TRANSFERABLE FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Transferable functional skills are those you can apply in a variety of situations. Recognizing skills you possess and identifying ones you would like to develop helps your career planning in several ways. You can research professions that will allow you to use your skills in a rewarding way, you can create a plan for developing desired skills, and you can tell networking contacts and potential employers how your skills will fit with your target profession and organization. Below are examples.

Assembling things	Handling detail work	Investigating problems
Compiling statistics	Writing reports	Selling products
Comprehending ideas	Interpreting languages	Remembering information
Coaching individuals	Persuading others	Drafting reports
Making decisions	Conducting meetings	Operating equipment
Inventing new ideas	Confronting others	Dispensing information
Inspecting physical objects	Motivating others	Conducting interviews
Compiling statistics	Handling complaints	Deciding uses of money
Interacting with people	Entertaining people	Collecting money
Delegating responsibilities	Supervising employees	Maintaining accurate records
Coordinating schedules	Adapting to new procedures	Analyzing problems
Gathering information	Thinking in a logical manner	Resolving conflicts
Editing	Writing creatively	Auditing
Organizing data	Writing speeches	Speaking to groups
Working with children	Developing plans	Planning social events
Following the stock market	Understanding other cultures	Summarizing information
Writing letters	Writing proposals	Managing a group
Raising funds	Recruiting volunteers	Estimating physical space
Mediating between people	Defining a problem	Promoting events
Teaching	Using scientific rules/methods	Evaluating performance
Listening actively	Managing financial resources	Drafting budgets
Gardening	Writing computer programs	Designing websites
Improving efficiency	Building teams	Collecting data
Making others feel comfortable	Working with animals	Providing care to others
Enforcing policies	Working in a fast-paced setting	Designing clothes
Taking photos	Playing musical instrument(s)	Following detailed directions
Staying on budget	Debating	Evaluating costs/benefits
Breaking down complex problems	Seeing the big picture	Meeting tight deadlines
Training others	Adapting to changes	Networking with people
Talking easily with people at all levels	Following up on details	Designing flyers/ads
Arranging furniture	Prioritizing tasks	Identifying potential in others
Preparing food	Observing behavior	Using math to solve problems
Empathizing with others	Interpreting information	Synthesizing data
Building furniture	Designing an audio system	Serving as a travel guide
Finding markets for new products	Repairing electronics	Caring for those who are ill



## SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Self-management skills relate to how you respond to life situations, how you interact with others, how you relate to your environment, etc. Some may come so naturally to you that they seem more like traits than skills. The fact is, they all require practice. They are transferable because they can be developed and demonstrated in all areas of life. In cases where task-oriented skills can be refined on the job, employers will prioritize candidates with proven self-management skills that fit the job and organization. Below are examples.

Adaptable	Determined	Nurturing	Sincere
Adventurous	Easygoing	Observant	Sociable
Alert	Effective	Open-minded	Spontaneous
Ambitious	Efficient	Orderly	Stable
Analytical	Eloquent	Original	Sturdy
Appreciative	Empathetic	Outgoing	Successful
Articulate	Energetic	Patient	Sympathetic
Artistic	Enterprising	Peaceful	Tactful
Assertive	Enthusiastic	Perceptive	Tenacious
Attentive to Detail	Ethical	Persistent	Thorough
Balanced	Expressive	Persuasive	Thoughtful
Broad-minded	Fair-minded	Poised	Tolerant
Businesslike	Flexible	Polite	Tough-minded
Calm	Forceful	Positive	Trustworthy
Candid	Formal	Practical	Truthful
Careful	Frugal	Precise	Understanding
Charitable	Generous	Proactive	Verbal
Cheerful	Genial	Productive	Versatile
Clear	Gentle	Protective	Vigorous
Clever	Gregarious	Prudent	Virtuous
Competent	Helpful	Punctual	Vivacious
Competitive	Humorous	Purposeful	Warm
Confident	Imaginative	Quick	Wise
Congenial	Independent	Rational	Zealous
Conscientious	Industrious	Realistic	
Consistent	Intelligent	Reasonable	
Cooperative	Intentional	Reflective	
Courageous	Judicious	Reliable	
Courteous	Kind	Reserved	
Creative	Literary	Responsible	
Curious	Logical	Responsive	
Decisive	Loyal	Self-starting	
Deliberate	Methodical	Sensitive	



## **POWER WORDS for YOUR RESUME**

Resume writers often use a passive approach in describing their experiences. Most employers do not want to see “responsibilities include...” They want to know what actions you take (or took) in your role, whether an intern, part-time employee, organization member, or volunteer. Use power verbs to effectively communicate your experiences. Be sure to use the correct tense for current and former experiences. Below are some examples.

### **GENERAL LIST**

ACCOMPLISHED	IMPROVED	PROJECTED	ACHIEVED	DEBATED
INCLUDED	PROMOTED	ADVISED	INCREASED	APPRAISED
DEFINED	DELIVERED	INSTRUCTED	BRIEFED	CLOSED
DEMONSTRATED	INSURED	BUDGETED	INTERPRETED	RECOGNIZED
CALCULATED	EARNED	INTERVIEWED	RECOMMENDED	EDITED
INTRODUCED				

### **PLANNING-BASED-ACTION WORDS**

ADMINISTERED	ANTICIPATED	COMMISSIONED	DETERMINED	DEVELOPED
DEvised	EVALUATED	FORECASTED	FORMULATED	IDENTIFIED
OBSERVED	PLANNED	PREPARED	PRIORITIZED	RESEARCHED
REVISED	STRATEGIZED	STUDIED	TAILORED	

### **ORGANIZING-ACTION WORDS**

ACQUIRED	ACTIVATED	ADJUSTED	ALLOCATED	ALTERED
APPOINTED	ARRANGED	ASSEMBLED	CENTRALIZED	COLLECTED
COMMITTED	CONFIRMED	COORDINATED	CUSTOMIZED	DESIGNED
ESTABLISHED	FACILITATED	IMPLEMENTED	OBTAINED	ORGANIZED

### **EXECUTING-ACTION WORDS**

ACTED	COLLECTED	COMPLETED	CONDUCTED	DISPLAYED
DISTRIBUTED	INSTALLED	PERFORMED	PROCESSED	PRODUCED
PROOFED	SOLD	TRANSACTIONED	CARRIED OUT	

### **SUPERVISING-ACTION WORDS**

ADJUSTED	ANALYZED	APPORTIONED	ASSESSED	COMPARED
CONTROLLED	CORRECTED	DISCOVERED	ESTABLISHED	MAINTAINED
MEASURED	MODIFIED	MONITORED	OVERSAW	REVIEWED
REVISED	SUPERVISED			

### **LEADING-ACTION WORDS**

ACCELERATED	ASSUMED	CHAired	CHANGED	CONDUCTED
DIRECTED	ENLISTED	FOUNDED	HIRED	LED
MANAGED	MENTORED	STRENGTHENED	SUPERVISED	TRAINED

## Useful Phrases

The following phrases may help with organizing your accomplishment statements for both **resumes** and employment **correspondence**. When choosing the phrase that best describes the situation, read it over once or twice in the context of the sentence to be certain that the selection is correct and that the sentence reads well.

Proven track record of/in . . .  
Specific responsibilities/functions/duties included . . .  
Experience involved/included . . .  
In addition to . . . responsible for . . .  
Contacted/Subcontracted by . . . to  
More than . . . years' extensive and diverse experience in . . .  
Demonstrated expertise in . . .  
Extensively trained in . . .  
Extensively involved in . . .  
Initially employed to/joined organization to . . .  
Specialized in . . .  
Total accountability/totally accountable for . . .  
Temporarily assigned to/temporary assignments included . . .  
Acted/Functioned as . . .  
Provided technical assistance to . . .  
On an ongoing/regular basis  
Ensured maximum/optimum/minimum . . .  
Provided valuable/invaluable . . .  
Interacted heavily with . . .  
Promoted from . . . to . . .  
Provided liaison for/between . . .  
Promoted to . . .  
Function to . . .  
Accountable to . . .  
Succeeded in . . .  
Selected as/elected to . . .  
Reported to /Reported directly to . . .  
Honored as . . .  
Consistently . . .  
Allowing/enabling the . . .  
Representing a . . .  
Facilitating a . . .  
Saving the organization an average of . . .  
Regularly undertook . . .  
Concerned directly with . . .  
Served/Operated as . . .  
Now involved in . . .  
Assigned to . . .

# Contents of a Resume

## HEADING

### **Name, email address, mailing address, and phone number**

- Include both your home and school addresses.
- Number where you can be reached during the day — be sure you have a professional sounding message on your machine.
- Name in bold face type.
- Name in all CAPITALS and no larger than 14 font.

