CAREER READINESS GUIDE

PRESENTED BY UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

ABOUT UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES

University Career Services (UCS) is nationally recognized for our innovative industry-focused model and customized approach to advising, programming, and employer development. We invite you to engage with UCS early and often. Our appointments, courses, and workshops can help you choose a major and set tangible career goals. We can assist you in creating a resume, networking with Mason alumni, and preparing for the workplace or further study. Our location near Washington, D.C., offers unparalleled access to internships and research and job opportunities. Each year, more than 700 employers participate in on-campus hiring events to recruit Mason students.

Visit careers.gmu.edu/about-ucs to meet our staff for help with the following:

EXPLORATION

Career Advisors assist you with exploring majors, career paths, or on how to use your talents, strengths, and interests.

STRATEGY

Career Advisors help connect you with employers and build a strategy for breaking into your industry of interest through internships or full-time positions.

SUPPORT

Peer Career Advisors assist you with improving your job search documents and navigating Handshake.

SERVICES

- Career advising appointments
- Workshops, events, and alumni/employer panels
- Access to Handshake job and internship database
- Career fairs
- On-campus interviewing

TOPICS DISCUSSED IN DROP-INS AND APPOINTMENTS

Drop-Ins:

- General questions and inquiries regarding resources, Handshake, or on-campus job search
- Basic resume or cover letter review

Appointments:

- Exploring/choosing a career
- Exploring/choosing a major
- Exploring/applying to graduate or professional school
- Industry research
- Internship search
- Interview preparation
- Evaluating a job offer and salary negotiation
- Job search
- Networking
- Practice interviews
- Professional development and advancement

Scheduled appointments and drop-ins are available for students six days a week. The workshops and events calendar are available on Handshake and on our website.

Call 703-993-2370 or visit careers.gmu.edu for more details, tips, and resources. University Career Services is located in SUB I, Room 3400, on the Fairfax Campus.

USING THIS GUIDE

The Career Readiness Guide is meant to serve as a resource guide and planning tool that you can use throughout your time at Mason. The guide can help you

- Form your career development plan and strategies
- Explore the range of career options and opportunities available to you

This guide has been divided into sections that address the most common questions encountered along the student journey. Look for the following icons for quick tips and reference points:

Exercises

Quick Tips

10-Minute Challenges
(See pages 29, 34, 36, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50, 60, 63, 64, 68, 70, and 74)

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Career Ready

USE YOUR TIME AT MASON TO BECOME CAREER-READY

It takes intention and effort to become career-ready by graduation. It is a process that takes time and planning throughout your Mason experience, and UCS can help you.

Based on feedback from employers and alumni, we have designed a career-readiness equation that will help you prepare for a successful transition into the workplace. The combination of your degree, two relevant experiences, and the ability to market yourself are all essential to making you career-ready.

EARN A DEGREE

There are resources within your academic department and the university to help you figure out your first step after Mason. The world of work is organized by industries, not majors or degrees. While you want to choose the degree(s) that best supports your goals, employers hire based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities you demonstrate as a result of your studies, and not just the name of your degree alone.

*Find the **Earn a Degree** chapter on page* **14**

How will my choice of degree support what I plan to do after graduation?

This is a question you will want to focus on

- in your first 30 credits if you are an undergraduate student
- in your first semester of your program as a graduate student

If you are not sure what you want to do after graduation...

- ☐ Research career options on **Choosing a Major or Career** (go.gmu.edu/careers-explore) (e.g., *What can I do with this major*?)
- ☐ Schedule an appointment with a career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment
- ☐ Register for UNIV 220 Decide/Confirm Majors if you are an undergraduate student and have completed fewer than 30 credits
- ☐ Take a look at the careers Mason alumni have pursued with their degrees: go.gmu.edu/LinkedIn-Mason
- ☐ Research the career outcomes of Mason's last graduating class

If you have a basic idea of what you want to study or what you want to do but not specifically...

- ☐ Review industries and identify one or two of interest: go.gmu.edu/careers-industries
- ☐ Search in Handshake for employers and job titles of interest
- ☐ Schedule an appointment with a career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment
- ☐ Register for UNIV 220 Decide/Confirm Majors if you are an undergraduate student and have completed fewer than 30 credits
- ☐ Apply for graduate assistantships and fellowships

If you know what you want to do but are not sure how to get there...

- ☐ Search in Handshake for 10 or more job listings to see common requirements for skills and experience
- ☐ Schedule an appointment with a career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment
- ☐ Register for UNIV 320 Internship/Career Readiness if you have completed 30 to 90 credits
- ☐ Consider attending the Clearance Ready Program: go.gmu.edu/careers-clearance

Create your to-do list with action items using the suggestions on the previous page for inspiration. Incorporate a timeline and additional actions or resources—things you might learn from your success coach or academic advisor—to fit your specific goal.

GAIN EXPERIENCES

Employers expect new graduates to have six to 12 months of relevant experience. An internship or other type of career experience enhances classroom learning, helps in future course selections, and validates career paths.

(2x)

*Find the **Gain Experiences** chapter on page* **37**

What's the first relevant career experience I want to have? What about the second?

This is a question you will want to focus on

- as an undergraduate student enrolled in 30 to 90 credits
- midway through your program if you are a graduate student

If your time is limited because of work, family, or other obligations...

- ☐ Register for an internship course that counts toward a degree requirement
- ☐ Register for project-based, client-based, and experiential or skill-building courses. Talk to your academic advisor or success coach to learn about your options.
- ☐ Search in Handshake for 10 or more job listings to see common requirements for skills and experience

If you can't afford to take on an unpaid internship...

- ☐ Apply for the Scholarship for Unpaid Internships through University Career Services and connect with the Student Financial Aid Office to explore other scholarship options
- ☐ Gain relevant experience through campus research, strategic use of course assignments, and so forth
- ☐ Search for 10 or more job listings in Handshake and review them to find common requirements for skills and experience
- ☐ Apply for graduate assistantships and fellowships

If you are ready to engage in experiential learning...

- ☐ Search in Handshake for internship listings and apply for 15 to 20
- ☐ Attend career fairs and employer networking events (go.gmu.edu/careers-events)
- ☐ Schedule an appointment with a career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment
- ☐ Register for UNIV 320 Internship/Career Readiness if you are an undergraduate student and have completed 30 to 90 credits

Create your to-do list with action items using the suggestions on the previous page for inspiration. Incorporate a timeline and additional actions or resources—things you might learn from your success coach or academic advisor—to fit your specific goal.

MARKET YOURSELF

You must be able to communicate (verbally and in writing) the skills and experiences you gained in the classroom to employers or graduate schools (e.g., through your cover letter or resume, during an interview or networking event, in a personal statement, etc.). In order to do this, think about how you will answer the following question:

*Find the **Market Yourself** chapter on page* **51**

What are the top skills and experiences I gained through my degree?

This is a question you will want to focus on

- as you are enrolled in 90 or more credits if you are an undergraduate student
- as you approach the conclusion of your program if you are a graduate student

If you worry that your skills and experiences are not enough to impress an employer...

- ☐ Discuss with your academic advisor how in-demand transferable skills (See page 12) would map to your completed course work
- ☐ Make sure to include academic-related credentials in your resume, including your concentration, thesis, a description of a capstone project, and/or any independent studies (See samples starting on page 76 for more details)
- ☐ Practice interviewing by scheduling an appointment with University Career Services at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment or using **InterviewPrep** (gmu.interviewprep.app)
- ☐ Get your Responsible Conduct of Research Certification if applicable

If you feel that your skills and experiences are adequate...

- ☐ Discuss with your academic advisor how in-demand transferable skills (See page 12) would map to your completed course work
- ☐ Make sure to include academic-related credentials in your resume, including your concentration, thesis, a description of a capstone project, and/or any independent studies
- ☐ Complete a practice interview using **InterviewPrep** (gmu.interviewprep.app) or by scheduling a practice interview appointment at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment
- ☐ Register for UNIV 420 College to Career if you are an undergraduate student and have completed 90 or more credits
- ☐ Register for PROV 701 Preparing for Academic Careers if you are a graduate student
- ☐ Submit your work for publication in the Journal of Mason Graduate Research or a journal related to your discipline

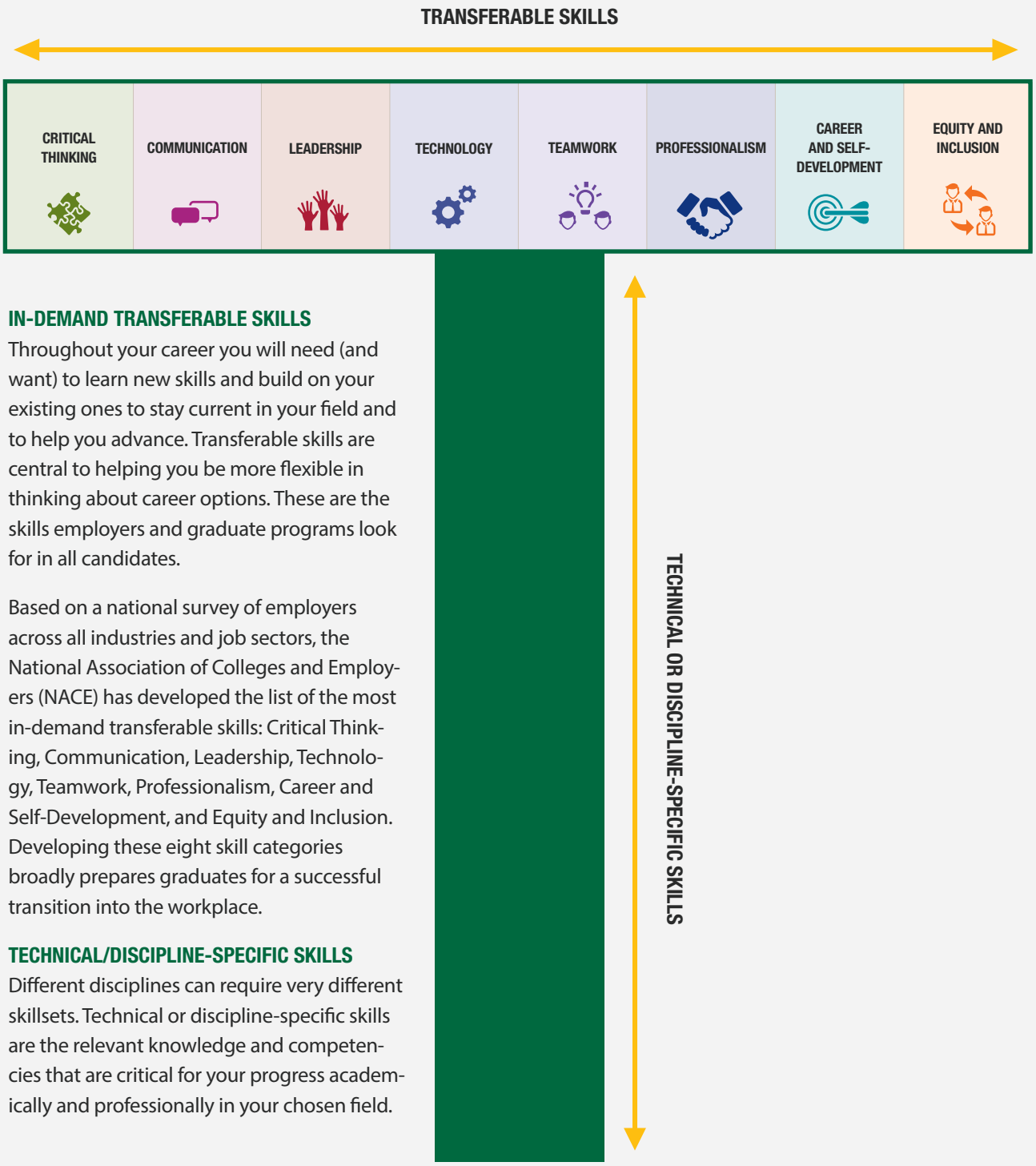
If you know which of your experiences have best prepared you for the opportunities you want and feel confident telling others about them...

- ☐ Celebrate your milestones of career readiness!
- ☐ Make sure to include academic-related credentials in your resume including your concentration, thesis, a description of a capstone project, and/or any independent studies
- ☐ Update your resume and Handshake and LinkedIn profiles with your new skills
- ☐ Attend a conference hosted by a professional association in your career field
- ☐ Present at the annual Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference at Mason
- ☐ Complete the **Career Plans Survey** (survey launches May 1, August 1, and December 1)

Create your to-do list with action items using the suggestions on the previous page for inspiration. Incorporate a timeline and additional actions or resources—things you might learn from your success coach or academic advisor—to fit your specific goal.

T-SHAPED PROFESSIONAL: THE FULL PACKAGE

Employers in every industry are looking for the "full package," someone who has both a breadth of knowledge (i.e., transferable skills) as well as depth of expertise (i.e., technical or discipline-specific skills). Strive to become a "T-shaped" professional and gain confidence in both your breadth of knowledge (the horizontal line of the T) and the depth of this knowledge (the vertical line of the T).



IN-DEMAND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Throughout your career you will need (and want) to learn new skills and build on your existing ones to stay current in your field and to help you advance. Transferable skills are central to helping you be more flexible in thinking about career options. These are the skills employers and graduate programs look for in all candidates.

Based on a national survey of employers across all industries and job sectors, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has developed the list of the most in-demand transferable skills: Critical Thinking, Communication, Leadership, Technology, Teamwork, Professionalism, Career and Self-Development, and Equity and Inclusion. Developing these eight skill categories broadly prepares graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.

TECHNICAL/DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC SKILLS

Different disciplines can require very different skillsets. Technical or discipline-specific skills are the relevant knowledge and competencies that are critical for your progress academically and professionally in your chosen field.

EXERCISE 1: MY IN-DEMAND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Step 1: Read the skill proficiency guide on the right. In the right column use the corresponding letter for each level—**B, N, I, A, E**—to indicate your current proficiency for each skill listed below.

