

# Northwestern Michigan College Student Success Center

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## **How to Succeed in your Internship/Job Search: Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interviews**

Career Success Coach  
Student Success Center  
Osterlin Building



**First things first. Let's get started.**

## **Foundation File**

A foundation file contains the building blocks for your resume. The file is a chronological list of each job held; degree, certificate, or license earned; internship, volunteer experience, and/or activity participated in; and award or honor received during your life. Your most current activities should be the first entries you see when you open this document. If possible, every entry should include what you did in detail, who you did it with, where you did it, when you did it, and the contact information for the supervisor or leader. When you finish a new certificate, change jobs, or participate in a new volunteer experience, add it to the file. If you keep the file current, it will make updating your resume much easier. The worksheets in this booklet provide one way to record the information to be used in your file. If you build the file in a word processing program, it will be easier to copy and edit your entries when you build your resume.

Your foundation file holds the raw materials for building your resume. Through the experiences you have had, including education, work, volunteering, and other activities, you have acquired and developed skills that may be relevant to



## **Resume Type and Content**

As previously mentioned, the two most common types of resumes are chronological and functional. Each resume style has advantages. Choose the format that best fits your situation. The chronological resume is the most widely used and accepted format. The chronological resume lists your experience in reverse chronological order (listing your latest job first). The functional resume focuses on your relevant skills rather than job progression.



## **Action Verbs**

The following verbs can be helpful in developing your action statements for your resume. The titles are not meant to limit your search but rather offer some starting points. You may find it helpful to read through several lists to be reminded of your biggest accomplishments or those that are most relevant to the job for which you are applying. This is not a comprehensive list. It is intended to inspire your writing so that you can boldly and confidently

Contracted  
Coordinated  
Demonstrated  
Directed  
Eliminated  
Enforced  
Established  
Evaluated  
Facilitated  
Founded  
Generated  
Headed  
Hosted  
Implemented  
Incorporated  
Increased  
Influenced  
Initiated  
Launched  
Led  
Managed  
Merged  
Mobilized  
Motivated  
Negotiated  
Oversaw  
Presided  
Prioritized  
Restored  
Reviewed  
Scheduled  
Secured  
Started

Streamlined  
Supervised

**Research**

Analyzed  
Collected  
Compared  
Conducted  
Diagnosed  
Discovered  
Documented  
Evaluated  
Examined  
Experimented  
Gathered  
Identified  
Inspected  
Investigated  
Located  
Measured  
Researched  
Reviewed  
Sorted  
Specified  
Studied  
Surveyed  
Tested

**Teaching**



## Chronological Resume Example

### **Your name**

Address  
City, State, and Zip  
Phone Number  
Email Address

### **Education**

#### **Northwestern Michigan College**

*Associate in Science and Arts in Liberal Arts*  
Cumulative 3.8 GPA;

**Traverse City, MI**

May 2012

## Functional Resume Example

### Your name

Address  
City, State, and Zip  
Phone Number  
Email Address

### Education

**Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City, MI**  
Associate in Applied Science – Business Administration  
Expected Graduation, May 2014

### Summary of Qualifications

#### Communication Skills

Conversation partner for ESL students.  
Compose written and email correspondence for Insurance office.  
Collaborates with coworkers to promote organizational effectiveness.  
Ability to transcend cultural boundaries to develop working relationships.

#### Training/Teamwork

Demonstrated daily procedures and oversaw training of new employees.  
Volunteered with club members to meet fund-raising goal of \$8,000.

#### Planning/Organizing

Committee chair for Winter Fun dance for 2 years.  
Volunteered in Guatemala for the Cultural Awareness Program.  
Facilitated language development events for foreign exchange students.

### Skills

Quickbooks, Microsoft Word and Excel  
Scheduling and multi-line phone systems  
Fluent in Spanish

### Experience History

<b>Insurance For You</b>	Office Assistant	My Town, MI	2012-2013
<b>Great Food Diner</b>	Waitress	My Town, MI	2010-2012

## **Cover Letters**

A cover letter is a great partner to your resume. It gives you an opportunity to tell an employer why you are the candidate they are looking for to fill a posted position. Your cover letter should demonstrate how your experiences fulfill the employer's needs and why you would be a great fit for the organization. A good cover letter is not a repeat of your resume, but links your skills and experience to the qualifications for the position. It gives you a chance to engage the employer about setting up an interview. Your cover letter should convince the employer that it is definitely worth the time to interview you!

### **Do**

Address the letter to a specific person. If you cannot find the person's name use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Selection Committee."

Use the job description to develop your letter. State why you are qualified for the position. Think about your skills.



## **Sending your resume and/or cover letter**

You may be asked to send your resume by mail, email attachment, in the body of the email, or as an upload on the employer's website. Make sure you find out from the hiring person/team which method is preferred.

If you are asked to mail your resume and cover letter:

1. All the paper should be the same in your package. The paper for your resume, cover letter, and envelope should be a quality grade product in a neutral color. You may neatly fold the resume and cover letter to fit in the envelope, preferably just 2 creases. If you are not electronically printing the envelope, make sure your handwriting is neat and legible.
2. Your cover letter should be signed in blue or black ink in the signature block.
3. The cover letter is placed on top of the resume.
4. Keep your reference sheet until you get an interview, unless you are asked to send it.

Attaching your resume to an email:

- 1.

## **Reference Sheet**

Use the same header and font from your resume. This sheet is generally taken to your interview so that you have it available if the interviewer asks for it.