## EDUCATION

### **Complete name of institution, location, degree and dates**

- Begin with most recent degree you have earned or are pursuing (usually the highest).
- Include date (year) of degree completion, not all dates of attendance.
- Include expected date of completion if you are still in school (Bachelor of Science in Public Health, expected May 2017).
- Omit your GPA if you want to unless you are applying to a graduate school, specifically asked to include it, or your GPA  $\geq 3.5/4.0$ .
- Make sure to indicate if the GPA is your *MAJOR GPA* or your *OVERALL GPA*
- Correctly state degree names: Master of Healthcare Administration, Master of Science in Public Health, Master of Public Health, Bachelor of Science in Public Health.
- Include scholarships, awards, majors and minors, honors, honors thesis, honor societies.

## EXPERIENCE

### **Organization name, location (city, state), job title, dates (month, year), responsibilities and accomplishments (“PAR” see page 9)**

- Include all relevant work experience, paid or unpaid.
- Account for every year. Don't leave gaps in total years worked or studied (there may be more inconsistency for undergraduate years).
- Be consistent with employment dates, January 2011 to July 2022 or Jan 2011 to Jul 2012.
- Be generic with job titles (Office Assistant might not mean as much to an employer as it means to you). But make sure they reflect responsibility. Use *working titles* when state or federal government jobs have been held.
- Include the organizational unit in which you worked, if you think it would mean more to an employer.
- QUANTIFY all accomplishments.
- Use ACTION VERBS. Be more descriptive than "helped or assisted" (refer to list on p.11).
- Use “PAR” with results focus (see p. 9).

## SKILLS

### **Computer, Language, and Professional Certifications**

## ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS (Can substitute Honors or Professional Affiliations)

### **Organization's name and affiliation**

- Include involvement in professional rather than personal organizations so that your professional, not personal, life is reflected.
- Include charitable involvement and fundraising work. These show a willingness to involve oneself and can often demonstrate valuable abilities.
- Note several personal interests to demonstrate well roundedness, but focus on activities that show action, i.e., “Enjoy running, hiking, skiing, etc.”

## Resume Samples

BSPH (paragraph)

**Your Name**  
Your email address

School Address  
511 Pritchard St.  
Chapel Hill, NC 27502  
555-555-1234

Permanent Address  
300 Bordeaux Lane  
Cary, NC 27511

## EDUCATION

### University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill, NC

Bachelor of Science in Public Health, *expected graduation May 2016*  
Chemistry Minor, Pre-Dental, Dean's List, National Leadership Scholarship  
GPA 3.78

## EXPERIENCE

### Dr. Robert Moran and Dr. Richard Brooks Pediatric Dental Practice

Cary, NC

*Laboratory Technician, April 2014- August 2014*

Managed all sterilization, pre-patient set up, and radiology development areas of the practice, including composing and arranging all extraction, composite and prophylaxis cleaning set ups. Assisted hygienist staff and expanded duties to include chair side assistance to the dentists. Gained valuable knowledge of business practices, dental office terms and codes, Statim, Ultraclave, and radiology equipment, and OSHA/HIPPA regulations.

### Alamance Country Health Department

Burlington, NC

*Office staff and Dental assistant, March 2014- Present*

Handle opening office duties, patient check in, organization of files and closing office duties in a free dental clinic that specializes in the Hispanic population. Set up sterilization lab, radiology lab and assume duties of changing over chairs. Distribute after extraction care instructions to patients in English and Spanish.

### North Carolina Leadership School

Chapel Hill, NC

*Emerging Leaders Program, September 2014-Present*

Participate in leadership seminars and workshops to develop skills of effective leadership in multicultural environments. Gain experience with group dynamics, individual leadership styles, skills in communication, and group management.

### UNC Campus Y

Chapel Hill, NC

*Freshman Camp Staff, 2013- Present*

*Freshman Camp Counselor 2012-2013*

Organize and deliver a three day bonding experience for incoming freshman. As staff, delegate certain duties to my respective committee and work on increasing morale at camp and in counselor/camper relations.

### Carolina Union Activities Board

*NewSounds Committee recording secretary 2004-Present; member 2013-2014*

Promote a wide variety of local and regional musical acts and organize showcases to bring to campus. Record minutes at each weekly meeting and distribute through e-mail.

## SKILLS

Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel

## ACTIVITIES

Alpha Delta Pi Sorority, University of North Carolina, *Dance Marathon Representative*

NC Missions of Mercy, volunteer to provide dental care to underinsured in North Carolina

North Carolina Outward Bound Leadership School

Medical Missions International dental trip to the Dominican Republic

**Your Name**  
Your email@email.unc.edu

School Address  
303 University Commons Apt. E33  
Carrboro, NC 27510  
555-222-3344

Permanent Address  
100 Regal Court  
Henry, NC 27511  
234-456-1234

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**EDUCATION**                      **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**  
Bachelor of Science in Public Health degree in Health Policy and Management,  
Expected Graduation in May 2016

**EXPERIENCE**                      **Intern in Insurance Department,** Raleigh Ear, Nose, and Throat                      Raleigh, NC  
May-August 2014

- Entered patient insurance information into the computer system
- Filed insurance claims and aided with handling denials
- Compiled insurance benefits for allergy patients
- Administered check-in procedures when necessary
- Communicated with insurance companies and patients on a regular basis
- Gained knowledge of the field through discussions with colleagues

**Emergency Medical Technician,** Young Life’s Oakbridge                      Ramona, CA  
July to August 2013

- Gave middle school children medical attention as needed, day or night
- Served as the only on-call medical technician
- Collaborated with a registered nurse on a weekly basis
- Prepared medical paperwork for patient and insurance records

**Facility Manager,** H.E.E.L.S. For Health                      Chapel Hill, NC  
January to April 2013

- Attended to recreational needs of faculty patrons
- Serviced fitness machinery for basic maintenance
- Required to be CPR certified

**SKILLS**                      Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Internet Research, Study of Spanish

**ACTIVITIES**                      UNC-Chapel Hill

- Bible Study leader in Campus Crusade for Christ
- American College of Healthcare Executives member
- Womentoring Program
- Volunteer at Rose Manor Nursing Home
- Volunteer at the Community School for People Under 6
- Secretary and Treasurer of American Medical Students Association (AMSA)
- Pre-Medical Chapter
- UNC Hospitals Volunteer
- Student Health Action Coalition Volunteer

## **CREATING A SCANNER-FRIENDLY (TEXT) RESUME**

Organizations receiving a large volume of resumes may need to store them electronically and may use scanning hardware or software for the initial resume screening. The following tips can help you create a resume that appeals to the human eye while also being readable by scanners.

- Use a sans serif font like Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, or Verdana. The characters in serif fonts like Times New Roman are likely to touch, and this increases the likelihood of your resume being misread by scanners.
- Avoid enhancements like italics, bold type, underlining, parentheses, boxes, graphics, and lines.
- Avoid a two-column format.
- Apply 11- or 12-point font size except for your name and possibly the section headings. These may be larger to stand out more.
- If mailing your scannable resume, print with jet black ink on high-quality, solid, light paper and do not fold or staple.
- If sending via e-mail, attach as a Word document or include the resume in the body of your e-mail.

## **REFERENCES**

Some employers will ask you to provide a list of references from individuals who will be able to tell about your skills, work habits, and other qualifications. Generally, you will be asked to give a minimum of three references. Consider supervisors, faculty members and advisors of organizations with which you are involved when you are identifying potential references. Employers want to hear from someone who knows your work habits and can talk about your performance.

Ask your selected contacts if they are willing to serve in this role prior to listing them. Provide them with a copy of your resume so they have an idea of your various experiences and the skills you are presenting to employers. You may also want to give them a brief overview of the job and requirements. Occasionally, employers will ask you to provide letters of recommendation. Be sure to give your references all the accurate contact information and ample time (two weeks if possible) to write a letter and send it by the deadline. You may want to follow up with your references to offer a gentle reminder that the deadline is approaching.



# COVER LETTERS

## HPM Cover Letter Guidelines

### Introduction

A cover letter should accompany your resume whenever you are mailing or e-mailing a resume to a prospective employer. This letter is your opportunity to specify which skills and experiences that appear on your general resume match the needs of this employer. The contents should supplement and highlight - not repeat - the data included in your resume. Along with your resume, this is your first "writing sample." Make sure it is organized, easy to read, and free of any grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors.

### What employers are looking for:

A sincere interest in their organization.

A knowledgeable applicant who has taken the time to research them.

Reasons why they should hire you.

Individualized cover letters to each employer are ideal because of the initiative, effort and professionalism they convey. While it is acceptable to use a basic written structure with each of your cover letters, using the **same** cover letter or a "mass-mailing" application letter is obvious and often ineffective.

130 Beechwood Drive  
Carrboro, NC 27510

January 21, 2014

Ms. Michelle Westrom  
Marketing Director  
The Heritage of Raleigh  
5950 Falls of the Neuse Road  
Raleigh, NC 27609

Dear Ms. Westrom:

I am a senior in the BSPH Program in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am writing to express my interest in a full-time position at The Heritage of Raleigh. Specifically, I am most interested in working in marketing, preferably in local community outreach.