IN-DEMAND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS		PROFICIENCY (B, N, I, A, E)
CRITICAL THINKING	Identify relevant information and analyze data	
	Restrain emotions during analysis	
	Collaborate to develop and test possible solutions	
	Adopt multiple perspectives and distinguish between fact and opinion	
COMMUNICATION	Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively when speaking and in writing	
	Write and edit memos, letters, and complex reports clearly and effectively	
	Possess public speaking skills and the ability to express ideas to others	
	Express complex ideas clearly and accurately to a variety of audiences	
LEADERSHIP	Manage projects from beginning to end	
	Define and clarify roles, objectives, and processes	
	Use interpersonal skills to coach others on performance improvement	
	Understand how to motivate others and delegate responsibilities	
TECHNOLOGY	Value continuous learning and be responsive to a variety of training formats	
	Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task	
	Demonstrate the ability to adapt to new and emerging technologies	
	Use technology ethically and efficiently to solve problems and accomplish goals	
TEAMWORK	Build collaborative relationships while understanding others' viewpoints	
	Negotiate and manage conflict	
	Reach consensus on processes and solutions	
	Work together to identify and utilize the strengths of each member	
PROFESSIONALISM	Demonstrate accountability and effective work habits (e.g., punctuality, time and workload management, working productively with others)	
	Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior	
	Have a professional work image	
	Act responsibly (e.g., use social media responsibly) and learn from mistakes	
CAREER AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT	Identify and articulate skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals	
	Identify areas of professional growth	
	Navigate and explore job options	
	Take necessary steps to pursue and advocate for opportunities in the workplace	
EQUITY AND INCLUSION	Value differences and implement strategies for inclusion	
	Interact respectfully and effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	
	Understand one's own biases and use that awareness to work to eliminate them	

SKILL PROFICIENCY GUIDE

B (Beginner)
You have a common knowledge or an understanding of basic techniques and concepts.

N (Novice)
You have the level of experience gained in a classroom and/or experimental scenarios or as a trainee on-the-job. You are expected to need help when performing this skill.

I (Intermediate)
You can successfully complete tasks in this competency as requested. Help from an expert may be required from time to time, but you can usually perform the skill independently.

A (Advanced)
You can perform the actions associated with this skill without assistance. You are certainly recognized within your immediate organization as a consultant when difficult questions arise regarding this skill.

E (Expert)
You are known as an expert in this area. You can provide guidance, troubleshoot, and answer questions related to this area of expertise and the field where the skill is used.

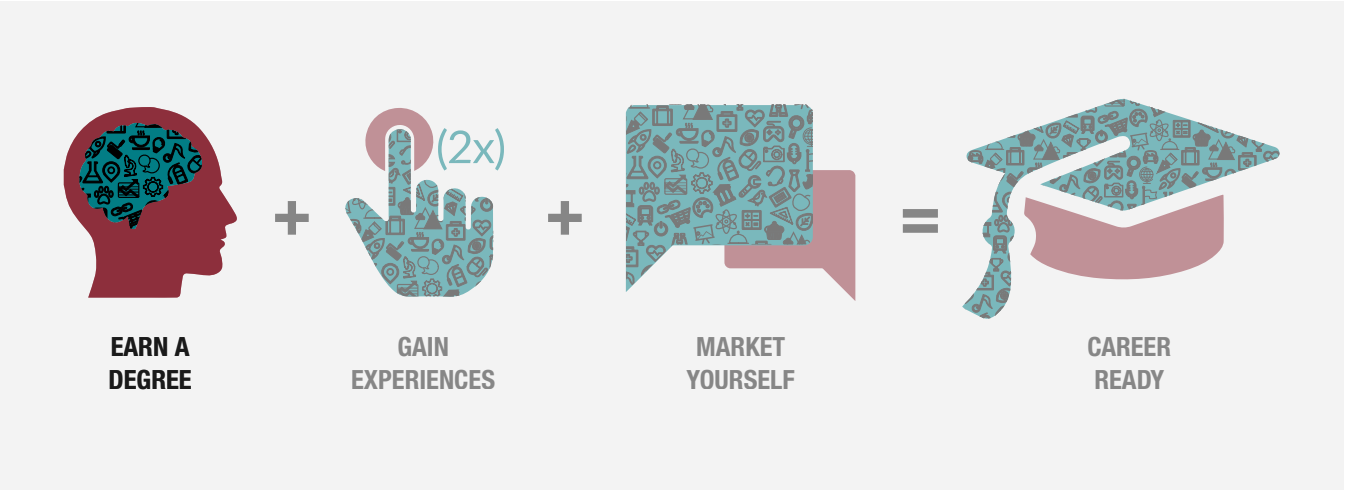
Step 2: What is one skill you would like to develop before you graduate? How will you develop that skill, and how will you know you have it? Take a moment to reflect.

QUICK TIPS

Tip 1: Once you've developed these essential transferable skills in and out of the classroom, it is critical that you can persuasively communicate them to potential employers or graduate programs (See Market Yourself section on page 51 for more information.).

Tip 2: You should not expect to be an expert in all skills before graduation, and which skills are most important will depend on a potential employer's needs and priorities. You will be expected to demonstrate competency at the level you've said you have, and you will be expected to continue growing those skills after you are hired. Skills tests are very commonly used by employers in the hiring and onboarding process.

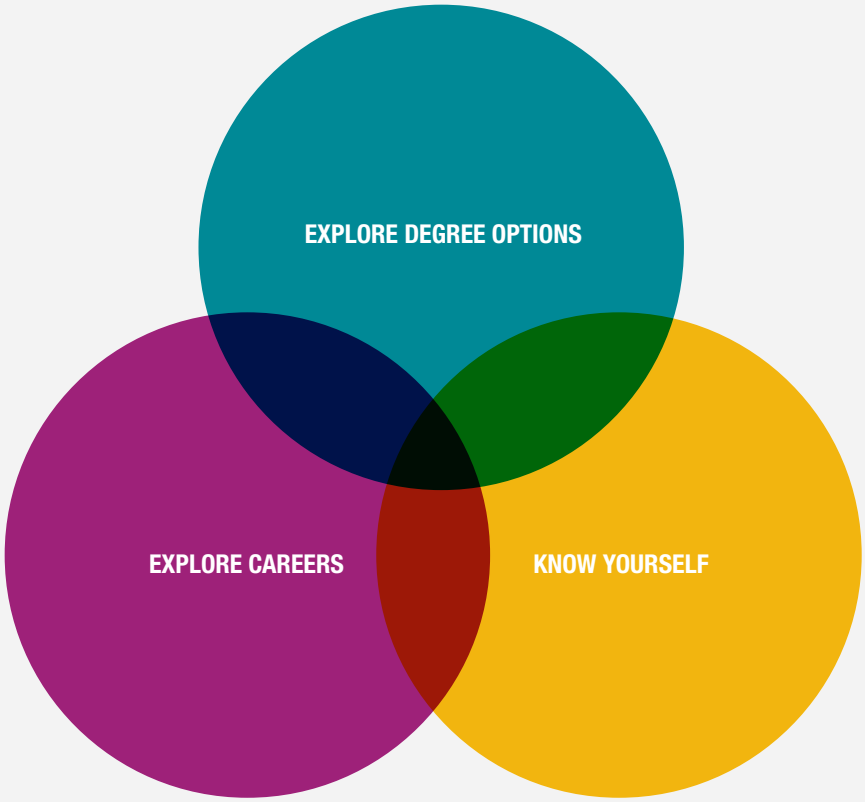
Earn a Degree



CHOOSE AND USE YOUR DEGREE

- ☐ Research Mason academic programs
- ☐ Talk to your academic advisor or faculty mentor
- ☐ Review industry resources
- ☐ Meet with a career advisor
- ☐ Complete career exploration activities
- ☐ Have a career conversation
- ☐ Enroll in a career course

Earning your degree is more than just taking classes, earning the credits, and getting the "piece of paper"—it's about finding a degree that is the right fit for you. How do you know if your choice is a good fit? The process involves both knowing yourself and exploring academic programs and careers.



Some people first choose a major and then figure out what they want to do with it; others identify their career goals first and then determine which degree will help them get there. Both approaches work!

Certain jobs require skills affiliated with specific degrees, such as engineering, nursing, and accounting. But for many people, their degree or major alone does not determine their career path or career success. There are many career options that you might enjoy based on your own ideas about what is a good fit. As we discussed in the Career Ready section of this guide, getting career ready is as much about your experiences and your ability to market yourself as it is about your degree. You'll want to choose the degree(s) that will best support your goals, but keep in mind that where you end up in the world of work is not driven by the name of your degree as much as the knowledge, skills, and abilities you can demonstrate as a result of your studies.

> My advice is to study something that you are interested in but keep it broad. Always have a backup plan—or two or three. Nothing is set in stone. A lot of people end up finding jobs that have nothing to do with their degree, but a lot of times it is just [having] the degree that matters.
>
> *Mason Student*

KNOW YOURSELF

It is helpful to explore your interests, skills, values, social identities, and decision-making style. Understanding these aspects of yourself will help you identify academic programs and careers that could be meaningful to you.

As you begin learning about yourself, we suggest two steps:

1. Complete career exercises in this section and include your results in the summary. See page 28.
2. Schedule an appointment with a career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment to continue the conversation at a deeper level. A career advisor may recommend a formal and/or informal assessment of personality, skills, and interests such as the Strong Interest Inventory, SkillScan Drive, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or Clifton Strengths. For more information, visit go.gmu.edu/careers-explore.

EXERCISE 1: MY PERFECT JOB

Take a few minutes to imagine….

You are creating your dream job. Nothing is stopping you. You have no concerns about education, time, money, location, or confidence. This job pays well, and you have the perfect education and work experience to qualify for it. It is exactly what you want, and it makes you happy.

Don't worry if you don't know the answers to all the following questions. The activities here will help you explore the possibilities. And you can always talk to UCS for more help.

Describe Your Perfect Job

What are you DOING? (e.g., describe your daily duties and activities)

HOW are you doing it?

What is DRIVING you? WHY are you working?

What does your RELATIONSHIP with your coworkers look like?

Are you working WITH PEOPLE or ALONE? Both?

WHERE are you working? (e.g., office, outdoors, etc.)

What is the MISSION of the company? Does there need to be a mission for you to enjoy it?

What kind of SUPPORT do you need from your boss?

Do you aspire to be in a LEADERSHIP position? If so, in what way?

Now that you've opened your mind to different aspects of your dream job, continue to add to the picture by exploring your interests, values, and skills.

KNOW YOURSELF: INTERESTS

Have you heard this advice: *Follow your passion and you will find your career?* **Following your passion implies that you have one. But many people don't.** What did you enjoy at age 10? What activity makes you lose track of time?

Simply start with an interest.
According to the vocational theory developed by John Holland, the activities people engage in and the work environments in American society can be categorized by a set of common characteristics. The more compatible a person's interests are with the work environment, the greater success and satisfaction the individual is likely to experience. The same can be said for your choice of academic program—the greater your interest in the subject, the more successful you will be academically.

EXERCISE 2: INTERESTS CHECKLIST

Follow the directions to identify your preferred Holland Interest Themes.

1. Check the boxes for the activities that sound appealing to you whether you have done them or not. **Do not consider your skill, only your interest in the activity.**

Realistic Theme (R)

- ☐ Go hiking or camping
- ☐ Operate large machinery or precision tools
- ☐ Assemble, repair, or network computers
- ☐ Plant a garden
- ☐ Lead a fitness class
- ☐ Raise or train animals
- ☐ Find solutions to mechanical problems
- ☐ Work on a construction site
- ☐ Take an engineering class
- ☐ Serve in the military
- ☐ Repair or tune up bikes, cars, or motorcycles
- ☐ Plan outdoor recreational activities
- ☐ Provide safety during an emergency

Total: _____

Investigative Theme (I)

- ☐ Solve math problems or quizzes
- ☐ Work with a chemistry set
- ☐ Read and solve mysteries
- ☐ Develop a survey questionnaire for a research project
- ☐ Read scientific books or watch scientific documentaries
- ☐ Work in a laboratory
- ☐ Learn a new computer programming language
- ☐ Compare and analyze budget figures
- ☐ Observe behavioral or scientific phenomena
- ☐ Use a microscope or telescope
- ☐ Play chess or other strategy games
- ☐ Analyze and solve abstract problems
- ☐ Collect and analyze data for an experiment

Total: _____

Artistic Theme (A)

- ☐ Design posters, flyers, or brochures
- ☐ Write an article or report the news
- ☐ Work creatively in an unstructured environment
- ☐ Think of new ways to solve problems or accomplish tasks
- ☐ Sketch, draw, paint, or sculpt
- ☐ Read or write poetry
- ☐ Dance or act in a play
- ☐ Attend a play, opera, or concert
- ☐ Design a dress, piece of jewelry, or furniture
- ☐ Play a musical instrument
- ☐ Visit an art exhibit or museum
- ☐ Write a creative story for fun or publication
- ☐ Create decorative food displays

Total: _____

Social Theme (S)

- ☐ Take a social sciences course (e.g., psychology or sociology)
- ☐ Provide care for children or adults who need assistance
- ☐ Belong to clubs or attend conferences and networking meetings
- ☐ Help someone new become acquainted with others and make friends
- ☐ Teach a class or a workshop
- ☐ Organize social events
- ☐ Learn about different cultures and groups of people
- ☐ Listen to your friends' personal problems and try to help solve them
- ☐ Do volunteer or community service work
- ☐ Train a new employee
- ☐ Mentor a young person
- ☐ Lead a discussion group on social justice
- ☐ Collaborate on group projects

Total: _____

Enterprising Theme (E)

- ☐ Give a speech or presentation
- ☐ Compete in a game or contest
- ☐ Lead a work project or committee
- ☐ Sell items or services
- ☐ Participate in a political campaign
- ☐ Help settle disputes
- ☐ Be a member of the debate team
- ☐ Own or operate a small business or service
- ☐ Manage a fundraising campaign for an organization
- ☐ Entertain business clients
- ☐ Serve as a club officer
- ☐ Supervise a staff of people
- ☐ Persuade others to accept your ideas

Total: _____

Conventional Theme (C)

- ☐ Fill out income tax forms
- ☐ Take notes during a meeting
- ☐ Maintain the records for a club, or serve as treasurer in a club
- ☐ Create a digital filing system to make it more organized
- ☐ Write business letters, memos, or reports
- ☐ Work with numbers, financial data, and spreadsheets
- ☐ Collect and organize items such as stamps, international coins, or baseball cards
- ☐ Update software and test new computer programs
- ☐ Create a budget and manage personal finances
- ☐ Make charts and graphs
- ☐ Take or keep an inventory of supplies
- ☐ Prepare agendas and schedules
- ☐ Develop and follow efficient work routines

Total: _____

2. Count up your checkmarks for each theme. What are the three themes with the highest number of checks?

3. Identify your first, second, and third most appealing themes. This is your Holland Code. For instance, SAC means: Social, Artistic, and Conventional.