**Kathy Smith**  
111 Lake Dr.  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
(111) 333-4444  
ksmith@emailserver.com

### **REFERENCES**

Name (include title, Dr. Ms.)  
Company title (Northwestern Michigan College)  
Address  
City, State and Zip  
Phone Number  
Email  
How you are connected to them (Advisor, Former employer)

Name (include title, Dr. Ms.)  
Company title (Northwestern Michigan College)  
Address  
City, State and Zip  
Phone Number  
Email  
How you are connected to them (Advisor, Former employer)

Name (include title, Dr. Ms.)  
Company title (Northwestern Michigan College)  
Address  
City, State and Zip  
Phone Number  
Email  
How you are connected to them (Advisor, Former employer)



# Common Interview Questions

**1. Please tell me about yourself.**

This is a great spot to tell your professional story. Your professional story should tell the employer about your education, work and professional history while engaging and connecting with the interviewer.

**2. Why should we hire you? What experience qualifies you for this job?**

This is where you talk about the skills you have, which include job skills and life skills. Give solid examples of the skill. Give an example of how you used the skill in a past situation.

**3. What do you think you can bring to our company?**

It is a good thing you researched the company and can relate your skills to their needs and desires. Let the employer know you would fit in well.

**4. What is your strongest skill and your weakest skill?**

This is not the time to be down on yourself. Think of this answer beforehand so you can state both skills in a positive manner. Consider approaching your weakest skill from the perspective of being willing to learn from your mistakes, consider what you could have done differently. Being willing to learn and adapt is important.

**5. Do you have any questions for us?**

Absolutely! Not having questions for interviewer makes you seem unprepared and, potentially, disinterested. The interviewer wants to know if you have career goals and critical thinking skills. Have at least three questions prepared ahead of time.

**EXAMPLES:**

1. What would your perfect candidate possess?
2. I noticed on your website that your organization believes in professional development, what programs do you offer?
3. Is this a new position? If so, can you tell me what caused the creation of the job?
4. How long was the last person in this position? What did that person bring to the company that everyone hopes will continue?
5. When can I expect to hear about the hiring decision?



No heavy perfume or cologne.

Remove the lint/hair from your clothes. Clothes should be clean and neat.

Smell nice – use deodorant and bathe.

Avoid low cut shirts and/or pants.

If in doubt, don't wear it!

# **Resume Preparation Worksheet**

## **Personal Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## **Education**

*Most recent listed first*

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

## SKILLS

Skills come in different types. The skills you need to do a particular job are called hard skills. These include specific computer programs, fluently speaking more than one language, how to use multi-line phones, making dental impressions, running a lathe, operating a vehicle, and using specific tools to name a few. These are the type of skills that might be listed on a resume.

Soft skills are another type and are quite important to employers. Examples of this type include being able to work as part of a team, being flexible and willing to adapt, being punctual and responsible, and being able to problem solve. These are generally addressed in your cover letter where you have more space to relate your abilities to the job description.

Transferable skills may be another term you may encounter. These are the skills that seem specific to a job but the knowledge can actually be applied in a variety of settings. Negotiating, writing, coaching, managing money, researching, supervising, planning are examples of these.

Check out [www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com) for more information on these different types of skills. Websites like *onetonline.org* and *acinet.org* will have information about the skills related to a particular job type.

List below the skills that you bring from life experiences. They may be skills you have from previous jobs, volunteer work, participation in school organizations, special class projects. Since you will be targeting your resume to a specific type of position it may be helpful to list the duties and qualifications for that position and begin by listing your related skills.

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## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

*List most recent experiences first, including jobs and internships.*

**Job Title** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dates of Employment** \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills, Duties, Accomplishments** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Job**

**Title** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dates of Employment** \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills, Duties, Accomplishments** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# **Networking**

Networking is us

## **Career Fairs**

### **What to expect before the fair:**

A career fair gives you the opportunity to meet and interact with many potential employers, in one venue, over a few hours. What a great use of your time and energy! Don't expect a job offer on the spot. However, it is a superb chance to make a positive first impression.

Before the fair, you will want to find out if you need to register. Fairs are generally free for job seekers. Make sure your resume is current. Your contact information should be up-to-

**What to expect at the fair:**

On the day of the fair, take time to be well-groomed and appropriately dressed. Arrive a bit early so you have time to check your appearance and get a map of the booths, if one is available. Wear a name tag if one is provided. Note on the map where your preferred companies are located so you can plan your time. Think positively and smile before you head in to introduce yourself. Good luck!

There may be waiting lines, so recognize that you may only have a few minutes to make your great impression. When it is your turn, shake hands, look the recruiter in the eye, and introduce yourself. Give your pitch. If the recruiter has questions, answer them. If you have questions, ask them, briefly. Let the recruiter know that you are interested in the position. Offer your



## Some Final Thoughts for Your Consideration

You have made it to the end of this booklet. Hopefully, you feel more equipped as you venture into the job market. Your resume will evolve as you proceed through life and gather more experiences that you can share with an employer. It will be wise to keep your resume current since you never know when your dream job is going to become available.

Before closing, it is important to consider what employers want. It is valuable to consider the job-seeking process from the other side of the desk. These are just a few of the important areas that may help you understand what matters to your potential boss:

- 1) Communication skills – verbal and written; in house and with clients
- 2) Honesty and integrity
- 3) Teamwork - do you play well with others?
- 4) Interpersonal abilities - can you relate well to others?
- 5) Motivation and initiative - how are you at decision making and problem solving?
- 6) Strong work ethic - can you prioritize work, your time, and your responsibilities?
- 7) Analytical skills - gathering data and critical thinking
- 8) Flexibility and adaptability
- 9) Computer skills
- 10) Self-confidence

Finally, please remember that help is available. The Career Success Coach is located in the Student Success Center. Please drop in or make an appointment to discuss your questions or concerns.

Happy internship/job seeking!