During the first part of my internship last summer at Deloitte Consulting, I worked on the redesign and implementation plan for a state hospital marketing campaign directed at the local community and its residents. I spent the rest of my time at Deloitte working with a large extended care facility and developed an interest in logistics, particularly as it impacts direct-to-customer sales.

Please consider me for a slot on your closed interview list. Enclosed you will find a copy of my resume for your review. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sally Student

Enclosure

## Strategies For Cover Letter Writing

### Convey Interest in and Knowledge of the Organization

- Refer to events in the organization or interests of the reader.
- Refer to recent conversations, published comments, or networking referral.

### Highlight Resume Points (particularly results/impact)

- Support your claims with resume illustrations.
- Unsupported claims don't say much.
- Can use letter to "customize" resume to position.

### Example

**OK:** *I revitalized the marketing department.*

**Better:** *By streamlining office procedures and introducing weekly staff meetings, department morale improved and participation increased. We posted a 16 percent rise in productivity the first month after I instituted these new measures.*

### Communicate Motivation and Interest

Note that motivation can be conveyed by statements and by the vigor of your writing.

**Example** *With my analytical and coordination skills, I believe I could be an integral part of your organization's continued success.*

### Demonstrate a "Fit" with Employer/Position (when possible and appropriate)

**Example** *Glaxo is seeking marketing expertise and creativity in its interns. During my six years of marketing and advertising experience, I have developed strong skills in these areas.*

### Common Mistakes

- Using a self-oriented approach (focused on why you chose a field or what the organization can do for you).

**Example** *I am undertaking my BSPH studies with an emphasis in finance so that I may gain a better understanding of the financial strategies of a large hospital. Of particular interest to me is UNC Hospitals' finance division. My previous work experience as a highly successful accountant in the competitive consulting industry lends credibility to my desire to remain in finance. (Instead, focus on what you bring to the organization, not what you get out of it.)*

- Relying on hyperbolic statements (exaggerating reactions, qualifications and potential). At the least, your sincerity can be questioned; at the most, you can come across as pretentious or foolish.

**Example** *The perpetuity and stability of the Carolinas HealthCare System is of paramount importance to society as a whole, for a great void would be left with no relief in sight.*

## Strategies for Applicant "Problem" Situations

- If you have no/very little related work experience:
  - Draw parallels between seemingly unrelated experience and the job; make the link for the reader.
  - Focus on skills and functions (rather than job titles and organization names).
  - Expand on outside interests, memberships, extracurricular activities, etc. that relate to the job.
  
- If you have had little or no upward advancement (such as a series of lateral moves):
  - Choose examples of achievement that indicate advancement in expertise and abilities.
  - Use strong action words to underscore vigor and motivation.
  - Emphasize how duties expanded and responsibilities increased.
  - Note self-initiative at key points in your career.
  
- If you have had a period of unemployment:
  - General Rule: Don't address it in a cover letter (especially if you were fired). Most explanations tend to be long-winded, drawing further attention to the issue. Be prepared to address the employment gap in an interview (including any phone discussions before the interview meeting).
  - Focus on consulting projects or part-time jobs to fill in gaps in employment. You do not have to be working 40+ hours a week in a formal organization setting to be gaining experience.

## Tips on Cover Letter Writing

- Follow a typical business letter format; there should be an inside address for the recipient along with current date (see examples of cover letters).
- Address your letter to a person, not a title, and preferably to a person who is in a position to make a hiring decision. If that is not possible, use "Dear Hiring Manager:" or "Dear Human Resources Manager:". Try not to use "To Whom It May Concern:" as this is considered outdated.
- Type the letter and keep to **ONE PAGE ONLY!**
- Use a standard font like Times New Roman, Garamond, Arial, etc.
- Create a visually appealing letter.
- Use high quality **white or cream** bond paper. The paper for your cover letter should match your resume paper.
- If you are mailing your cover letter, sign your name with a bold and assertive signature. Black ink is preferred although blue is acceptable. If you are uploading your resume, consider scanning your signature.
- Make sure your cover letter answers the following: who you are, why you are applying (interest in the position, practice, location), how you qualify for the position both professionally and personally, what you know about their firm/department/organization and when you intend to follow up to arrange an interview.
- Limit the use of sentences beginning with "I."
- Keep the sentence structure simple and concise; don't use flowery language or clichés.
- Don't indicate you are a "hard worker" without giving examples from your activities or experiences that demonstrate your "hard-worker" quality.
- Don't indicate you will follow up and then fail to follow up! Appropriate follow-up can lead to more interviews than leaving the follow-up to the employer.
- **PROOF, PROOF AND REPROOF!** Typographical or grammatical errors are intolerable and indicate carelessness; have the CSO, an academic advisor, or trusted friend offer objective advice on the letter.

## Cover Letter Format

Street Address (*applicant*)  
City, State Zip

Date

Addressee  
Title  
Employer Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

### **(OPENING PARAGRAPH)**

Introduce yourself by stating who you are, what position you are seeking and how you found out about the organization. This would be the place to mention any networking contacts you might have.

### **(MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS)**

A. Say why you want to work for this PARTICULAR EMPLOYER. Show what you know about them. Research the organization. Do not send out generic letters that look like you just changed the employer name each time.

B. Tell employer why they should be interested in hiring you, i.e., what you can do for them, not just what they can do for you. Talk about relevant skills and experiences. As with resume writing, think about transferable skills. You may use this opportunity to include information not on your resume and/or to elaborate on or highlight some items from your resume. (*Be careful not to repeat your entire resume*)

### **(CLOSING PARAGRAPH)**

Thank them for their consideration. Provide the employer with your phone number and offer to provide any additional information they might be interested in receiving. Let them know if you intend to follow up and when. Tell them if you are going to be in their city and when, or if you would be willing to visit their organization to talk about the position.

Sincerely,

*Name Signed*

Name Typed

Enclosure

## Examples

Example Cover Letter (suggested by network contact)

111 Park Place  
Durham, NC 27707

May 27, 2012

Mr. Martin Danaher  
Chief Operating Officer  
University Healthcare Associates  
Oxford Place, Suite 3500  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Danaher:

My former college roommate, Celia Leonard, suggested that I contact you in reference to the Materials Management position currently available in your organization. I recently discovered your listing of this position in the *Modern Healthcare* classified section.

Following my graduation from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with an BSPH degree in Health Policy and Management, I began working at Ocala Regional Medical Center as an Assistant Materials Manager. Since that time, I have helped reduced equipment costs by 18%, increased the use of competitive bidding with net savings to the bottom line of \$50,000 per year, and completed my own database for inventory tracking.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in person and will call you next week to arrange an appointment. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

(signature)

Emily Detleffs

Enclosure

## Example Cover Letter (advertised position)

14 Montree Lane  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

January 22, 2013

Ms. Mary Beth Lister  
DHHS Immunization Program  
1917 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1917

Dear Ms. Lister:

I am writing in response to an internship opportunity advertised to students in my department in the School of Public Health at UNC-Chapel Hill via email. Currently, I am a junior in the Bachelor of Science in Public Health Program in Health Policy and Management. Attached is a copy of my resume and references.

At this point in my professional education and development, I am interested in applying some of my skills and knowledge learned in the classroom to real-life situations and research. These skills include strategic planning and data analysis. In terms of practical experience, I worked as a research intern at a surgical clinic and learned how to collect primary source data. In addition, I recently started working on an immunization strategy project to identify the efficacy of patient recall/reminder systems to improve rates of immunization and vaccination among children and older adults. As an intern, my hope is to help identify and address the problems or issues that lead to a disparity in immunization rates among different ethnic groups.

Working in the areas of immunizations and preventive medicine are two career interests of mine. This internship would provide a great experience in beginning to build a strong foundation in this area of public health. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to interview for this position. I will telephone you later this week to discuss the matter further.

Sincerely yours,

*(signature)*

William Whitley

Enclosure



## Example Cover Letter (referred position)

30 Bell Circle  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

March 28, 2013

Stephen H. Bandeian, MD, JD  
Medical Director, Strategic Policy and Analysis  
MAMSI  
4 Taft Court  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Bandeian:

Our career services coordinator, Cathy Padgett, who recently spoke with you at the UNC School of Public Health Career Fair, referred me to you. She briefly explained to me that an Assistant Project Manager position might become available with MAMSI's office in North Carolina. I would be very interested in learning more about this position. As a senior in the Bachelor of Science in Public Health Program who is graduating in May, I am seeking a job opportunity that will allow me to remain active in health care policy analysis, an interest and knowledge base that I have been able to develop during my education at UNC-Chapel Hill.

My employment history illustrates my interest and involvement in health care policy analysis. Last summer, I worked at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) on a project directly related to hospital utilization rates of uninsured persons and individuals covered by Medicaid. Currently, I am working at the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research where I am surveying state agencies to determine the successes and failures of the Medicare Flexibility Program.