Write your code here: _____

Work environments can be divided into six broad interest areas: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Knowing your unique combination of interests can assist you in determining jobs that suit you best.

LINK YOUR INTERESTS TO ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CAREERS

To learn more about your Holland Code and how to use this information when considering an academic program or future career:

- Check the table on the next page for a quick reference
- Schedule an appointment with a career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment

HOLLAND THEMES

	AREA	DESCRIPTION	ACTIVITIES	ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
R	Realistic (Expresses interests and solves problems by doing) **DOER**	Enjoys working with machines, tools, objects, and animals Practical, reserved, and physical Likes to work outdoors on concrete problems and see tangible results	ROTC Intramural and Club Sports The Geo Club Event Production Activities	Atmospheric Science (RI) Earth Science (RI) Environmental and Sustainability Studies (RCI) Environmental Science (RI) Mechanical Engineering (RIS/IRE)
I	Investigative (Expresses interests and solves problems by thinking) **THINKER**	Enjoys researching, exploring ideas, collecting data, analyzing, inquiring, and using instruments Methodical, original, and logical	Honors Committee Biology Club Student Engineering Organizations Student Government	Anthropology (IRE) Biology, Biochemistry (IRE) Criminology (IES) Economics (IAS) Mathematics (IRE) Pre-med (IRS) Computer, Civil, or Electrical Engineering (IRE) Computer Science (IEC) Health Informatics (ISC) Neuroscience (IRA)
A	Artistic (Expresses interests and solves problems by creating) **CREATOR**	Enjoys being original, independent, introspective, self-expressive, innovative, and unstructured Develops skills in music, art, drama, language, and writing	Student Activities Board Student Publications Mason Cable Network Storytellers Club Music Educators National Conference	Art and Visual Technology, Art History (AES) Creative Writing (AIS) Dance (AER) English (AES) Foreign Languages (ASE) Music (ASI) Theater (ASE) Graphic Design (ASE)
S	Social (Expresses interests and solves problems by helping) **HELPER**	Enjoys working with people to inform, train, enlighten, or cure Perceptive, responsible, empathetic, and patient	Sororities and Fraternities Campus Ministry Peer Advisors Mason Ambassadors Orientation Leaders or Resident Assistants (RAs)	Education (SEC) Human Development (SEC) Government (SEC) Global Affairs (SEI) History (SEI) Kinesiology (SRI) Nursing (SIA) Psychology (SIE/ASE) Social Work (SEC)
E	Enterprising (Expresses interests and solves problems by persuading) **PERSUADER**	Seeks to use mind, words, and feelings in dealing with people to motivate, persuade, manage, and sell things or promote ideas May like taking personal or financial risks Assertive, sociable, ambitious, enthusiastic, influential, and goal-oriented	Student Funding Board Debate Team Model United Nations American Marketing Association Management and Activist Clubs	Business (ESC) Communication (EAS) Human Resources (ESC) Law (ESA) Management (ERS) Public Administration (ESR) Tourism and Events Management (ESA)
C	Conventional (Expresses interests and solves problems by organizing) **ORGANIZER**	Enjoys activities that permit organization of information in a clear, orderly manner Likes structured settings Is detail-oriented, responsible, and conforming	Accounting Club Student Government DMIS Club Student Elections Commission	Accounting (CIS) Finance (CEI/ESC) Data Management (CEI) Information Technology (CIS)

KNOW YOURSELF: VALUES

Values are a set of standards that determine attitudes, choices, and actions. Mapping your value priorities can lay important groundwork for making sound career decisions. Some people value creativity, variety, autonomy, and flexibility; others place a premium on income, security, or prestige. There is no right or wrong in values; think about only what is important to you. You may find that your workplace values change over time, or even compete. Work-related values underlie our choices about work and our career satisfaction.

Example

Dayo identified his long-term career goal as a clinical psychologist and dreamed of becoming as famous and financially independent as Dr. Phil. Upon completing more career research, he learned that he would need to spend several more years in a graduate program and earn a PhD. He decided that he wanted to start a career that would pay very well right after graduation, so he chose the computer science major and became a software engineer after he completed his bachelor's degree. He valued a high income in both scenarios, but his value of supporting his family led him to prioritize the timing (short-term goal versus long-term goal), and he chose a path that would yield that income sooner.

EXERCISE 3: VALUES CHECKLIST

Step 1: Review and place a check mark by your top six to eight choices from the Academic/Work Values column below. These values are critical to identifying the academic/work activities that will be most rewarding to you.

Step 2: Then identify six to eight choices from the Personal Values column. These values are important to identifying the activities and lifestyle that will be most meaningful to you.

ACADEMIC/WORK VALUES	PERSONAL VALUES
☐ Achievement	☐ Adventure
☐ Aesthetic Appreciation	☐ Autonomy
☐ Altruism	☐ Community
☐ Artistic Expression	☐ Exploration
☐ Competition	☐ Family
☐ Contributing	☐ Financial Security
☐ Creativity	☐ Friendships
☐ Detailed	☐ Health and Fitness
☐ Helping Others	☐ Independence
☐ Intellectual Challenge	☐ Location
☐ Leadership	☐ Recognition
☐ Mastery/Expertise	☐ Relaxation
☐ New Ideas/Learning	☐ Spirituality
☐ Organization	☐ Structure
☐ Physical Challenge	☐ Teamwork
☐ Power and Influence	☐ Time Flexibility
☐ Self-Expression	☐ Variety
☐ Supervision	☐ Volunteering

Adapted from skillscan.com

KNOW YOURSELF: SOCIAL IDENTITY

Social identity groups are based on the physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. We are all members of multiple social groups. Sometimes these groups are obvious and clear, and sometimes they are not. The groups can often be self-claimed. Government, schools, and employers often ask an individual to claim a racial or cultural identity group. People can also associate an individual with a group based on visual perception. Some social identities are personally claimed but not often announced or visually discernible, such as sexual orientation, religion, or disability status.

SOCIAL IDENTITY GROUP	EXAMPLES (NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST)
Gender Identity	Woman, Man, Nonbinary
Gender Status	Transgender, Cisgender, Nonbinary
Race	Asian Pacific Islander, Native American, Latinx, Black, White, Asian, Bi-/Multiracial
Ethnicity	Irish, Chinese, Puerto Rican, Italian, Mohawk, Jewish, Guatemalan, Lebanese, Latinx
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual, Queer, Questioning, Asexual
Religion/Spirituality	Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Agnostic, Atheist
Socioeconomic Status	Poor, Working Class, Lower-Middle Class, Upper-Middle Class, Owning Class, Ruling Class
Age	Child, Young Adult, Middle-Age Adult, Adult 65+
Disability/Ability	Person with Disabilities (cognitive, physical, learning, etc.), Person without Disabilities
Nation of Origin and/or Citizenship	United States of America, Nigeria, Mexico, Turkey, Argentina, Spain, Italy, France
Body Size/Type	Hourglass, Fit, Lean, Stocky, Thick, Muscular, Thin, Curvy, Short, Tall
Other	First Generation, Veteran, Career Changer, Global Nomad

EXERCISE 4: MY SOCIAL IDENTITIES

These social identities have shaped me in the following ways:

SOCIAL IDENTITY GROUP (SEE EXAMPLES ABOVE)	SAMPLE *International student*	1)	2)	3)
STRENGTHS/SKILLS	*Independent, resourceful, perseverant, strong work ethic, analytical, technical, and environmental research skills*			
VALUES	*I care about learning, improving the environment, and international relations. I want to use my knowledge and skills to improve the environment in my home country.*			
INTERESTS	*Environmental science, research, and teaching*			
RESPONSIBILITIES	*I want to complete my college education and earn a well-paying position, enabling me to become self-sufficient and support my family back home.*			
PRIVILEGES*/BENEFITS	*Language skills, international perspective, strong science background gained from my home country's education system*			
OBSTACLES/BARRIERS	*I qualify for few jobs in the United States due to my visa status, my English writing skills, and my lack of local family support.*			

These aspects of myself shape my choice of major and career in the following ways:

SAMPLE

I want to use my knowledge and skills in environmental research to improve the environment in my home country as a researcher, and later in my career as a professor or an environmental consultant.

***Privilege:** Used here to describe usually unearned (yet also earned) advantages or benefits that are enjoyed by members of "dominant" social identity groups who receive interpersonal, institutional, structural, and societal power by virtue of their membership in that group. For example, one privilege straight people may experience is the tax advantages received through heterosexual marriage status.

Adapted from Drew University's Center for Career Development

KNOW YOURSELF: SKILLS

When someone asks you about your skills, do you often think about things you know and can do? You may answer using examples of both knowledge and experience: *I know how to build computers well and have already built my first computer. I am fascinated with international relations and Asia in particular. I'm always the one to organize events and plan family vacations.*

EXERCISE 5: WHAT I KNOW AND CAN DO

To help you identify some of your specialized knowledge, complete the sentences below:

I know quite a bit about

My favorite school subject(s) were/are

I could teach somebody else how to

If I had a gift certificate to buy five books in one field, I would choose books about

From my work experience, I have learned a lot about

From my hobbies, activities, and volunteer experience, I have learned a lot about

What patterns or themes have you noticed in your answers above?

Are any majors or careers coming to mind now that you want to explore?

QUICK TIP

For a deep-dive exploration of your transferable skills, discuss taking a formal assessment of skills, such as **SkillScan Drive**, with a career advisor. To make an appointment, visit go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment.

KNOW YOURSELF: DECISION-MAKING STYLE

Understanding your decision-making style will help you navigate the process of choosing your degree and getting started in your career. While some benefit from journaling or list making, others may turn to trusted loved ones to talk through a tough decision.

Example

Janel is the type of person who usually talks with her friends, collects a lot of information, and writes down pros and cons. She is currently trying to decide between biology and communication as her major. Here are three actions steps Janel plans to complete in the next four weeks:

- *Collect information about both majors and possible career outcomes using the University Catalog, O*NET Online, and "What can I do with this major?"* (go.gmu.edu/careers-explore)
- *Based on the information learned, identify the pros and cons of each major*
- *Discuss findings and reactions to the information with a close friend*

EXERCISE 6: MAKING DECISIONS

Think about difficult decisions you have made, and check the items that have worked in the past:

- ☐ Talking with friends/family
- ☐ Talking with a professional career advisor
- ☐ Collecting a lot of information before deciding
- ☐ Following someone else's advice
- ☐ Letting someone else make the decision
- ☐ Making the final decision yourself
- ☐ Writing down pros and cons
- ☐ Going with your gut to make a decision

Decision to be made:

Consider the decision before you. Based on what you know about your decision-making style, define three steps that you can take in a specific amount of time to get closer to making a decision.

Complete by

KNOW YOURSELF: SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Use this form to summarize the results from your preceding exercises.

1) My Perfect Job (Page 16)

2) Interests (Page 18)

Holland Code: Specific Interests:

3) Academic/Work Values (Page 22)

4) Personal Values (Page 22)

5) Social Identities (Page 24)

6) What I Know and Can Do (Page 26)

As you validate your preferences, observe patterns and generate ideas for academic programs and career options.

Make a list of three academic programs you want to explore:

Make a list of three careers you want to explore:

QUICK TIP

Now that you have learned more about yourself, you can begin to focus on the options that are the best fit for you. Make an appointment with a career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment to discuss what degree and career options are most in line with your strengths, interests, and values.

EXPLORE DEGREE OPTIONS

Whether you are still exploring what degree you will pursue, or you are unsure about how you want to use your degree after graduation, you need to make the connection between your field of study and specific careers. Mason has several resources to help you explore majors, minors, graduate degrees and certificates, and the possibilities for each.

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

1. Visit the *University Catalog* at catalog.gmu.edu/programs and identify one academic theme to explore (e.g., arts, media, communication, business, economics, entrepreneurship, computing, education, social services, engineering, technology, design, environment, sustainability, social action, government, policy, international affairs, health, medicine, well-being, people, culture, behavioral science, mathematics)
2. Visit the **"Read about it"** section at go.gmu.edu/careers-explore and identify one major of interest under "What can I do with this major?"

EXERCISE 7: MAJOR TO CAREER ANALYSIS

To get started, visit **Choosing a Major or Career** (go.gmu.edu/careers-explore)

- Use the "What can I do with this major?" resource.
- Select one major for exploration. Not all universities name their degrees the same way, but this will give you a general idea of the possibilities.

Major:

List three potential career areas and favorite job functions:

Examples: real estate, property management, human resources, training and development, writing/editing

List three typical employers that hire in each field:

Examples: nonprofit organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, consulting firms

List three strategies to maximize career opportunities:

Examples: learn webpage design and software packages relevant to publishing and media, develop a portfolio or audition video

Select one resource for additional information:

Examples: professional associations, Occupational Outlook Handbook, related resources, employment

List any other important considerations:

Example: PhD or a professional certification required to do this job

EXPLORING ADVANCED DEGREES AND CERTIFICATIONS

If you are considering a graduate program, an organized approach can simplify the application process and lead to acceptance into a graduate or professional degree program. When making this important decision, carefully weigh the time commitment, financial considerations, personal adjustments, and your readiness to pursue graduate-level course work.

- Assess the value of a graduate degree in terms of earning potential, entry into a profession, advancement, and competitiveness.
- Seek guidance from faculty, people in the profession, and your career advisor.

EXERCISE 8: MY GRADUATE SCHOOL READINESS

Select one answer for each question.

1. Do I have a clear understanding of what I want to do?

A) Yes, I am pretty sure!
B) Somewhat
C) Not really
D) I do not know

2. Does my ideal career require an advanced degree?

A) Yes, in most cases
B) Sometimes
C) Not usually
D) I am not sure

3. What are my plans for financing graduate school?

A) I have already developed a financial plan
B) I do not have a finalized plan, but I have done some research into fellowships, scholarships, and loans
C) I know that it will be expensive, but I don't know how I will pay for it
D) I have not thought about finances at all

4. Am I prepared for two to seven more years of schooling?

A) Absolutely
B) Maybe
C) No way
D) I have not thought about it

5. How would I describe my time-management skills?

A) I always work ahead
B) I tend to manage my time well, though there are times when I get off track
C) I am a bit of a procrastinator
D) What time-management skills?

6. Does the field I want to go into or the program I am interested in prefer work experience before getting an advanced degree?

A) Yes, and I do have experience OR No, people tend to go straight from undergraduate to graduate school in my field
B) It is preferred, but I do not have experience
C) It is required, but I do not have experience
D) I am not sure

7. What are my motivations for going to graduate school?

A) I know what I want to do, and getting an advanced degree will help me achieve my goals
B) It might help me in achieving my career goals
C) I am not ready to enter the workforce
D) I do not know what else to do

8. Have I researched the degree I want?

A) Yes
B) Just a little
C) Not really
D) I do not know what degree I want yet

9. How do I feel about the subject I am going to study?

A) I cannot get enough of it!
B) It is okay
C) It is pretty dull
D) I don't know what subject I am going to study

10. Can I afford to give up a full-time working salary to attend graduate school?

A) Yes, probably
B) Maybe
C) Probably not
D) I am not sure

If your answers are mostly

A - Having done your research, you have found that graduate school will improve your career prospects by making you a stronger candidate in your field. It is recommended that you begin to look into the next steps that will prepare you to be the best candidate possible for the programs you're interested in.

Recommended Next Steps (A)

- Visit your career and academic advisors to discuss graduate school options
- Speak with faculty in your department to find the best program for you
- Research the application process for your programs
- Visit the Writing Center to discuss your writing sample and personal statement
- Take the appropriate graduate school exam
- Meet with a peer career advisor to discuss your resume or CV

B - It is unclear whether graduate school is the right fit for you. If you conduct some more research, you should be able to form a clearer idea. Consider everything, from whether you possess the commitment to your subject to be in school for another two to seven years to whether you can afford graduate school right now. You may consider taking a few years off before graduate school to get some hands-on experience in your field.

C - Graduate school may not be the best fit for you right now. Consider your other options. Have you looked into internships or full-time positions in your field? Take the time to plot out your possible career routes, both with and without graduate school, to determine which path will be the best fit for you.

D - You likely do not have enough information right now to decide whether graduate school is right for you. Because you have not yet done much research into graduate school, that may be a good place to start. You should consider looking more into the requirements for your ideal career field, as well as information about specific graduate programs you may be interested in. Upon doing some additional research, reflect on what you've learned about yourself and again assess whether or not graduate school will be beneficial to you.

Recommended Next Steps (B, C, D)

- See a career advisor
- Speak with faculty or academic advisors in your major
- Find a professional in your field to find out more about the pros and cons of going to graduate school
- Browse petersons.com to learn about potential schools and programs
- Register for UNIV 421 College to Graduate School

Another thing to consider when you are deciding if you want to go to graduate school is if you hope to work in academia or pursue a nonacademic career path with your degree. There are significant differences between working in the academy and in industry around roles and responsibilities, workplace culture, and career advancement. Explore the notable differences between academic and nonacademic careers.

ACADEMIC	NONACADEMIC
Publishing in peer-reviewed journals is necessary for success.	Publications are nice to have, but not needed.
You can experience a great sense of autonomy.	There is often a clearly defined set of reporting lines and accountability.
Work schedules can be irregular and driven by the schedule of classes. Breaks are built around the academic calendar (e.g, winter and summer breaks).	Although evolving, standard business hours are considered Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Breaks are not set or built into the calendar, and busy times are driven by the cycle of the specific industry.
Your budget is often determined by fundraising and grant-seeking. These efforts are frequently part of the job, particularly for career advancement.	Your budget is often determined by a centralized resource allocation process and set by the fiscal year.
Tenure-line positions are highly coveted for job security, but the number of tenure-track positions is on the decline.	There is no equivalent to the tenure track.

EXPLORE CAREERS

Your future career may relate more to your career interests, work values, and skills than any specific academic major. By assessing what you know about yourself, the job market, and the opportunities you have, you can make better decisions. It is also important to identify what you don't know and what you need to learn to fulfill the requirements of possible fields.

Notice what grabs your attention in the process and what makes your energy level increase. When considering two options, which one do you feel pulled to? Why? Look for clues in your energy and interests.

EXPLORING CAREERS THROUGH CAREER CONVERSATIONS

Exploring careers from a professional's perspective is a valuable way to determine if a particular career is an option for you. Whether you have questions about the day-to-day operations of a job, the proper points of entry for a field of work, the best courses to take, or internship experiences to explore, this is a great way to find answers that will help develop your thoughts around suitable careers.

To conduct an effective career conversation, consider next steps:

- Find appropriate professional contacts, such as Mason alumni, Mason students in professional student organizations, or referrals from your professors or career advisors
- Research industries and career fields (e.g., type of skills and qualities that are needed in the field or required for career entry, and types of career tracks and sample job titles in this field)
- Prepare your questions about the industry, career field, and the individual with whom you are speaking (e.g., Is a specific major or degree required? Is an advanced degree necessary for an entry-level position? Does the employer have tuition benefits? What skills or training do people use every day to complete their work?)
- Initiate the connection
- Conduct the conversation, and interview the person to gather information about their career
- Follow up and thank the professional contact

Sample Email

Dear [First Name Last Name]:

I am a sophomore at George Mason University. I found your name in the Mason Alumni Association group on LinkedIn, and I'm interested in learning more about your profession. I enjoy my psychology classes and would like the opportunity to speak with you about how you got into the field. Your perspective and advice are very valuable and timely, as I consider declaring psychology as a major next semester.

Would you be willing to set aside 20 minutes for a career conversation? I am open to further correspondence by email or phone, or in person if you prefer. Feel free to reply to this email (mstudent@gmu.edu) or call my cell phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Your first and last name
George Mason University

Continue to have career conversations (i.e., informational interviews) to gather advice from a professional about an industry, career, or organization. An informational interview is a structured meeting where you are in charge of asking all the questions and gathering the information that will help you decide about an employer or an industry and how to prepare yourself to successfully enter that line of work.

In case of a planned or chance meeting, you should always have questions prepared to ask the new professional contact. Here are some examples:

WHO TO ASK	WHAT TO ASK
PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBERS	- What do you think are my greatest strengths? - What do you like most and least about your job/career? - What is something you wish you had known about the world of work when you were my age?
ACADEMIC ADVISOR	- What are the most popular classes in this department? - What do Mason grads typically do with this degree/major? - What courses have assigned group projects, applied research, or client/community partner interaction?
PROFESSORS/INSTRUCTORS	- What are your research interests? - What are the emerging trends in this field? - In which careers/types of jobs could I best apply what I learn from your class?
PEERS/MASON STUDENTS	- What do you like most about your classes in this major? - What do you plan to do with this major/degree after graduation? - How are you applying what you learned in class to your job/internship? - What has surprised you most about this career/job based on your internship?
ALUMNI/PROFESSIONALS IN A CAREER FIELD OF INTEREST **TIP:** Attend UCS career fairs and employer events to meet Mason alumni and professionals eager to connect with you!	- Is there a specific major/degree required for the job you have? - Describe a typical day in your role. - What is the least known/understood aspect or fact about this career field? - What do you wish you'd known when you were starting out in this career/role?

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

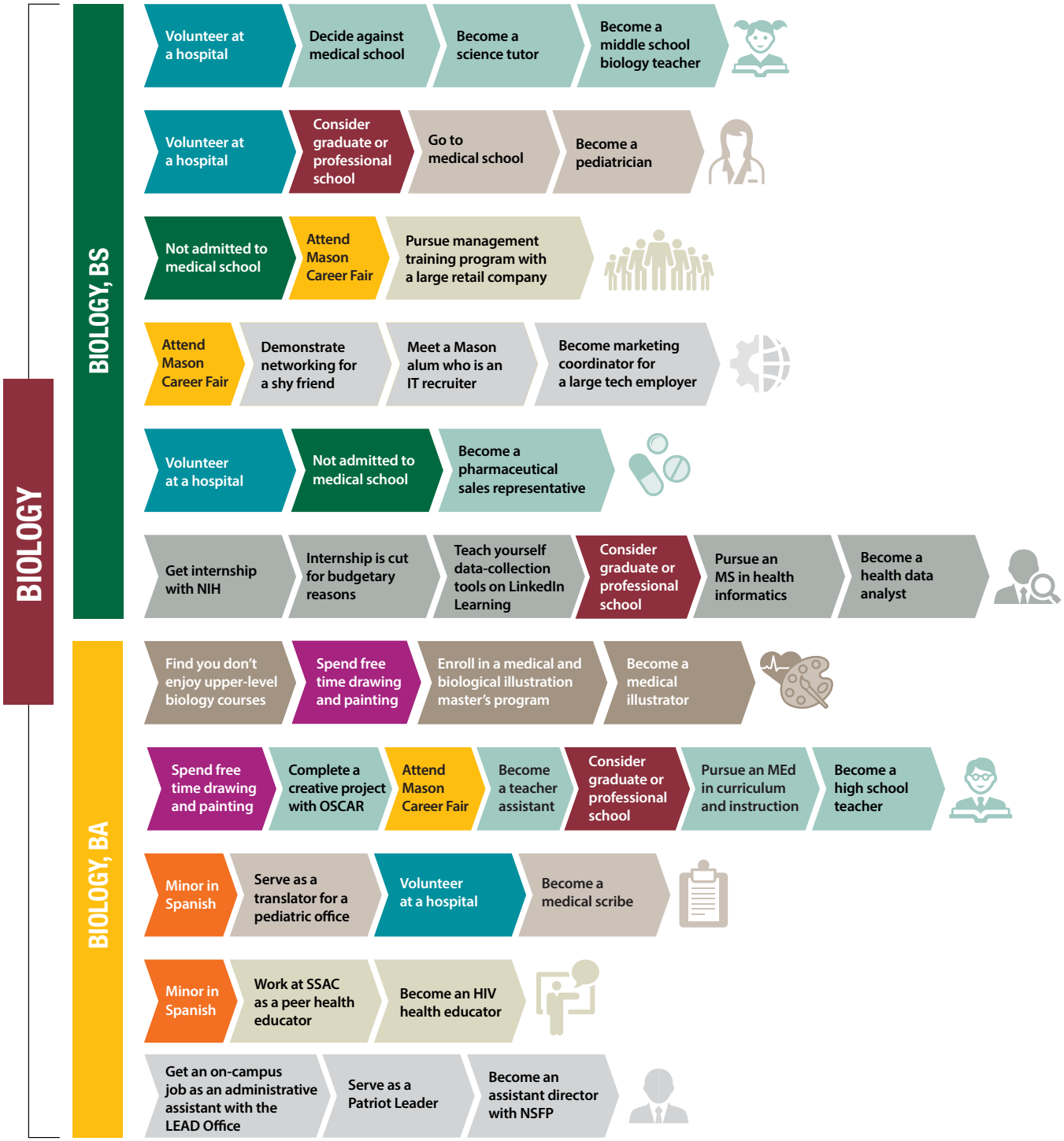
Visit **Choosing a Major or Career** at go.gmu.edu/careers-explore. In the **"Read about it"** section:

1. Learn what job roles are out there by exploring Handshake's Career Paths
2. Identify one industry of interest using the Career Specific Resources
3. Explore careers based on your skills and work experience using My Skills - My Future

ONE DEGREE, MANY OPTIONS

Your choice of degree creates options but does not define your career or job prospects. Your major, experiences, skills, motivations, job market, personal circumstances, and luck or fate all play a role in determining your first step after Mason.

Here are examples of different ways Mason grads have used their biology degrees. You can see how different experiences can shape the outcomes.



HOW TO USE YOUR DEGREE

Career planning is a process with no beginning or end, and it is never too late for you to take steps forward at any point knowing that you can modify your path as new opportunities arise. Make the most out of your academic experience by taking advantage of all that Mason has to offer you—there are so many ways you can extend your classroom experience into the world of work.