I am willing to undertake new opportunities and responsibilities. This same perspective has helped me succeed in previous employment positions by continually being open to new experiences. I have successfully completed all these experiences appreciating the importance of teamwork, organization, and deadlines. As a highly motivated and competent individual, I believe I would be an asset to MAMSI.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss the possible job opening as well as my interests with you. I have included my resume for your reference. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,  
(signature)

Catherine McClure

## Example Cover Letter (advertised position)

214 Williams Dorm  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599  
January 20, 2013

Ms. Sarah Mitchell  
UNC Hospitals Department of Pediatrics  
509 Burnett-Womack Building  
CB# 7525  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Dear Ms. Mitchell:

I am writing to express my interest in interviewing for the summer internship position in your department. I first learned of the opportunity through our career services coordinator, Cathy Padgett.

Presently, I am a junior in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The UNC Hospitals Department of Pediatrics appeals to me because it offers the dynamic and larger environment that I am looking for in the next step of my career path.

As my resume indicates, I am currently an intern at Carrboro Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. I am responsible for reconciling patient accounts, evaluating reimbursement trends by insurance companies, developing a policy and procedure manual, and performing front office duties such as filing, scheduling appointments, and generating referrals and record releases.

In addition, I have worked as an assistant manager at the Days Inn in Chapel Hill. My role required strong leadership and analytical skills, the ability to work with small teams, and significant self-motivation. I believe that these experiences, along with my strong academic performance, will allow me to make a significant contribution to the Department of Pediatrics at UNC Hospitals.

A copy of my resume is enclosed. I would like to discuss my qualifications with you at your convenience. Please contact me at 919-555-1234 or [dpattel@email.unc.edu](mailto:dpattel@email.unc.edu). I will contact you next week to follow up. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*(signature)*

Drew Pattel

Enclosure: Resume

# **ADDITIONAL JOB SEARCH CORRESPONDENCE**

## Additional Job Search Correspondence

### Networking Letters

#### *Purpose of Networking Letters:*

- Set the stage for a personal introduction or informational interview.
- Acquaint the person with your qualifications in advance of your phone call or meeting.

#### *Objectives of Networking Letters:*

- Create an open and comfortable atmosphere between yourself and the contact where he/she is willing to share information with you.
- Provide sufficient information about yourself and your career aims so the person can provide meaningful help.

#### *Key Elements (order may vary, depending on situation):*

- Personalized opening paragraph that builds rapport. Include name of the person who has referred you and the basis of your relationship.
- Explanation of how referral came about.
- Reasoning for job/career change or for career focus.
- General notation as to how this individual can assist you.
- Brief overall summary of qualifications.
- Action statement to initiate next step.
- Statement of appreciation.

### Follow-Up/Thank-You Letters

Interviews/meetings or phone calls must be followed up with a thank-you letter. Letters should also be written following interactions (within 24 hours) with recruiters at job fairs and corporate presentations. These letters can be sent via email but should be followed up with a hand-written note if possible since this makes you stand out in a positive way. (Almost no one sends a handwritten letter anymore.)

In a thank-you letter, be sure to:

- Re-establish rapport: acknowledge the interview/meeting or call and convey insightful impression(s)/reaction(s).
- Reiterate your key selling points (about two) and their fit to the position or organization.
- Reinforce interest.
- Include information requested by interviewer, if appropriate.
- Note (or remind of) next step.
- As always, keep the message brief.
- **Avoid:**
  - Defensive tone (*Example:* You may not think I have sufficient finance skills, but I can tell you my budget exposure at Rex provided me with a lot of knowledge.)
  - Arrogant, presumptuous tone (*Example:* I'm your best candidate.)
  - Impersonal style

## (Thank-You Letters continued)

It is recommended that you promptly (within 24 hours) send brief thank-you letters to individuals who have interviewed you on campus or who have helped you in some way with your job search. If you receive an offer, it is advisable to reply immediately.

The thank-you letter provides an opportunity to mention something that you might have forgotten during the interview. It is also another chance to put your name in front of the interviewer. Good manners are the main point of a thank-you letter; it won't get you the job but it may be the little extra that tips the scales in your favor. Similarly, a poorly written letter can take you out of consideration.

If you interview with more than one person from the same organization, you do not need to send a thank-you note to each interviewer, though you certainly may do so. It is appropriate to write to the person who seemed to be in charge of your day. Mention the names of the other employees you spoke with and ask the addressee to express your appreciation/interest to them.

### Sample: Thank-You Letter Format

Dear Ms. Jones:

**First Paragraph:** Express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview with the recruiter and others if appropriate. Include the position for which you interviewed and the date of the interview.

**Second Paragraph:** Indicate your desire in pursuing employment in the area or job for which you interviewed. You may personalize the letter by including a reminder of your meeting, e.g., "I appreciated your candid remarks about Pershing Yoakley & Associates and its growing healthcare practice."

**Closing Paragraph:** A final thank you is appropriate. Re-confirm any deadlines for a decision that were mentioned in the meeting, e.g., "I understand that I will be notified of your decision within three weeks." Re-emphasize your interest in working for the organization.

Sincerely,

## Acceptance Letters

When writing an acceptance letter, remember to:

- Use professional, direct style.
- Restate terms of employment and indicate acceptance.
- Convey eagerness.
- Note (or remind of) next interaction, if appropriate.
- **Avoid:**
  - Overly "chummy" style (*Example: I can't believe it!! I'm now employed at KPMG. I'm really excited about this.*)
  - Overly detailed logistical questions.
  - Being vague or unclear that you are accepting the offer.

## Rejection Letters

With letters you write to turn down an offer, remember to:

- Express appreciation for the offer.
- Provide a reasonable, appropriate explanation; keep it brief.
- Work to retain goodwill (for self and HPM).
- Pay particular attention to the message tone.
- **Avoid:**
  - Overly apologetic tone (*Example: I am very sorry to have to tell you this, but I've decided to accept another offer. Please accept my sincere apology.*)
  - Blow-by-blow description of your decision-making process.

Sample:  
Offer Decline  
Letter Format

Dear Mr. Smith:

**First Paragraph:** Express your appreciation for offer extended to you. Mention positive features of position. Decline the offer in a very professional manner and include one or two reasons, avoiding negative or demeaning statements.

**Second Paragraph:** Express your appreciation for their kindness. Reaffirm your interest in their organization and their offer. **Caveat:** don't burn any bridges. You may want to work there in the future.

Sincerely,

## Electronic Correspondence

### **E-mail, Sending Attachments, and Voice Mail**

When corresponding via e-mail, it is easy to forget that e-mail is only a medium of sending a message, much like the Postal Service. The care and attention spent on the message should equal that which you put into "paper" correspondence. Many employers have expressed dismay at the "informal" tone, sometimes bordering on sloppiness, that students use when sending e-mailed inquiries or cover letters.

**The same rules apply when using electronic correspondence as they do with traditional correspondence.** As you write e-mails to recruiters, send faxes, or leave voice mail messages, keep in mind the following guidelines.

- All written correspondence must be grammatically correct and free of typographical errors.
- Professionalism is key to success. **Delete any personal messages you may have on your voice mail, at the end of your e-mail (in the signature portion), and on your personal web site.**
- Be wary of sending resumes electronically. Check with the recipient first to see what kind of format his/her system will accept. You want your resume to look as good printed from an attachment as it would if you sent it through the mail.
- When leaving voice mail messages, always speak clearly and distinctly. Leave your name, phone number, a brief, to-the-point message, and when you can be reached. It is a good idea to leave your name at the beginning and end of your message and to repeat your phone number. Script the key points you want to make before you call.

## Examples of Other Job Search Correspondence

The following list and letters show that general effectiveness can result from a variety of styles and approaches. Recognize that these are examples, NOT models. They are not perfect. Make intelligent choices based on you, your reader and the communication context.

### Example Thank-You Letter (Internship)

100 Weston Way  
New York, NC 10013

February 5, 2013

Mr. Rocky Wells  
Section Manager  
Jamestown Corp.  
Post Office Box 12345  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27703

Dear Mr. Wells:

I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you in Chapel Hill earlier this week. I appreciated your insights about internship opportunities at Jamestown and about the organization in general. In addition, I found your descriptions of the positions you have held (and currently hold) at Jamestown to be very interesting.

As I indicated, I strongly believe that Jamestown is extremely attractive for an individual with my background and career interests. I believe that my skills and experiences will enable me to add significant value to Jamestown as a statistics analyst during a project-based internship next summer. My experience with the UNC Department of Performance Improvement will enable me to "get up to speed" quickly, take ownership of an opportunity, gather and process information effectively, and deliver lasting, value-added results to Jamestown.