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

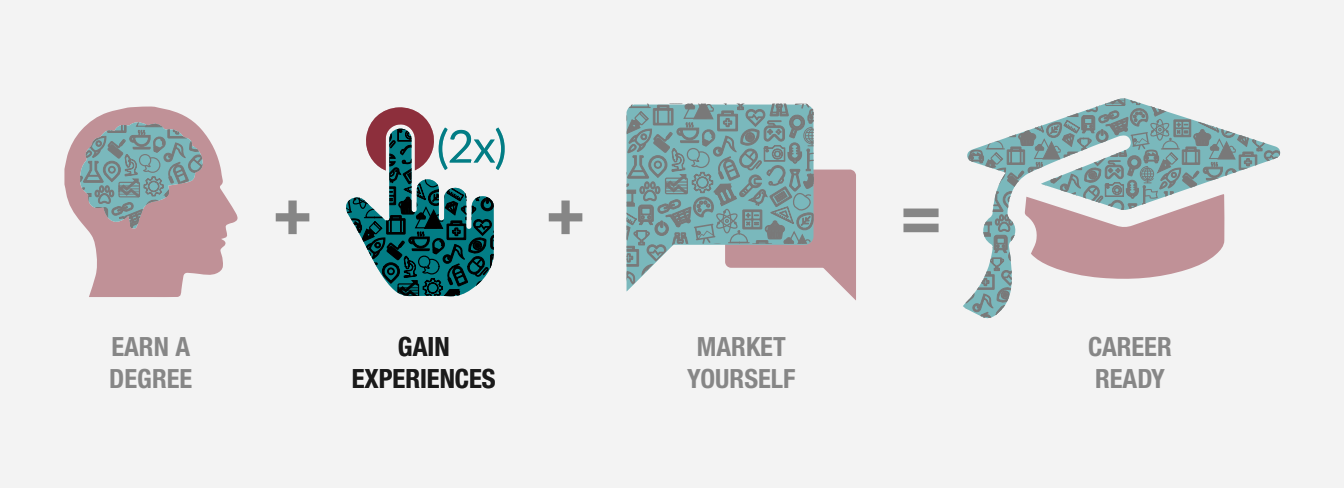
These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

Check **One Degree, Many Options** on go.gmu.edu/careers-explore for samples of various career paths Mason alumni have used with their degrees.

TOP TAKEAWAYS FOR YOUR CAREER

- Most employers care more about your skills and experiences than a specific major.
- Most students don't have it "all figured out." About 66 percent of Mason students change their major at least once!
- Your first job will not last for the rest of your career. The average person will have more than 15 jobs in a lifetime, each lasting about one to three years.
- Graduate school is not a career plan—it's an important step on your career path.

Gain Experiences



ENGAGE IN HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES

- ☐ Join an organization on campus or in the community (e.g., professional association)
- ☐ Get a job or take on new responsibilities with your current employer
- ☐ Conduct research
- ☐ Study abroad
- ☐ Volunteer
- ☐ Complete an internship

Employers and graduate programs look beyond your academic record for skills built and tested through hands-on experiences inside and outside the classroom. These experiences allow you to try different work environments within your projected career field and provide you opportunities to develop skills that new professionals need, such as critical thinking, interpersonal communication, and teamwork.

GAIN EXPERIENCES

There are many ways to gain experience. The preferred or most valued experience varies by industry or type of employer. Among the many types of hands-on experience that can demonstrate your skills, consider:

- ☐ Capstone projects and competitions
- ☐ Community-engaged learning assignments
- ☐ Entrepreneurship (start-ups)
- ☐ Field work
- ☐ Graduate assistantships
- ☐ Group projects and presentations
- ☐ Internships
- ☐ Off-campus jobs
- ☐ On-campus part-time jobs
- ☐ On-campus student organizations
- ☐ Professional associations
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Study abroad
- ☐ Summer jobs
- ☐ Technology development (websites, apps, games, etc.)
- ☐ Thesis
- ☐ Volunteering/community service

"The goal of undergraduate studies is not just to acquire knowledge, but to use knowledge...if it has no utility, then it's just a series of facts."
Dan Cox, OSCAR Mentor

"I wish I [had] taken advantage of unpaid internships. Experience matters."
Advice from a Mason Alum

CAREER SUCCESS STARTS AT MASON

As a Mason student, you can enhance your academic experience by taking advantage of resources available to you due to your connection to the university. There are a few privileges of being a student that you should leverage while you can!

Join professional associations

- Some organizations offer free membership if you are preparing for a career in a related field (e.g., the National Society of Professional Engineers, the American Planning Association, the Society of Petroleum Engineers, and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants).
- Others offer discounted student rates to join the professional association or to register for a conference (If you don't see student rates listed on the organization's site, call and inquire for a discount, scholarship, or volunteer opportunity at the conference to bring down costs.).

Complete internships

- Many internships will only apply to currently enrolled students. You will no longer be eligible after you graduate.
- When you're a college student, it's acceptable to have a new job each semester—this will not reflect negatively on your resume.

Be thoughtful about selecting courses

- Select skill-building courses or courses that include an experiential learning component or client-based project.

Seek interpersonal interactions that uniquely prepare you for a diverse working world

- Access our vast university community to develop friendships and a strong future network of reliable professional supporters after graduation.
- Take advantage of mentoring opportunities from faculty.
- Gain impressive leadership experience through various opportunities at the largest public research university in Virginia (e.g., Patriot Leaders or via Student Involvement).

Connect with alumni and other working professionals

- Many love to give back by mentoring or offering current students career advice. They want to help—you just have to ask.

Use your Mason affiliation—and your gmu.edu email address

- Get free or discounted access to various tools and technology (e.g., LinkedIn Learning on lil.gmu.edu, One Button Studio) or resources (e.g., case competitions or employer projects/simulations such as a CIA briefing or the U.S. State Department Foreign Service Conference).
- Receive great discounts on many helpful products (e.g., Apple, Dell, etc.) or online services (e.g., Dropbox, Spotify, Amazon, and LastPass).
- Using an affiliated email address will lend credibility to your professional profile when seeking guidance from others.

THE EXPERIENCE EMPLOYERS WANT

Because employers expect new graduates to have six to 12 months of relevant experience, you will need to complete at least two experiences that work well with your program and support your career goals. For experiences that are not as directly related, you will have to help employers see the connection by marketing the career readiness or transferable skills you developed.

You have limited time, so be strategic about which experiences you choose. Prioritize gaining experiences most related to and most valued by employers in your industry of interest.

INDUSTRY	RELATED EXPERIENCES	TIPS
ACCOUNTING	Accounting student organization Internship Externship Leadership role (e.g., treasurer of a home owners association or a parent-teacher association)	Consider the Mason Accounting Society The deadlines are in August/September (or earlier!) for an internship that begins the following summer Participate in the on-campus interviewing program Research certification requirements (e.g., Certified Public Accountant)
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT	A performance, show, or exhibit, or publishing a piece Arts student organization Volunteer or intern in an arts organization (e.g., Mason's Center for the Arts, the Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap, etc.)	Maintain a portfolio or website of your work Consider joining the Graduate Arts Management Society, GMU Printmakers Guild, or other Mason arts organizations Participate in Creative Careers Week Live in the College of Visual and Performing Arts Learning Community (LC) or the Creativity, Design, and Expression LC
CONSULTING	Client-based or team-based course projects Pre-professional organization providing networking, educational, and mentoring events Internship	Practice case interviewing Consider joining the Mason Consulting Club Participate in the on-campus interviewing program Earn certifications (e.g., PMP, Lean, Six Sigma, Agile)
EDUCATION	Student teaching or field experience Internship Tutor or serve as a peer advisor Volunteer or work with your desired age group (e.g., coach sports team)	Research licensure requirements The deadlines are February to May for positions, but many still hire over the summer for a fall start Participate in Education Recruitment Day
ENGINEERING	Client-based or team-based course projects Engineering student organization Internship Independent project or design challenge Research	Join engineering professional associations (e.g., Engineers for International Development) Maintain a portfolio of work and projects Attend career fairs Apply for funding to attend professional conferences through the College of Engineering and Computing Dean's Office Volunteer at the American Society of Civil Engineers Annual Conference and participate in Mentor Match
FASHION AND RETAIL	Internship Student fashion club or model troupe Part-time fashion retail job Volunteer (e.g., fashion consultant, boutique thrift store, costume department of a theater)	Take LinkedIn Learning courses on supply chain, market research, Illustrator/Photoshop for fashion design, etc. Develop an e-portfolio of work or a fashion website/vlog

QUICK TIP

More information about what you can do to best prepare yourself for your industry of interest can be found at go.gmu.edu/careers-industries.

FINANCIAL SERVICES	Financial student organization Financial role in a student or community organization (e.g., treasurer) Internship Volunteer at Junior Achievement	Consider joining the George Mason Investment Club or live in the Business LC The deadlines are in August/September for positions starting the following summer Participate in the on-campus interviewing program Research certification requirements (e.g., Certified Financial Planner)
GOVERNMENT	Internship Volunteer at the state or local level or on a campaign (e.g., Fairfax County elections) Research papers or projects (e.g., policy analysis) Run for a student government office	Join the Clearance Ready Program Participate in Government Career Week Start looking for the Federal Pathways Internship Program your first year
GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE	Spend a semester at the Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation in Front Royal, Virginia Volunteer or intern at an environmental organization (e.g., World Wildlife Fund, farmer's market, etc.) Client-based or team-based course projects Research and field experience	Apply sustainability principles to any role or job Participate in Health and Science Industry Week Engage with the Office of Sustainability or live in the Sustainable Futures LC Join the Mason Environmental Justice Alliance student organization
HEALTH	Volunteer through the Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) on campus, at hospitals, or Mason and Partners (MAP) Clinics Internships Research Leadership experience Shadow clinical professionals (as necessary)	Gain research experience through the Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR) Serve the community through the Office of Community Engagement and Civic Learning (CECIL), Center for Well-Being, or local organizations Join relevant student organizations (e.g., AcademyHealth) Participate in Health and Science Industry Week Get on the pre-health listserv
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM	Internship/Practicum Part-time job in customer or food service, event planning, outdoor education, entertainment, etc. Plan large-scale events for a club or organization	Join the Mason Tourism and Events Management Society Gain foreign language skills and international travel experience Volunteer (e.g., annual fundraising dinner, event organizer)
HUMAN RESOURCES	HR internship On-campus leadership role (e.g., Mason Ambassador, Resident Assistant, Patriot Leader, recruitment officer or membership chair) Manage volunteers for a nonprofit or community organization	Join the Society of Human Resource Management student organization Take an industrial and organizational psychology elective Focus on current HR issues when choosing topics for required research papers
HUMAN SERVICES	Apprenticeships/field placement Internships Volunteer/community service Research with a faculty member on related topics (e.g., mental health, foster care, aging) On-campus helping role (e.g., Substance Use Peer Educator, Resident Assistant)	Get involved in relevant student organizations (e.g., Social Work Student Association, Psi Chi) Volunteer through SSAC or CECIL on campus or local government or community organizations off campus Complete trainings offered through the Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment (CCEE)
IT (INCLUDES SOFTWARE DEVELOPER AND CYBER ROLES)	Internship Research project Course or capstone projects Obtain an industry certification (e.g., AWS, CISSP, Scrum) Participate in a hackathon Find a part-time technology job (e.g., desktop support)	The deadlines for internships and full-time jobs are September/October for positions starting the following summer Attend a career fair and employer events Join the Clearance Ready Program Join a student organization (e.g., Society of Women Engineers, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, National Society of Black Engineers, Competitive Cyber)

INTERNATIONAL	Study or intern abroad in a country or region of interest Join a cultural student organization or volunteer through the Office of International Programs and Services Work or volunteer using your foreign language skills	Be open to start at a multinational organization in a local office, then transfer internationally Live in the Intercultural Exploration LC Do Mason's Peace Corps Prep Program Utilize Passport Career
LAW AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE	Internship Ride along with a police officer Join the Mason Police Cadets Volunteer or work part-time to provide legal services or enforce policy (e.g., CASA)	Practice your writing and research skills Be open to start in local law enforcement and then transfer to a federal enforcement agency Keep your record clean, and join the Clearance Ready Program Join the Patriot Pre-Law Program
MARKETING, ADVERTISING, AND PR	Internship On-campus job (e.g., Admissions, Branding, Advancement, Events Management) Leadership role in a student organization (e.g., president, PR coordinator)	Join student organizations (e.g., Public Relations Student Society of America, American Marketing Association, etc.) Create content for blogs/vlogs, social media Join Toastmasters or an improv group Be mindful of your personal online brand
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	Internship Get involved with George Mason Student Media (e.g., *Fourth Estate*, WGMU Radio, Mason Cable Network) Volunteer on a movie or TV shoot Submit articles to local newspapers as a freelance writer Write and direct short films	Join the Green Machine Live in the Creativity, Design, and Expression LC or the Arts LC Join the Society of Professional Journalists Submit original work to contests (e.g., film festivals) Sign up with a temp agency specializing in media and entertainment
NONPROFIT	Internship Volunteer through SSAC or CECIL on campus or in local government or community organizations Complete a certificate program in grant writing Join your state's organization for support of nonprofits (e.g., Center for Nonprofit Excellence)	Participate in the Nonprofit Fellows Program Get involved in student or community organizations working toward your passion or interests Complete trainings offered through CCEE
SCIENCE AND RESEARCH	Research or lab projects Internships Join a professional association Present research at conferences and symposia	Gain research experience and apply for funding through OSCAR Apply to government research internships Become a tutor for a College of Science class or a lab assistant Be a part of the STEM Accelerator, such as becoming a learning assistant
SPORTS AND RECREATION	Internship Part-time job (e.g, Mason Recreation, Athletics, etc.) Volunteer (e.g., county parks and recreation, coach a youth team, etc.) Play a sport at any level (e.g., club or intramural)	Join the Mason Sports Management Society Be open to start in a small college or minor league team and then move to major professional leagues Use Teamwork Online

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

1. Indicate your industry (or industries) of interest in your Handshake profile.
2. Visit go.gmu.edu/careers-industries, select your favorite industry, and identify one resource for more exploration.

MAXIMIZE YOUR EXPERIENCES TO POSITIVELY IMPACT YOUR CAREER OUTCOMES

Below are a few suggestions for making the most of your experiences. Include such examples in your application materials (resumes and cover letters) and tell the stories of your accomplishments during interviews or networking events.

Study Abroad

Make your study-abroad experience more than a really cool trip.

How to maximize career benefits from studying abroad

- Select a study-abroad program that takes place over a summer, semester, or year; longer experiences are more marketable
- Do an internship or volunteer while abroad to increase cultural awareness and gain experience
- Always use the local language to improve the proficiency of your foreign language skills
- Participate in activities that will bring you in contact with the local people and allow you to develop cross-cultural communication skills
- Work on group projects with students from different cultures to increase teamwork skills
- Travel outside your home city to develop your independence and decision-making skills
- Document your experiences in a blog to improve your written communication and social media skills
- Pinpoint examples of times when you had to overcome a new challenge to show your adaptability

Research

Research is not just for those who want to pursue advanced studies or work in academia.

How to maximize career benefits from your research experience

- Select a research topic that addresses a question that is of interest to your target employers
- Interview alumni and experts in the field on your topic and thus expand your professional network
- Use the latest or most common methodologies and technologies for your field in the data collection, analysis, or presentation stages to build or hone marketable technical skills
- Share your findings, report, or paper via LinkedIn as a writing sample for job or graduate school applications or by sending a copy directly to anyone within your network who may be interested, could apply your research, or advocate for you via recommendations
- Publish your paper in a professional journal
- Develop presentation skills by going to conferences to present your research
- Develop critical thinking skills by translating discipline-specific concepts for a lay audience

Graduate Assistantships

In addition to financing graduate school, graduate assistantships (GAs) equip you with professional experience.

How to maximize career benefits from your graduate assistantship

- Tailor your experience to match your career interests or explore career paths by volunteering for a variety of project or position types (e.g., If you are pursuing an academic career, try to get both graduate research assistant and graduate teaching assistant experiences)
- Treat the experience as a professional role to earn strong references and recommendation letters at the end (e.g., Consider what you want your supervisor to be able to say about you at the end)
- Take advantage of professional development opportunities that complement the GA experience that are offered through University Life, the Office of Graduate Education, University Libraries, the Stearns Center, and Human Resources
- Join relevant professional associations for networking, educational, and mentoring events
- Interact with your GA co-workers/supervisors, peers, and future colleagues and get exposure to faculty and other seasoned professionals who are further along in their careers
- Identify and keep track of the skills you are gaining and how they translate to a broad job market—which task/skill/scenario examples will you use from your GA experience to respond to job interview questions?
- Move forward with your own goals and responsibilities while helping others progress as well through collegial collaboration and mentoring undergraduates

NAVIGATE YOUR JOB AND INTERNSHIP SEARCH

Finding a job or an internship takes focus, time (an average of six to nine months), patience, and perseverance.

Consider three simple steps:

- Decide what experience you are seeking
- Start with Handshake
- Use the most effective job search strategies

STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT EXPERIENCE YOU ARE SEEKING

If you have already identified your dream job or employer, meet with a career advisor who is a specialist and highly knowledgeable about the latest hiring trends to help you devise a strategy for how you are going to break into that field. Your career advisor will help you to develop a plan for gaining relevant skills and experience, perhaps through an internship, so that you can get started addressing needs in the local community or greater world.

Knowing what types of jobs or internships you're looking for is the first step to a successful search. Determine what is important to you, such as location, compensation, organization size, work environment, culture, mission, and vision.

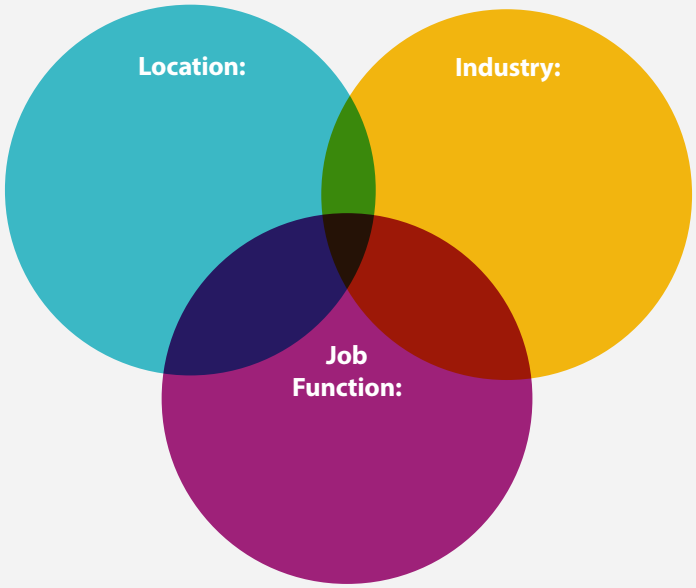
EXERCISE 1: MY JOB/INTERNSHIP TARGET

Type of position (e.g., full-time, part-time, paid or unpaid internship, volunteering, job titles, specialty areas, etc.)

Industry (e.g., health care, education, government, technology, nonprofit, entertainment, arts, consulting, etc.)

Type of organization (e.g., public, private, large, mid-sized, small, etc.)

The job/internship target is the intersection of three elements listed below:



Examples: *project assistant for a large nonprofit organization in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area; marketing coordinator for an information technology company in New York City*

My job/internship target:

Commitment:
I am going to spend _____ hours/minutes each day devoted to my job/internship search. (Even if you do not have a lot of time, spending at least 10 minutes a day will get you closer to your goal.)

QUICK TIPS

Tip1: You have created one job/internship target. Create another to make sure you have identified more than one good option.

Tip 2: You can search and apply for on-campus jobs (e.g., Federal Work Study, research and graduate assistantships, and part-time student employment) through

- Handshake (handshake.gmu.edu)
- Mason's job portal (jobs.gmu.edu)

For more information, review go.gmu.edu/careers-campus.

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

1. Schedule a meeting with your career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment
2. Create a free account on **CareerShift** using the instructions at go.gmu.edu/careers-CareerShift
3. Create a list of 50 potential employers in your industry of interest using **Handshake** and/or **CareerShift**

STEP 2: START WITH HANDSHAKE

Handshake is your job and internship platform that

- Has a variety of vetted employers looking for Mason students and graduates
- Provides thousands of opportunities for professional experiences
- Recommends career experiences and employer events based on your profile

THREE WAYS YOU CAN USE HANDSHAKE TO GET CAREER READY

- Keep your profile updated with academic projects and career interests as you earn your degree
- Find on-campus jobs, work-study, and internships to gain experience for your resume
- Market yourself to employers at networking events and career fairs listed in Handshake

STEP 3: USE THE MOST EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Learn How Employers Prefer to Identify and Hire Candidates

People hire people! A large part of your job search should include actively building relationships with professionals who work where you want to work. These relationships help you connect with the opportunities you want, even if they are never posted on an organization's website. Learn how employers prefer to identify and hire candidates.

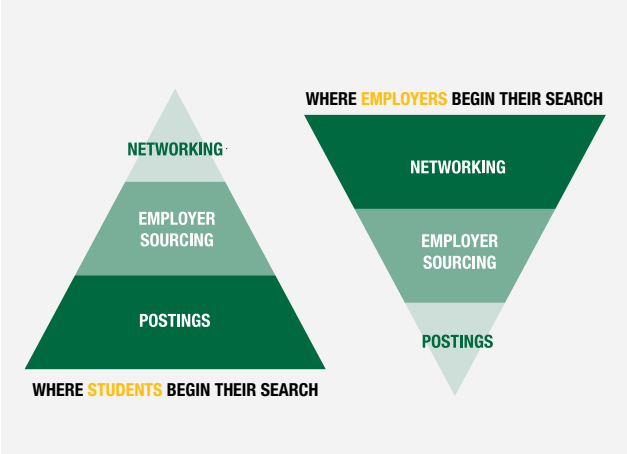
NO DEFINED OPENING	NEED IS CLEAR	IN-HOUSE SOURCING	ADVERTISED PUBLICLY
Employers are always noting who may be a good fit for a future opportunity	Insiders know, but no action has been taken to promote the upcoming position	Referrals from trusted sources are accepted; internal candidates apply	A job is promoted online or via social media, and anyone in the world can see and apply

"Hidden" Job Market

Your connections are a great way to learn more about career paths and form relationships that may lead to job or internship opportunities. When employers have an opening, they start with their contacts to see if anyone they already know may be interested or qualified. If they can't identify someone, then they post the job.

A referral can get your resume a closer look, an interview, or even an advantage in the final hiring decision. It means a lot when a trusted colleague says, "Well, I met Candidate B at a networking event at Mason, and they were professional and easy to get along with—choose them."

This is also why companies have referral programs, where employees get a bonus if they refer someone who ends up getting hired by the company.



10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

Handshake

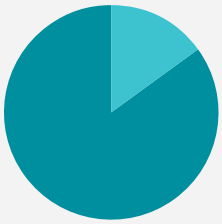
1. Activate your Handshake profile
2. Upload your resume
3. Fill out your job preferences
4. Add experience to your profile
5. Follow five interesting employers
6. Fill out sections on past courses and special skills
7. Add a profile picture
8. Message three peers with professional experience you admire
9. Ask one question about a company, job role, or specific opportunity
10. Apply to five jobs that interest you

For more details, visit bit.ly/HandshakeChallenge.

Get Support from Others

If you don't like the term "networking" you are not alone—many students report the same feeling. Anyone seeking opportunities needs to learn from, connect, and have conversations with others who can offer information, perspective, and advice about careers. Your personal network—including family, friends, professors, classmates, and alumni—can help provide valuable information on how to find opportunities. Remember, networks are built. If you don't feel like you have a large professional network, take steps to meet and talk to new people.

Your network is probably bigger than you think! To get started, add up all the contacts in your phone and email address book (see below for details). Networks are built over time. Remember, with each new person you meet, you are expanding your network. You have probably heard of the "five Fs" of networking. Here are a few suggestions on how to approach each group.



WHY IS NETWORKING IMPORTANT?

85% of open positions are filled through networking[1] therefore spend 85% of your job search time to develop and maintain your network[2] .

Source: [1]Payscale, [2]U.S. Department of Labor: dol.gov

Family and Friends

- Conversations with people in your comfort zone may help you learn about their career fields and introduce you to their professional contacts.

Fellow Students and Alumni

- Tap into the Handshake peer network! Ask other university students and employers questions about the internship/job search, employers' reviews, interview preparation tips, and so forth.
- Set up a free LinkedIn account and connect with the Mason Alumni LinkedIn group. Search for alumni from Mason or other institutions and connect with professionals individually, by industry, or through LinkedIn groups.

Faculty

- Consider reaching out to your professors or teaching and research assistants. One of the reasons they teach is because they love to help students. Many adjunct professors are successful professionals in their fields who also work outside the university.

Foundations and Professional Associations

- Reach out to check whether an association of interest offers a free or discounted student membership.
- Benefits of membership in a professional association can include access to industry publications, job and internship opportunities, mentors, and conferences. Many associations also have a membership directory so that you get contact information for all the professionals in the group.

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

1. Connect with two Mason students via Handshake
2. Submit a question to the Q&A section in Handshake
3. Find an organization on or off campus to join using these resources:
   - si.gmu.edu
   - go.gmu.edu/careers-industries
   - linkedin.com/search/results/groups

QUICK TIP

For more information on how to manage your job search in various industries, review go.gmu.edu/careers-industries.

EXERCISE 2: MY NETWORK AND CAREER ADVISORY BOARD

List at least five people in each category who you can discuss your job search with.

FRIENDS, FAMILY	FACULTY, PEERS/ALUMNI	FOUNDATIONS/PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Now select up to six individuals to be part of your Career Advisory Board. This is the group of people who will help you develop your career readiness plan. This is the team you will assemble to help you stay focused, identify your next steps, and support you when you encounter challenges. You will consult these individuals when you have big choices to make.

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES ONLINE

The networking platforms most often used for job searches are LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and online professional portfolios/blogs.

How to Identify Opportunities on LinkedIn

- Use the *Jobs* tab on various pages
  - This is the main page to search for jobs and internships by keyword, company, location, job function, industry, and experience level
  - Look at each company's page to identify the company's job and internship postings
  - Scan LinkedIn group pages to access opportunities that may not be posted elsewhere
- See the *Alumni* tab on the George Mason University school page to unlock a database of nearly 180,000 alumni that you can filter by location, industry, and academic program
- Consider requesting a career conversation with one of our alumni to learn more about their work
- Find active groups that are relevant to your interests and goals, including Mason groups such as the George Mason Alumni Association. You can send a message to someone in the same group even if you're not connected.

QUICK TIP

Tips for a Successful Job Search on Social Media

- Present a positive personal brand to prospective employers
- Emphasize your skills, interests, and values
- Showcase samples of your work to demonstrate your capabilities
- Research organizations and industry news/trends
- Follow organizations and thought leaders
- Stay current and increase your effectiveness by using a hashtag (e.g., #jobs, #recruiting, etc.)
- Screen your photos, videos, and comments for professionalism

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

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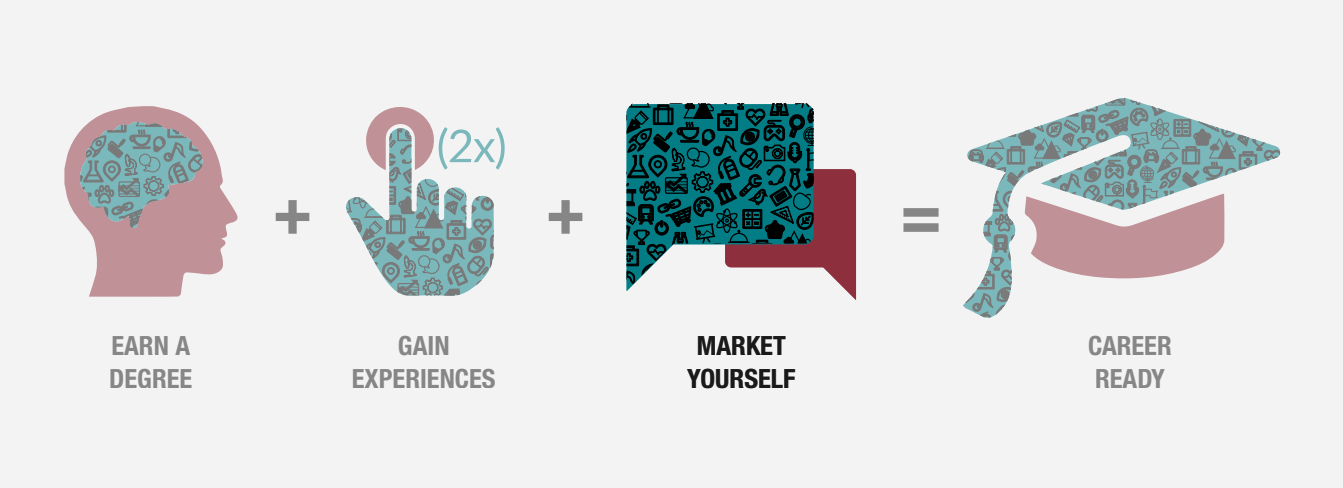
LinkedIn

1. Build five to 10 connections
2. Send one well-written personal connection request
3. Use your LinkedIn account to join the George Mason Alumni Association (Official) group

> I would have attended more conferences in my projected field of study to widen my network, find out more about research and current practice, and get a look into what it truly means to be an active and advocating member of my profession.
>
> *Advice from Mason Alum*

Market Yourself



EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WHAT YOU KNOW AND CAN DO

- ☐ Create a clear brand to stand out from others in your career field
- ☐ Create/update resume and job search materials
- ☐ Complete/update a Handshake profile
- ☐ Create/update a LinkedIn profile
- ☐ Meet with a career advisor
- ☐ Attend career events (e.g., Resume Clinic, Prepare for the Fair workshop, career fairs)

Employers and many graduate programs expect candidates to have relevant skills and experience. To get hired by an employer or accepted into a graduate program, you must be able to persuasively convey the skills you developed in and out of the classroom.