As I indicated, I have a particular interest in Jamestown Corp and the work that the company does. Thank you again for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,

*(signature)*

John Paul Getty



## Example Decision Letter (Accept)

121 Blues Lane  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

March 15, 2014

Ms. Tina Cullen  
Director of Finance  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Five Moore Drive  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear Ms. Cullen:

This letter is to provide confirmation of our discussion regarding my acceptance of Glaxo's offer of a position as a finance intern during the summer at a monthly salary of \$X,XXX. In addition, I will receive travel reimbursement at \$0.405/mi. I will contact Corporate Travel as instructed in order to complete the necessary paperwork.

As we discussed, I am looking forward very much to my start date of May 18, 2005. Ideally, I am hoping to complete my internship by August 7, 2014, so that I may prepare to return to classes in the fall semester.

Thank you very much for this exciting opportunity. I am looking forward to working with you and the organization.

Sincerely,

*(signature)*

Billie Holliday

## Example Decision Letter (Reject)

2332 Holly Blvd.  
Hollywood, CA 90028

March 6, 2013

Mr. Howard McClure  
Finance Recruiting Manager  
Carolinas HealthCare System  
PO Box 32861  
Charlotte, NC 35333-2861

Dear Mr. McClure:

This letter is to provide confirmation of our discussion on Wednesday, March 4, regarding my decision to accept another finance internship position for the summer.

I hope that I adequately conveyed how difficult the final choice was for me. I strongly believe that a summer internship at CHS in Charlotte would have been an excellent and enjoyable learning experience, and regret that I had to decline.

As we discussed, I remain very interested in pursuing a full-time position with Carolinas HealthCare System. I will contact you near the end of the summer to discuss full-time positions at CHS.

I sincerely appreciate all your time and assistance during the recruiting process and your interest in me for a summer position. I will look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,

*(signature)*

Julia Benfield

# INTERVIEWING 101

## HPM Interview Guidelines

the interview is one of the most important parts of your job search and often the most anxiety producing. Good interviewing skills can be learned and practiced by anyone, as shown by the many books that have been written on the subject. This section will touch on some of the more important factors in becoming a good interviewee.

- Since the employer has already seen your resume (and your cover letter), they are already familiar with your academic qualifications and job experiences. The main purpose of the interview is to allow the interviewer to gauge your interpersonal and communication skills and your “fit” with the organization. **Being articulate, enthusiastic, confident and prepared** are key elements of a good interview. The best interview is a conversation. Remember, an interview is not only your opportunity to “sell” yourself to the employer but your chance to decide whether or not you are interested and would be comfortable in the organization. Don’t prejudge before a personal visit.
- Before the interview, it is helpful to think about your skills and achievements. Plan 3-4 ninety-second “mini commercials” about yourself, highlighting features that you want the interviewer to know by the end of the interview. Work these into your answers during the interview; do not sound rehearsed. A story or situation should illustrate these strengths, e.g., not “I’ve had a lot of leadership experience,” but “When I was president of xxxxx, I increased membership by xx% and was asked to organize our national meeting.”
- Always have several questions for the interviewer. Do not wait until the end of the interview to start asking them, since you may run out of time. Not asking questions may be interpreted as a lack of interest and preparation. Never ask questions that can be easily answered by reading the employer’s web page; ask questions that build on what you already know about them.

As corny as it sounds, **“You never have a second chance to make a first impression.”** Many interviewers make hiring decisions in the first five minutes.

- Practice your interview questions and answers with a friend or in front of a mirror. Be professional all the way. When you meet the interviewer, good eye contact, a smile, and a firm handshake are critical; repeating the interviewer’s name helps you to remember it during the interview. Your dress should be conservative and professional: suit and tie for men; suit or business dress (no pant suits) for women. Women no longer have to stick to black or navy, but use good judgment and always err on the side of conservatism. Shoes should always be polished. Do not wear overwhelming fragrances (men or women), and if you are a smoker, be certain that you brush your teeth before the interview and that your clothing does not smell like smoke. Remember not to smoke or chew gum during the interview day. Simple understated jewelry is best for women. Men should only wear a watch and a wedding, class, or family ring. Be sure that your hair and fingernails are neat and clean. Consult the CSO for further guidance.

## Overview

The interview is the most important part of the job search process. Typically, the interviewer has already seen your resume and established an initial impression. However, the interview is usually the first opportunity to interact with a potential employer in person, and this interaction will determine whether or not you have the opportunity to continue in a organization's selection process.

The following section outlines important interview tips, including preparation techniques, as well as types of interviews. You should refer to the information throughout your job search to keep your interview skills crisp and effective.

## Preparation

Given the importance of the interview in landing the job of your choice, preparation is a necessity. You should familiarize yourself with the specific position for which you are interviewing. Then, make a link between your skills and strengths and the requirements of the position.

### *Before the Interview:*

- **Research the organization** thoroughly using information from network contacts and published materials. You must understand the products, services, history, local dynamics/challenges, and people involved in each interview.
- Reread job descriptions, newspaper ads/articles, and annual reports.
- Review a copy of the resume from which the interviewer will be working and keep a copy with you. However, do not pull your resume out during the interview unless the interviewer asks for another copy (the same rule applies for a reference list).
- Develop a list of thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer about the organization and position.
- Develop and rehearse your PAR illustrations (discussed in the Resume section of this manual) relevant to the organization and the position for which you are interviewing.
- Prepare for open-ended introductory questions.
- Reconfirm interview details: date, time, location, interviewer's name/position.

### *Prepare Yourself:*

- Check your appearance carefully. Speak with the CSO staff as to the appropriate dress if you have questions.
- Give yourself a pep talk and approach the interview process in a positive state of mind.
- Allow plenty of time to get to the interview and relax. Suggestion: arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the interview time.
- Reflect on the image that you wish to project.
- Review your interview agenda several times (see interview agenda on the next page).
- Know exactly where the interview is being held. Go the day before and map out your route if you are not good with directions or unfamiliar with the area. **Don't be late!**
- Always be professional and be courteous to everyone.

### *Match Competencies/Experience with the Organization's Needs:*

- Identify themes that are relevant for the organization and position including prior work experience, academic performance and extracurricular activities. Include themes that feature specific knowledge, skills, abilities or personal characteristics that highlight a good fit with the organization and/or position.
- Use PAR stories to support these themes. These illustrations should highlight your accomplishments by showing something you did or made happen.
  - **Problem**, situation or opportunity you faced.
  - **Action** you took.

- **Results of the action you took including the benefit to the organization.**

Effective PAR stories lasting 30 to 90 seconds convey specific examples aimed at highlighting results and prioritizing work, academic and extracurricular experience.

Identify the relevance of these PAR illustrations to the potential position. Relate how past experiences will translate into future success, and specifically link the stories to the positions/tasks at the organization.

### **Interview Agenda**

Develop an agenda for the meeting that will meet your objective and enhance the opportunity for a shared, productive interchange. Create an agenda outline taking into account the following:

- **Interviewer information:** Name, title and role in the interviewing process.
- **Purpose of the interview:** Informational, screening, call back, etc.
- **Available time:** If you've only got 30 minutes, don't spend 20 on small talk.
- **Goals of the organization, division, and department:** Understand what the organization is and wants to be, its competitors, its strengths and weaknesses.
- **Specifics of the position:** Responsibilities, objectives, authority.
- **How your competencies match the needs of the position (PAR stories in brief)?**
- **The perspective of the hiring manager:** How well does the interviewer perceive that you match the employer's requirements? Try to anticipate the most pressing concern the interviewer has about your fit for this position and be sure to address this in the interview.
- **Ask about the next step:** When is the next round of interviews? What is the organization's plan for making its final decisions?
- **Ask about other sources** that will help you learn more about the organization/position.

### **During the Interview**

#### ***Tips to keep in mind:***

- Listen carefully. Give the interviewer time to talk.
- Use your *agenda*.
- Ask thoughtful questions. Use examples. Keep answers concise.
- Think of the interview as a conversation where each party learns more about a potential opportunity. Strive to have a natural conversational flow and avoid "canned" responses or just saying what you think the interviewer wants to hear.
- Avoid rambling! Leave out the phrases "you know," "like," and "I mean" as much as possible.
- Remember the importance of your visual impact:
  - Maintain eye contact.
  - Avoid awkward body language.
  - Sit up straight.
  - Square your shoulders.
  - Show enthusiasm.
  - Place one or both hands in the interviewer's view (keep them still unless making a point).

- Listen to the questions carefully and articulate your thoughts clearly and concisely.
- Use listening cues: head tilt and facial expressions.
- Clarify the next step in the process.
- Stress willingness, ability and compatibility.
- Use your closing to reinforce themes or mention critical agenda items not already covered.
- Smile every now and then! It is amazing how important a relaxed demeanor can be in the interview process.
- Be yourself, but present yourself to the best of your ability.
- Ask for the interviewer's business card. This can be useful in follow-up correspondence.
- Thank the interviewer for their time.
- Be friendly and courteous to everyone you meet.