Your brand is your reputation. It is what other people know and understand about you. You create a brand by consistently presenting yourself

- in documents (resumes and cover letters)
- online (social networking platforms such as LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc.)
- in person (networking events and interviewing)

PROMOTING YOUR BRAND IN DOCUMENTS

When applying for internships or jobs, you will need at least two documents: a resume and a cover letter. Employers use these documents to select candidates for interview. Most hiring officials spend an average of six to seven seconds reviewing your resume—make it easy for them to identify you as the best applicant for the position.

If a hiring official is using an applicant tracking system (ATS) software to make an initial selection, you will need to create a document that will move you beyond the initial screening. Employers use the ATS to identify candidates for interviews in the following ways:

- **Viewing applications**: Make your top skills and qualifications easily visible for quick scans of your resume.
- **Automatic rankings**: Increase your ranking as a candidate by matching the language of your resume to the job description.
- **Keyword searches**: Emphasize your skills, experiences, location, former employers, or work experience because employers search by these terms.

MAKE YOUR APPLICATIONS ROBOT-PROOF

Many of the tips that will ensure your resume gets through the applicant tracking system (ATS) screening process (also known as making your resume "robot-proof") also make it more employer-friendly. Using these strategies helps you create a document that will move you beyond the initial screening and ensures you are well-received by human reviewers, too.

Robot-Friendly Resume Design Checklist

Keep the layout simple

- ☐ Length could be more than one page
- ☐ No tables or charts
- ☐ Only one column
- ☐ Standard section headings (e.g., "Related Experience")
- ☐ Dates connected to job titles
- ☐ Standard round bullets
- ☐ Year of graduation only (e.g., 2022), not years of attendance (e.g., 2018–2022)

Make it easy for the machine

- ☐ No pictures
- ☐ No information in visuals
- ☐ No logos that interrupt text
- ☐ No headers or footers (the only exception is a header with contact information and page number)

Make text scannable

- ☐ No more than two readable fonts that are standard on a PC or Mac
- ☐ No underlining

Save as

- ☐ Word documents saved in the newest file type (.docx) or compatibility mode (.doc)

QUICK TIPS

Tip 1: Have your resume critiqued during the Resume Clinic that takes place each fall and spring semester. View a calendar of events on the University Career Services website at go.gmu.edu/careers-events for more details.

Tip 2: If you want to test how the robot is matching the resume and/or cover letters with a job description, visit jobscan.co.

Tip 3: Save your resume using your last and first name (e.g., PopescuFlorin) instead of something generic (e.g., Resume2) to make it easy for employers to search for it.

RESUME VERSUS CV

Sometimes you may be asked to submit a resume, and sometimes you may be asked to submit a curriculum vitae (CV). If you are not sure what the employer requires, you need to answer two questions to help determine the best document: What kind of job are you applying for? Where is the company based?

Outside of the United States, employers often use the term CV

- instead of the term "resume" to describe both CV- and resume-style documents (e.g., in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and parts of Europe)
- interchangeably with resume (e.g., in South Africa, Australia, and India)

In the United States, a CV and resume are different documents with different purposes. The chart below will help you understand more about the differences between resumes in the U.S. and international resumes.

INTERNATIONAL RESUMES OR CV	U.S. RESUMES
May be two or more pages, but depends on the country.	Generally, consists of one page for undergraduate students and two pages for graduate students.
Often lists academic and work experience in chronological order.	Lists employment history in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Some work history may be left out if it does not relate to the position.
May include personal information, such as • Age • Race • Marital status • Religion • Hobbies • Recreational interest	Do not include personal information, including • Social security number • Height • Weight • Nationality • Age • Race • Marital status • Religion
Notation of employers might include details about the organization.	Includes the names and locations (city, state, country) of each employer with a brief description of the position, including your accomplishments, to illustrate the work performed. The focus is to market your skills and accomplishments. Uses active verbs to describe work and the descriptions are in past tense if the job occurred in the past and present tense if the job is current.
A4 standard paper size of 215.9 x 279.4 mm (8.4 x 11.9 inches) can create problems with U.S. printers.	U.S. standard paper size 8 ½ x 11 inches can create problems on international printers.
Personal photo is often posted on the resume at the top of the page.	Personal photo is not included, with the potential exception of arts, entertainment, or broadcast media fields.
Dates of attendance at all educational institutions are often noted.	Future college graduation dates should be noted. Completion of high school is not noted if one is in college. An associate's degree that is matriculated into a four-year degree is not noted unless it is unique. Colleges that one transfers from should not be noted.
Military service is often included.	Military service might not be noted unless it relates to the position sought, shows an employment history, or otherwise distinguishes the applicant.
Uses British English in European countries.	Uses American English for U.S. companies. Avoids using first person ("I" statements).

Resumes Samples (pages 76–87)

QUICK TIP

If you want to develop a CV for an academic careers, please refer to Preparing for Careers in the Academy. For additional information, visit the University Career Services website at go.gmu.edu/careers-resume.

KEY WORDS FOR RESUME PREPARATION—ACTION VERBS

Use action verbs at the beginning of each statement that describe your experiences. Below are several categories with examples:

ADMINISTRATIVE

accomplished
administered
approved
arranged
classified
compiled
developed
documented
maintained
managed
monitored
operated
organized
prepared
prioritized
provided
purchased
recorded
resolved
retrieved
screened
systematized

MANAGEMENT

accomplished
achieved
administered
analyzed
appointed
assessed
assigned
chaired
coached
consulted
contracted
controlled
coordinated
developed
directed
established
evaluated
examined
exceeded
executed
implemented
improved
increased
initiated
led
managed
marketed
negotiated
organized
planned
prepared
prioritized
produced
promoted
recommended
reconciled
recruited
reviewed
supervised
targeted
trained
transformed

COMMUNICATION

addressed
advised
aided
arranged
articulated
authored
clarified
communicated
completed
composed
conceived
conducted
consulted
contributed
cooperated
coordinated
corresponded
counseled
debated
defined
directed
drafted
edited
enlisted
explained
formulated
helped
influenced
informed
inspired
interpreted
interviewed
lectured
marketed
mediated
moderated
motivated
persuaded
presented
promoted
recruited
represented
spoke
suggested
summarized
supervised
trained
updated

HELPING

advised
aided
assessed
assisted
attended
cared for
clarified
coached
coordinated
counseled
delivered
demonstrated
developed
diagnosed
educated
engaged
facilitated
furnished
mentored
overcame
provided
referred
served

RESEARCH

calculated
cataloged
clarified
collected
computed
correlated
critiqued
diagnosed
discovered
evaluated
examined
experimented
extrapolated
gathered
identified
inspected
investigated
monitored
observed
organized
proved
surveyed
tested

CREATIVE

acted
adapted
composed
conceived
conceptualized
crafted
created
customized
designed
developed
directed
fashioned
founded
generated
illustrated
improvised
initiated
innovated
integrated
invented
marketed
originated
performed
problem-solved
revitalized
shaped
synthesized
traveled

TEACHING

adapted
advised
clarified
coached
coordinated
explained
guided
informed
instructed
served
taught
trained

FINANCIAL

administered
allocated
analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
compiled
developed
financed
forecasted
formulated
invested
maintained
managed
marketed
prepared
projected
targeted
tracked

TECHNICAL

administered
analyzed
assembled
built
calculated
computed
configured
constructed
created
designed
determined
develop
installed
led
maintained
managed
operated
overhauled
oversaw
programmed
simulated
tested
troubleshot
used

HOW TO DESCRIBE YOUR LANGUAGE SKILL PROFICIENCY

On your resume and job applications, be honest about your foreign language skills. If needed for the role, you will likely be tested. For a precise assessment of your foreign language proficiency, use the U.S. Department of State guidelines and definitions:

PROFICIENCY CODE	SPEAKING DEFINITIONS	READING DEFINITIONS
0 – No Practical Proficiency	No practical speaking proficiency	No practical reading proficiency
1 – Elementary Proficiency	Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements	Able to read some personal and place names, street signs, office and shop designations, numbers and isolated words and phrases
2 – Limited Working Proficiency	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements	Able to read simple prose, in a form equivalent to typescript or printing, on subjects within a familiar context
3 – Minimum Professional Proficiency	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics	Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence, reports, and technical materials in the individual's special field
4 – Full Professional Proficiency	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs	Able to read all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs
5 – Native or Bilingual Proficiency	Equivalent to that of an educated native speaker	Equivalent to that of an educated native

Source: careers.state.gov/faqs

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT-STYLE RESUME

Federal government-style resumes contain additional information that is not found on civilian resumes. This information includes veteran's preference, full addresses and phone numbers of employers, supervisors' names, and wage or salary.

This style of resume allows you to expand on your experiences and skills. Multiple pages are expected. Be honest and thorough about dates, skills, and experience, because the agency will verify the accuracy of what you provide.

Although most U.S. government agencies will accept a "simple" resume, you can make yourself more competitive by creating the longer federal resume. There is an excellent federal resume builder on the USAJobs website (usajobs.gov) that can help you properly format your resume and ensure that you include the necessary information.

For resume samples and government specific resources, visit the Government page at go.gmu.edu/careers-industries.

HOW TO DESCRIBE YOUR PART-TIME EXPERIENCE

Many students have a difficult time talking about the skills they developed from various part-time jobs and even consider not including these experiences on their resume. Although some part-time experiences seem irrelevant, it is important to remember the in-demand transferable skills that are useful and relevant for any career. Some examples include communication skills, teamwork skills, problem-solving skills, organization skills, leadership skills, and so on. Here are some examples of how others have communicated on their resume the skills obtained in some of the most common part-time jobs.

RETAIL JOB

- Provided friendly, prompt, and efficient customer service with a high level of accuracy at the point of sale
- Effectively advised customers on purchases by maintaining a high level of knowledge about store products

FOOD SERVICE JOB

- Built a rapport with customers from diverse backgrounds, utilizing a friendly, genuine, and helpful attitude that resulted in repeat customer visits
- Performed opening and closing procedures, ensuring all tasks were completed accurately

BABYSITTING/NANNY JOB

- Supervised and maintained the safety and well-being of one infant and two toddlers on a daily basis
- Anticipated the family's needs and demonstrated initiative by providing additional services such as cleaning and organizing

LIFEGUARD JOB

- Collaborated with a team of four other lifeguards to ensure security of entire facility and safety of 200+ patrons per day
- Trained three new employees on rules and procedures, offering additional mentorship and support as needed
- Reacted calmly and swiftly in order to provide lifesaving care and first aid, following a detailed emergency action plan

OFFICE/ADMINISTRATIVE JOB

- Managed a three-line telephone system during busiest times of the day, responding to various internal and external inquiries and routing calls to the appropriate employee when needed
- Organized special event details using a shared Excel spreadsheet to maintain effective communication with real-time updates

PET CARE JOB

- Provided in-home pet care, frequently demonstrating strong problem-solving skills while ensuring pets' safety and providing care in emergency situations
- Communicated with 12+ customers per week via phone and email to complete a needs assessment to ensure expectations were surpassed for each client
- Handled the bookkeeping of clients' payments, daily and weekly appointments, and clients' unique needs or requests

LAWN CARE JOB

- Executed planned landscaping designs with excellent attention to detail, resulting in 100% customer retention the following season
- Identified additional projects at customers' homes, averaging a 20% increase in profit per quarter

Adapted from UNC Career Services

QUICK TIP

Have your resume critiqued during drop-in hours (Monday to Friday, 1–3 p.m.) and the Resume Clinic that takes place each fall and spring semester. View a calendar of events on the University Career Services website at go.gmu.edu/careers-events for more details.

EXERCISE 1: T-CHART FOR ANALYZING POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

On the left side of the T-chart, write down the requirements and qualifications listed in the job description you are interested in. On the right side, list specific examples of how you have demonstrated that particular skill or requirement.

This is a great tool when trying to figure out what experiences to highlight in your resume and cover letter. Include all your qualifications on your resume. Select three to five of your strongest qualifications to highlight through examples or stories in the body of your cover letter.

REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS	MY RELEVANT EXAMPLES
Team Oriented	*Provided brief, concise, helpful feedback to colleagues on draft presentations*
Project Management	*Developed, implemented, and evaluated research design and data collection strategy; collaborated with instructor to design survey instruments*
Communication	*Designed and delivered a presentation communicating research findings to an audience of 35, including my professor, faculty advisors, and peers*
1)	1)
2)	2)
3)	3)
4)	4)
5)	5)
6)	6)
7)	7)

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Creating the accomplishment statements for your resume is one of the most difficult and important elements of your resume. It is best to put your accomplishment statements in bullet format to make them easy to read. If you struggle with deciding how much or what type of information to include in each bullet, ask yourself the following questions when creating your bullets:

- **What did I do?** Did you organize information, did you publicize an event, did you recruit people?
- **Why did I do it?** Was the purpose to raise money for charity, promote awareness about a cause, or create unity on campus?
- **How did I do it?** Did you use special programs like Photoshop to create those flyers? Did you personally invite new students to join your organization? Did you develop a new, more efficient way to plan a program?
- **How was the organization improved, or what was my impact?** Did you increase attendance to events? Did you get recognized as a result of your efforts?