***Skills to Keep in Mind:***

- Analytical skills (logic, structuring a problem, ability to make quick calculations, implications of recommendations/business strategy decisions)
- Diagnostic skills (extracting pertinent information in diagnosing a problem, prioritization of problems/issues)
- Communication skills (good listener, ability to handle pressure, self-confidence, ability to defend ideas)
- Creativity
- The "Airplane Test:" Would they want to sit next to you on an LA to Boston flight?
- The "Omaha Test:" Would they want to be stranded with you in Omaha over a long weekend?

## Pre-Interview Prep Checklist

- Make sure to reread the job description (if you have it) so you remember exactly what you are interviewing for.
- Research the company.
- Review your resume.
- Practice answering interview questions pulling examples from your resume.
- Have questions to ask your interviewer at the end of your interview.
- Make sure to have an appropriate interview outfit ready.
- Double-check logistics – **what** time is your interview and **where** is your interview? **Don't be late!**
- Always be professional and courteous to everyone.



## Interview Types

### **The Structured Interview**

In this interviewing strategy, all potential candidates are asked the exact same questions. Generally this will be the structure of the first interview you will have with an organization.

### **The Group Interview: *The Stress Interview***

Answering questions and maintaining a dialogue with two or three interviewers at the same time can be a rough and rigorous process. The scenario is not uncommon, particularly in interviews with consulting firms and pharmaceutical companies.

Sometimes you'll know beforehand whether there will be more than one interviewer, but often you may not. Don't be thrown off or intimidated if you enter an interview and find more than one interviewer; always be prepared for the possibility.

The purpose of group interviews is generally to get an idea of how you interact with different people at the same time, to see how you handle stress, and to assess your ability to position yourself (and hold your position) when challenged.

### **THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

Employers interviewing candidates in various locations will often narrow the list through phone interviews before arranging on-site interviews. Telephone interviews may be conducted by one individual or by a panel. If a phone interview is arranged with an employer in another time zone, be sure to clarify which time zone will be observed.

When anticipating a phone interview, answer the call by stating your name. This professional greeting will prevent the caller from having to ask for you. Arrange to have a reliable landline phone in a quiet location where you can limit or avoid distractions. While everyone has a cell phone, you don't want to drop a call or not have cell service. Feel free to contact the Career Services Office and ask about room availability.

Print a copy of your resume, the job description, and questions you plan to ask them. You may also want to have key words written down that will help you recall examples you would like to share in your responses.

Remember to smile! Smiling will increase the level of energy in your voice. Sit straight as if you were meeting with the interviewer(s) in person.

### **VIDEO INTERVIEWS**

To save time and money, employers may interview through video calling programs like Skype. Practicing will allow you to see how you appear on a screen and hear how your voice carries. Your goal should be to look just as you would if you were sitting in the room with the interviewer.

Position the camera on your computer to capture the upper half of your body. This will allow the employer to observe some of your nonverbal communication. For eye contact, look at the camera rather than the screen.

Make sure your surroundings reflect a professional setting. Clear away distractions including pets that might interrupt your thoughts or appear on screen. Check the lighting to make sure you will be visible. Before speaking, wait to make sure the interviewer is completely finished. Speak clearly and smile!

### **THE BEHAVIORAL AND SITUATIONAL INTERVIEW**

Behavioral and situational interviewing is based on the idea that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. It focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that are job related.

Employers use the behavioral and situational interviewing strategy to evaluate three types of skills: (1) content skills or work-specific knowledge; (2) functional or transferable skills that are associated with people or things such as organizing, problem solving, communicating, and planning; and (3) self-management skills focusing on characteristics or traits such as dependability, team player, self-direction, punctuality, etc.

**The following are sample questions to help prepare you for behavioral and situational interviewing:**

1. How have you demonstrated initiative?
2. How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do?
3. Think about a difficult supervisor, boss, professor, or another person. What made him or her difficult? How did you successfully interact with this person?
4. Tell me about a complex project or task that you have been assigned.
5. Describe a situation where problems began to occur and the action you took.
6. What leadership positions have you held? Describe your leadership style.
7. Summarize a situation where you successfully persuaded others to do something or see your point of view.
8. How have you constructively dealt with a disappointment and turned it into a learning experience?
9. Describe a situation where class assignments and work or personal activities conflicted. How did you prioritize them? How did you manage your time?
10. How do you work within a group? What role do you typically assume?

### **The Case Interview: *Think on Your Feet***

As more HPM students gravitate toward positions in consulting, they encounter the case format more frequently in their interviews. Cases are word problems based on real life business situations. The case interview is no longer just a recruiting tool within the consulting industry. Other environments are increasingly using the case interview to screen an applicant on the ability to think quickly and logically about problems, to demonstrate analytical skills, and to showcase interpersonal skills. Regardless of your career focus, you may encounter the case interview.

Successfully mastering the case interview relies on both art and science. The scientific, logical approach to reviewing case facts will permit you to make great inroads into quickly identifying the issues of the case, but without the art of a well-communicated dialogue, your case interview is doomed. Case interviews are rarely easy; relentless practice is the best method for case interview success.

In a case interview, the interviewer is trying to judge all or some of the following:

- Logical thought process
- General business knowledge and acumen
- General knowledge
- Comfort with quantitative analysis
- Creativity
- Communication skills
- Response under pressure

### Types of Cases

Cases come in a variety of shapes and size. The most common cases (especially in consulting) are "long" cases (20-60 minutes) that ask you to analyze a business strategy or operations challenge. You may have multiple cases in one interview. The content of the case will depend on the functional area in which you are interviewing, and a single consulting case interview question may cover marketing, operations, strategic, and financial issues. Depending on the individual, this case may be interactive, allowing you to ask questions as you progress, or one-sided, leaving you to walk through your approach after the problem is initially set up. A suggested methodology or approach to this type of case is found below.

*Examples of the long case might be:*

- **The CEO case**—Assume that the CEO of a nursing home chain has hired you to determine why supply costs have risen and how to control them. The key to this type of case is to ask questions to gather data, pose a hypothesis, do some analysis and make assumptions. The interviewer wants to understand the process you would use to solve a problem. You may be given data or other information to analyze.
- **The Engagement case**—Assume you have been hired by the director of marketing of a managed care organization to determine why enrollment is decreasing. This case is similar to the CEO case, but you would be asked instead to structure an engagement. How would you approach the problem? The answer is not in the data; it is in how you would go about the project.
- **Situational or Behavioral case**—These cases have to do with relationship building or a situation where you have to manage a team. They could deal with colleagues or clients and often reflect knowledge gained through past experience.
- **Financial Analysis case**—This case will test your ability to perform analysis of financial statements or information about financial results.
- **Market-sizing questions**—Questions are aimed to assess how comfortable you are with numbers and whether you can identify drivers, make assumptions, and work through to a reasonable answer. "How many golf balls would be used in the US in a given year?" is one example.
- **Brainteasers**—These are structured to find out if you can think out of the box. A classic brainteaser is "Why are manhole covers round?" Suggested answers for all three examples used can be found in the book, *Ace Your Case*.
  - You have two empty jugs. One holds three gallons, the other holds five. How do you get exactly four gallons of water from the tap?
  - There are eight balls, one of which is slightly heavier than the others. You have a scale that you can use for weighing, but you are only allowed to use it twice. How do you find the heavier ball?

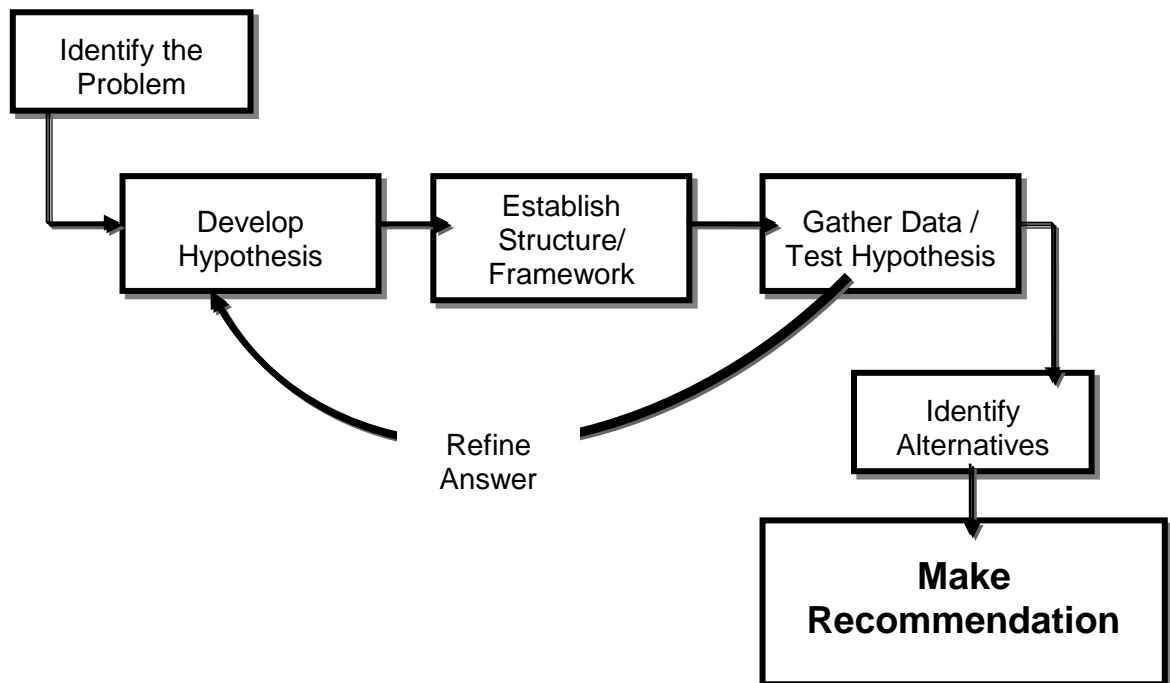
- You have 18 blue socks and 14 black ones in a drawer. It is very dark. How many do you have to pull out before you have a matching pair?

**Suggested Methodology**

It is important to understand that the method you use to approach the case is just as important as the answer at which you arrive. The following proposed methodology is a helpful starting point in your quest to mastering the case interview. You may find it helpful to customize your approach to your individual style over time. It is important to be flexible and realize that this is only one approach. Different firms and different individuals have different case styles. Be sure to respond to hints, data, or suggestions of the interviewer. More often than not, the interviewer will guide you in the direction they want you to go, and it is up to you to read his/her subtle clues such as "We already looked into that," or "That isn't relevant to this industry."

*1. Identify the problem*

- The interviewer will begin by verbally outlining a case situation, e.g., profits are declining in the pediatrics division. Listen carefully and write down the main points. Identify the critical/key issue(s). A diagram of the situation may help you think clearly as you dissect the issues.
- Make sure you know what question the interviewer is asking and what type of recommendation they are seeking; keep that objective in mind as you develop your clarifying questions. Consider the following two case scenarios. In the first situation, the overriding question of the interviewer is, "How can we best increase capacity to meet projected service demand?" In the second situation, the overriding question of the interviewer is, "How can we best provide services to meet projected market demand?" The desired result for both situations is to plan for meeting the market forecast, but the way you would attack the case in each situation would differ.
- Take a few moments to think and organize your approach before speaking. Then communicate your next steps. For example, say to the interviewer, "What I would like to do is spend a few minutes reviewing my notes, then I am going to ask you some questions. After that..." This shows the interviewer your logical approach to attacking a problem and lets the interviewer know you are intentionally taking a few moments of silence to think.



## 2. *Develop a hypothesis*

Many follow a hypothesis-based approach, which calls for the interviewee to develop a hypothesis early on regarding the nature of the business issue. While some firms prefer this up-front hypothesis, others prefer that you skip this step and work toward a hypothesis and recommendation at the conclusion of the case.

## 3. *Establish a "framework" or a series of frameworks to structure your analysis*

A framework is a structure that you use to organize your thoughts and help you analyze the critical issues of a case. Choosing a framework is not the main goal of this exercise--it is meant only to guide you. Allow your own creativity to come through rather than being overly reliant on the framework.

## 4. *Gather data/test hypothesis*

Begin by asking the most basic questions. Work your way methodically through, starting with the most important issue. Your framework will guide you in covering your major points for in-depth analysis in the time allowed. Remember that the case facts will be intentionally ambiguous; keep probing to get the information you need. Think out loud! Let the interviewer see how you are analyzing the problem by letting them hear your thought process and assumptions out loud.

## 5. *Identify alternatives*

Discuss the costs and benefits of each alternative, including your reasons for discounting their relevance in the particular situation. Clearly state your assumptions and your rationale.

## 6. *Make recommendation*

- Summarize your analysis and the approach you used.
- Make a solid, data-driven recommendation, choosing an alternative that has a positive net present value and is consistent with the strategy of the firm.
- After your recommendation, an assessment of next steps and further analysis needed is an added plus.

The whole purpose of a case interview is for the recruiter to test your ability to dissect a problem in a logical fashion. Therefore, in your analysis, make sure to justify all your assumptions and decisions. When faced with a complex problem, break it down into manageable portions to allow you to retrace your thought process and proceed down a different path if your first solution is not optimal.

Don't be afraid to ask questions when you need more information; the opening dialogue is intentionally vague. You are not expected to know everything, but your ability to ask poignant, probing questions will shed light into your logical thought process.

### **Case Interview Preparation**

Case interview preparation takes a considerable time commitment on your part. Starting early is advisable, especially in the consulting arena where cases are most prevalent and most rigorous. There are many avenues available for case interview preparation:

- Practice by attacking your cases in a consistent, logical fashion.
- Form informal study groups with your peers and practice on a regular basis. Many students pursuing non-consulting jobs have considered case interview preparation a non-necessity in the past. However, if you would even consider interviewing for these types of jobs, it is wise to pursue at least some level of knowledge early on so that you are not caught off guard.
- Evaluate your ability to think strategically.
- Evaluate your understanding of the organization or agency.
- Evaluate your ability to think creatively.

## Questions Employers May Ask Candidates

### Education-oriented Questions:

- Why did you return to school?
- What made you choose Carolina?
- Are your grades a good indication of your academic achievement or ability?
- How has your degree prepared you for a career in *(function)*?
- What are the most important experiences you had outside the classroom?
- General questions regarding leadership and extracurricular participation.

### Goal-related Questions:

- What are your long and short-range career goals? *If you do not have specific career goals, talk about your ideal job. The employer wants to see that you have thought about this and are able to verbalize your goals.*
- How did you decide on these goals, and how will your career enhance your ability to reach them?
- What do you want to get out of your summer internship?
- What is most important to you professionally?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What would you do if money were not an issue?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?

### Employer-related Questions:

- Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
- If you wanted to be in (N.Y., Calif., etc.), why did you pick Carolina?
- Will you relocate? Are you willing to travel?
- Why did you pick our organization?
- What do you know about us? How would you describe us to outsiders?
- What type of organization fits your style and why?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in our organization?
- What level of contribution could you make to our organization?
- What do you see as the greatest challenges in our industry?
- Why should I hire you versus another candidate?

### Character-related Questions:

- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How do you think your peers/professors would describe you?
- What excites and/or motivates you?
- Describe your role within a group.
- How do you determine and evaluate success?
- What are the major accomplishments of your life? Your major disappointments? What accomplishments have given you the greatest satisfaction?
- How do you manage your time?
- What major problems have you encountered? How did you handle them?
- How do you deal with criticism?
- How would you handle a situation if your boss/preceptor asked you to do something against your beliefs?

**Personal:**

- Tell me about yourself? *With this generic question the interviewer might be trying to get a sense of your personality. Focus your answer on your personality in regard to being a good employee and not so much on personal history. Start off with positive comments about your work history and habits such as coming in early, staying late, etc.*
- Have you ever regretted a decision you made? Why?
- Why do you want to live in this area?
- Do you have any ties to the community you want to work in?
- How do you determine success?
- Which of your qualifications and personal qualities will make you a successful employee?

**Academic:**

- How are you doing academically? What courses have you been successful in? Which were the worst for you?
- Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
- What have you learned about yourself from working in groups during graduate school? What role have you typically played?
- What courses have you taken that give you special qualifications?
- Why did you choose HPM as a major? For what, do you think, will your degree qualify you?

**Experience:**

- Are you more comfortable working independently, or are you a team player?
- By what criteria will you judge the organizations that offer you positions and the positions themselves?
- How is your experience relevant?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?

**Chaotic Economy:**

If you're currently searching for a new job or preparing for a career transition, you are most likely well informed about the challenges of the weak labor market. But the turbulent economy is also having an effect on the types of questions asked by interviewers and recruiters. Following are three new questions you may hear in you next interview—and how to respond.

- "What do you think about the stock market?" This is becoming a favorite question to break the ice at the beginning of an interview. Although the question has little to do with your ability to perform the job, your answer can still make a difference. Employers may ask this question to help them determine your commitment to your career goals. The right answer is one that emphasizes that although you are aware of the current stock market woes, your long-term career plan is still in place, and you are taking the appropriate steps to achieve it.
- "You've been out of work for a while. Are you getting desperate?" This question might strike you as a bit too direct, but don't be surprised if you hear some form of it if you've been out of work six months or more. Respond without being defensive, concentrating on the activities you've been doing since your last job ended. Mention any freelancing, consulting, part-time work, research, or educational programs that you have been involved in.
- "We're getting hundreds of resumes every day for this job." Don't be tricked into responding—this is not a question. Employers often mention how many candidates they have in order to intimidate you into accepting a smaller salary. Instead, smile politely and nod, waiting for an actual question.

**Others:**

- What can you offer us?
- How do you feel about being supervised? By someone younger? By someone with less education?
- Do you mind routine work?
- How do you work under pressure?
- Give an example of a leadership experience (make this relevant to the position).
- What type of outside activities do you enjoy? Why?
- What is the biggest risk you've ever taken?
- Describe a situation in which you failed and what you learned from it.
- What was your greatest frustration in your last job?
- Who would you say has been your most important role model? Why?
- How do you plan to identify with the healthcare profession?
- What do you think about a single payer vs. a multi-payer healthcare system?
- What do you see as some of the major challenges facing physicians?
- Do you think healthcare is a right or a privilege?
- Why are you seeking a fellowship?
- Compare the North Carolina healthcare market to the California market.



## Questions Candidates Ask Employers

- How much autonomy/supervision would I have?
- Tell me about some of the people with whom I'd be working.
- What kinds of people succeed here? Fail here? Examples.
- What is the biggest problem facing this organization right now? Greatest strategic challenge?
- What are the major strengths and weakness of this organization?
- What is your annual operating budget?
- What is the approval process for getting things done?
- What types of work assignments or activities might be expected?

### **Future of the Organization:**

- Where do you see the organization in five years?
- What is the organization's mission as you see it?
- To what extent has the organization realized that mission?
- What do you view as the organization's most important asset? Why?

### **Future of the Position:**

- Why was the position created?
- What opportunities might I have to contribute?
- What does the career progression look like? Are there lateral opportunities?
- How do you see the position expanding or changing in the future? How has it changed in the past?

### **Questions Regarding Expectations:**

- What is your policy on internal advancement?
- What would a typical day in the position look like?
- How is success determined here?
- Who evaluates you and what are the criteria for advancement?

## Interviewing Dos and Don'ts

### Do:

- ✓ **Smile** and show enthusiasm. If you are by nature a shy and quiet person, force yourself to be more outgoing, even if just for the first five minutes of the interview.
- ✓ Concentrate on what you can do for the prospective employer, not what they can do for you.
- ✓ **Ask questions** that show interest in and basic knowledge about the prospective employer.
- ✓ Follow up job applications or interviews within a reasonable time, usually 2-3 weeks. Some people hesitate to follow up, and this is a mistake.

### Don't:

- ✗ **Don't mention salary** or benefits at the *first* interview.
- ✗ When you've answered a question and have made your point, **Stop!** Don't go on and on or try to wax eloquent.
- ✗ Don't be critical of school, professors or former employers. Even if you hated your former boss or your first year in HPM, demonstrate your ability to get the best out of any situation.
- ✗ Don't be offended, defensive, or sensitive to any question.
- ✗ Don't interrupt or argue with the interviewer.
- ✗ Don't tell hard luck stories or beg for the job.
- ✗ Don't ever assume that you are "winning" or "losing" the interview by the way the interviewer seems to be reacting. Some interviewers remain intentionally "stone-faced" to see how you react. Be yourself and stick to your game plan.

### After the Interview

Follow up can be as important as the interview itself. Remember to take some time to "close the deal" by following some simple hints.

*Immediately after an interview, make notes about:*

- The position
- The people involved and your interactions with them
- The organization
- The department
- Other clues and information you picked up

Critically assess your performance in terms of what went well and what didn't. What were your strengths and weaknesses? Think about how you performed with your agenda. What did you leave out and why? Use this information as a building block for your next interview.

Write a follow-up letter. Keep it brief and to the point, no more than one page. A handwritten note is **always** better than a typed or electronic version.

Develop the letter as follows:

- Express your appreciation for the person's time and insights.
- Re-emphasize some important issues you discussed.
- Elaborate on how you can contribute (set yourself apart).
- Reinforce your interest and enthusiasm.
- Include any additional information requested by the interviewer as an enclosure.

Sources for jobs appreciate knowing the outcome of your application. These sources, usually obtained through networking, will refer you to other jobs once they know you will keep them informed.

## **EVALUATING JOB OFFERS**

Your hard work paid off and now you have multiple job offers. How can you be sure you are making the right choice?

Thoroughly evaluating offers includes examining both the nonfinancial features of the job and the financial compensation. Consider first what you value about the job itself, the organization, and the work environment.

### **Questions related to nonfinancial features of the job:**

- Which job seems to be a better fit?
- Which job can you see yourself doing each day for at least 40 hours per week?
- Which work environment seems to be a better fit?
- Which organizational culture suits you best?
- Which location is best suited to your needs?
- Which job offers more of what you value in a career?
- Which job matches your personality type the most?

It is also important to consider the overall compensation package. A higher salary does not necessarily mean the best offer financially. Consider your needs for health-care coverage, tuition reimbursement, relocation assistance, and retirement preparation.

### **Questions that relate to financial features of the job:**

- Which employer offers better health insurance for your needs?
- Which employer offers better retirement funding?
- Is there an option in either organization for profit sharing?
- Which job offers the best compensation package?
- Will company-owned work devices be provided?
- Is one or both of the salaries commission-based?
- Does either organization have a system in place for promotions?

## **NEGOTIATING SALARY**

You may be eager to discuss salary, but, whenever possible, let the interviewer bring up the topic. Your job in the interview is to convince the employer that you are the candidate they do not want to lose. Know how your qualifications fit their needs and be able to communicate that confidently (avoid arrogance) and specifically.

If asked about salary expectations or requirements, you might ask in return what salary the organization has in mind for that position. If it is lower than you expected, then you have an understanding of where to begin with your negotiation.

Research typical salaries for your targeted position before the interview. Be sure to focus on positions that match your education and level of experience. Websites to review include **salary.com** and **careeronestop.org**. With accurate information you can respond, “The average regional salary for a person with my qualifications and education is \$ \_\_\_\_.” If asked about salary before you have a chance to relate

your qualifications to the job, state that the position itself is more important than the salary and that you hoped to discuss your qualifications first.

Keep the conversation focused on your qualifications and not your need for a higher salary because of student loans and other expenses. The decision to negotiate should be based on the value you bring to the organization from experience, abilities, and education.

Compensation may be offered in benefits as well as salary (e.g., insurance coverage, pension plans, paid vacations). A low starting salary may be offset by the prospect of a salary increase in the near future. Consider things you might be able to negotiate other than salary like reimbursement for moving expenses. If the salary or compensation package offered is unacceptable, politely state what would be acceptable to you and close the interview by reaffirming your interest in the company and the job. If the employer says he/she will think about your offer, then wait a week and call back. If the employer states that your salary requirement is unacceptable, then express regret that you were unable to reach a compromise and restate your interest in the position and the organization.

Send a thank-you letter within two days of your interview. This may not lead to a salary agreement but you will have handled the negotiation process professionally, leaving a positive impression.

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING AN ETHICAL JOB SEARCH**

### **FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS**

#### **PRINCIPLES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE**

**1. Provide accurate information about your academic work and records, including courses taken, grades, positions held, and duties performed.** You can, however, refuse to provide an employer with specific information about any job offers you may have received from other employers. You do not have to name the organizations that have made you offers, nor do you have to provide specific information about what salaries you've discussed with those organizations. Instead, you can give broad responses to such questions, naming types of employers—"I've interviewed with employers in the retail industry"—and offering salary ranges rather than specific dollar amounts.

**2. Be honest.** Conduct your job search with honesty and integrity. Do not lie or stretch the truth on your resume, applications, or during any part of the interview process.

**3. Interview genuinely.** Interview only with employers you're sincerely interested in working for and whose eligibility requirements you meet. "Practice" interviewing is misleading to employers—wasting both their time and money—and prevents sincerely interested candidates from using those interview slots.

**4. Adhere to schedules.** Appear for all interviews, on campus and elsewhere, unless unforeseeable events prevent you from doing so. And, if you can't make the interview because of an unforeseeable event, notify your career center or the employer at the earliest possible moment.

**5. Don't keep employers hanging.** Communicate your acceptance or refusal of a job offer to employers as promptly as possible, so they can notify other candidates that they are still being considered or that the position is filled.

**6. Accept a job offer in good faith.** When you accept an offer, you should have every intention of honoring that commitment. Accepting an offer only as a precautionary measure is misleading to the employer and may restrict opportunities for others who are genuinely interested in that employer.

**7. Withdraw from recruiting when your job search is completed.** If you accept an offer or decide that full-time graduate or professional studies are for you, notify your career center and withdraw from the on-campus recruiting process immediately. And, let employers that are actively considering you for a job know that you are now out of the running. By informing everyone that you've got a job or are headed to graduate school, you not only get the chance to brag but also to help your friends who are trying to get on interview schedules or who are being considered for positions.

**8. Claim fair reimbursement.** If an employer has agreed to reimburse you for expenses you incur in its recruitment process, your request should be only for reasonable and legitimate expenses.

**9. Obtain the career information you need to make an informed choice about your future.**

It's up to you to acquire the information about career opportunities, organizations, and any other information that might influence your decisions about an employing organization.

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