Make sure to quantify whenever possible as you list your accomplishments by including numbers, percentages, and dollars. Remember: Anyone can do the "what." It is harder to write about the "why," the "how," and the impact. Doing so effectively will make your resume stand out.

Sample Effective Experience Statements

Demonstrated communication skills by interacting with customers at the front desk
ACTION VERB / SKILL SET / TASK DEMONSTRATING SKILL
Good. *Includes the three elements needed to describe the knowledge, skill, or ability*

Communicated effectively with more than 30 customers daily, demonstrating strong interpersonal communication skills
ACTION VERB / ADVERB / TASK DEMONSTRATING SKILL (including quantity and frequency) / ADJECTIVE / SKILL SET
Better. *Gives potential employers a description of* ***what*** *you did,* ***how*** *you did it, and the depth of your experience*

EXERCISE 2: MY EXPERIENCE STATEMENTS

Each bullet point may contain three important elements: an action verb, skill, and tasks that evidence the skill. When applicable, include an adjective or adverb, quantify the impact, and underline the accomplishment.

In the space below, write your own bullet statements.

Action Verb / Skill / Task or accomplishment

Action Verb / Skill / Task or accomplishment

Action Verb / Skill / Task or accomplishment

Action Verb / Skill / Task or accomplishment

Action Verb / Skill / Task or accomplishment

Action Verb / Skill / Task or accomplishment

QUICK TIP

Invest the time to improve your bulleted statements. Here are a few examples:

BEFORE	AFTER
Led new marketing campaign for homecoming weekend	• Created and led a month-long social media campaign to promote an alumni and current student event that attracted 585 attendees and resulted in 20% growth in school donations
Communicated with customers daily	• Closed sales 92% of the time by interacting with clients face-to-face to identify the best products based on their needs
Provided customer service at Verizon	• Effectively advised customers on services by maintaining a high level of knowledge of current products, contracts, and sales promotions • Drove revenue by communicating and demonstrating benefits of products and special offers to customers • Awarded Employee of the Month in April 2020 for strong customer service skills and being a great team player

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

1. Scan three job descriptions for six to eight keywords
2. Use the T-chart exercise for analyzing one position description
3. Schedule a meeting with your career advisor at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment
4. Use drop-in hours for a quick resume review. See details at go.gmu.edu/careers-appointment
5. Update a bulleted statement in the Experience section of your resume

COVER LETTERS

The goal of the cover letter is to supplement your resume and directly connect your experiences to the position you want. It encourages employers to look at your resume further and provides them with a writing sample. Effective cover letters are tailored for the particular job and organization to which you are applying. Personalizing your cover letter demonstrates your enthusiasm and interest in the position and can help you stand out more as a candidate. For additional information visit the Write Cover Letters and More section of the University Career Services website.

Contact Information
Name, City, State, Zip
(Use the same template you use for your resume to create a visual brand.)

Date

Salutation
Dear [first and last name of the person who will be doing the hiring]
If you do not have a name, call the department or human resources to find out to whom and how your letter should be addressed.

If necessary, address your letter to a generic title, such as Personnel Manager, Hiring Manager, or Recruiting Representative.

First Paragraph
1. Introduce yourself and grab the employer's attention.
2. Indicate why you are interested in the position and/or this organization.
3. Use your community. If someone has referred you to the organization (a current employee, friend, or family member), include his or her name in the first sentence.

Second/Third Paragraph
1. Tell the employer your story.
2. Describe your related qualifications for the type of position you seek using specific examples from academic, work, volunteer, and/or cocurricular experiences.
3. Connect your accomplishments, skills, and knowledge directly to the type of position, organization, and/or field.

Final Paragraph
1. Summarize or give a final statement of interest and qualifications.
2. Thank the employer for his or her time and consideration.
3. Note any plan to follow up with the employer by phone or email.

Closing
Sincerely,

Your Name

Cover Letter Samples (pages 88–89)

MORE COMMUNICATIONS

Review the **Write Cover Letters and More** section on the University Career Services website (go.gmu.edu/careers-letters) for samples and editable templates.

CAREER CONVERSATION
Written to develop a contact in a field or organization and may be used to request a career conversation, job lead, or help with preparing job search materials.

FOLLOW UP
Follows an interview. Conveys appreciation for the interview and reiterates your interest in the position.

APOLOGY
Expresses your regret for missing an interview. Conveys your continued interest and states your desire to reschedule the meeting.

ACCEPTANCE
Serves as an ethical contract between you and the employer after you have been offered a job. It should be brief, express your appreciation, restate the terms and conditions of employment (salary and benefits), and confirm the starting date.

RESIGNATION
Provides official notice of your intention to resign.

WITHDRAWAL
Notifies an employer in a considerate and positive tone that you no longer wish to be considered for a position with that organization.

PROSPECTING
Inquire about a position when one is not currently advertised.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
Typically requested when applying for graduate school or a scholarship, and from employers in certain fields.

REFERENCES

Employers may require you to provide a list of references to verify your work history and confirm your qualifications. It is recommended to use professors, supervisors, and colleagues as references. Before listing them as references, be sure to ask their permission. If contacted, your references will speak with the potential employer by phone or email. Employers use references to get a sense of how others have enjoyed working with you and to determine if you are the right hire for them. Consider carefully who you ask to serve as your references. Ask yourself

- Can this person provide a positive reference?
- Can this person speak to my ability to be successful in this role? Do they know my strengths?
- Is this person's input relevant?
- Does this person know me?

References Sample

Daniel Faircloth
Fairfax, VA 22030 703-555-8120
dfair1111@gmu.edu

Jocelyn Weaver, PhD (Current Instructor)
Assistant Professor
School of Systems Biology
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA 22030 703-555-2014
weaver9@gmu.edu

Melissa Graybar (Previous Supervisor)
Manager
Britches
88766 Maple Street
Alexandria, VA 22049 703-444-1000
mgraybar@britches.com

Rhonda Kalish (Previous Internship Supervisor)
Project Manager
National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD 20887 301-433-0909
rkalish@niaid.nih.gov

CREATE YOUR REFERENCES PAGE
Enter references into this text field

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

References

1. Update contact information on your reference page.
2. Send an email to inform your references you are looking for their support and reference before you apply for jobs.
3. Write a brief summary of what you are applying for and why you are asking for their reference.
4. Send an email to your contact who agreed to act as a reference and provide supporting information, like your resume, the job description, and a few key skills you're hoping they can emphasize.

PROMOTING YOUR BRAND ONLINE

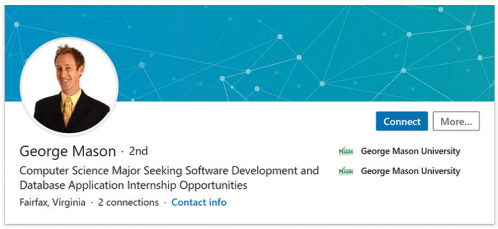
Building and developing your brand helps you convey your value to an employer when you are looking for a new job and can also help you be more effective and visible after you have obtained the job. Social media and online resources are great tools for you to identify and connect with people who may know about jobs and internships. A positive online presence can also attract recruiters to you.

LinkedIn maintains more than
875 MILLION USERS
from more than 200 countries across the world.

Source: about.linkedin.com

LINKEDIN

- With more than 875 million users, LinkedIn is the premier professional networking site. Create a profile on LinkedIn and think broadly regarding people to invite to join your network.
- You may be surprised to discover that your uncle, professor, or former supervisor is connected to someone who works for your dream employer.
- Market yourself and create a professional brand.
- Establish and build your professional network by connecting to friends, family, supervisors, coworkers, classmates, professors, advisors, and others with similar interests or skills.
- Gain and share information about industry trends, companies, and job leads.
- See whether you have connections to a company and ask for an introduction.
- Join groups based on your career interests. Search through the members of groups you have joined on LinkedIn. If the **Contact** section of a profile says "Expertise Requests," this is a good indication that the individual would be willing to talk with you. Use the **Send a Message** feature to request an informational interview. Be sure to customize your request by including what you have in common with the potential contact (e.g., George Mason alumni).



Other social media platforms may be frequently used in your industry of interest. Make a point to research your organizations of interest and see where they are active.

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

LinkedIn

1. Take a professional headshot and upload it to your profile.
2. Read one article related to your industry of interest.
3. Send an invitation to connect with a guest speaker from a class or campus event.
4. Send an invitation to connect with an employer.
5. Visit LinkedIn Intelligence (linkedintelligence.com), an online library of resources, and select one resource for review.

PROMOTING YOUR BRAND IN-PERSON

NETWORKING EVENTS

When networking, your personal branding statement can be the answer to the question, "What do you do?"

Events hosted by professional associations, academic departments, or University Career Services can be intimidating, but they can also help you connect with industry experts, alumni, and employers you might not otherwise meet. Follow these tips to prepare for and make the most of these opportunities:

- Prepare and practice your personal pitch (also called an elevator pitch) so that you feel comfortable introducing yourself to new people. See the pitch template on page 68.
- Conduct research about the speakers and participants before an event by reviewing their bios and LinkedIn profiles. Researching speakers will give you ideas of topics to discuss with them.
- Update your LinkedIn profile so that you are ready to send invitations to connect with any of the people you meet.
- Identify the various benefits of networking, such as if you shared your career interests with someone, gained a piece of useful advice, or provided someone else with beneficial information.

PREPARE FOR CAREER FAIRS AND OTHER NETWORKING EVENTS

Create a Successful Pitch: Three Steps

Know your employer

- What are the employer's needs?
- What problems do they have or need to solve?

Know yourself

- What is your personal narrative?
- Where have you been, where are you now?
- What did I do? Why? How?
- How did I improve the organization? What was my impact?

Know where you want to go

- What is your next step?

First Impression

- Shake hands when appropriate (see Quick Tip for more information)
- Exude confidence
- Remain calm (speak slowly and clearly)
- Engage and connect
- Be positive from the inside out

QUICK TIP

Shaking hands at events or interviews is not a requirement.

Are you wondering what to do if you do not shake hands for a specific reason? Before the event, you may need to consider what response you are most comfortable choosing.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Smile and use a polite nod; it is less personal and acknowledges the other person's presence in a friendly way.
- Smile and briefly explain your cultural view. You may say, "Sorry I cannot shake hands due to cultural/religious beliefs. It is very nice meeting you."
- Hold both of your hands together and give a short bow.
- Put your hand over your heart and smile while saying "Such a pleasure to meet you." No apology needed.
- You may say:
  - "I'm so sorry, but I prefer not to shake hands with anybody."
  - "I'm sorry, I'm not shaking hands right now to help limit the spread of germs."

EVENT-APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Business Professional

Business Casual

YOUR PERSONAL PITCH

The first thing you do when you meet someone or are trying to establish a relationship is to introduce yourself. What would you say to make a positive first impression?

EXERCISE 3: MY PERSONAL PITCH

What I know about the EMPLOYER

What I know about MYSELF

What I know about where I want to GO

What I want to know about the OPPORTUNITY

Pitch

Hello, my name is (first and last) and I am currently a (class year) at George Mason University studying (degree program). I am looking for (an internship/job) with your organization.

I am interested in (career field) because (explanation) and have developed skills such as (skill) to help prepare me for the career.

I saw through my research in Handshake that you have (opportunities) that align with my interest. Can you tell me a little more about (insert question)?

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

InterviewPrep

InterviewPrep records practice interviews using webcam or smartphone technology.

1. Create a free account at gmu.interviewprep.app.
2. Download the app on your phone.
3. Select several questions in your account.
4. Record an answer to one question and share the video with someone (friend, faculty member, mentor, etc.) for feedback.

PREPARE FOR THE EVENT

Remember that employers are looking for enthusiasm, motivation, initiative, communication, and knowledge of their organization. **Prepare for the event and remember these tips.**

Clean It up
Polish your look with well-groomed hair (including facial, if you've got it). Nails should be cleaned and trimmed.

Try It on
Inspect clothing for stains, missing buttons, loose thread, or lint. Remove tags and tailor stitches from new clothes. Clothes should be clean, hemmed, neatly pressed, and fit properly.

Set the Tone
Choose suits in blue, brown, black or gray. Wear comfortable, polished, close-toed shoes, even if it is warm.

Travel Light
Ditch large bags or backpacks. Carry a portfolio, copies of your resume, and a pen. Wear minimal jewelry.

Be Kind
Avoid wearing cologne or perfume or smelling like smoke. Some employers may be sensitive to fragrances. Simply wear antiperspirant or deodorant.

QUICK TIP

Don't forget to do a few things at the end of the conversation:

- **Ask what the next step will be and the recruiter's preferred method of contact.**
- **Ask the recruiter for a business card so that you can follow up.**
- **Thank the recruiter for their time and for the information they provided you.**

AFTER THE EVENT

CONNECT

Say thank you (email or call)

Send documents or submit applications

POLISH

Resume

Pitch

LinkedIn and Handshake

REFLECT

Was I prepared?

Did I give my pitch?

What did I learn about a potential employer?

PANEL DISCUSSIONS: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF ATTENDING

University Career Services organizes multiple employer and alumni panels during the semester, especially during specific career weeks (in the fall: government and creative careers; in the spring: health and science, and nonprofits).

1. Have a goal—why are you attending?

- Ask yourself, "Why am I going?"
- Identify two things you would like to learn.
- Read about the panelists—their bios, LinkedIn profiles, and so forth—so that you can plan your questions.

2. Get to the point—what are you asking?

- Wait for the moderator to ask for questions (Note: The most valuable questions are open-ended and can't be answered with just a yes or no).
- Ask one question at a time and allow panelists to respond.
- Ask questions briefly, in two or three sentences (or less).

3. Get more—how will you follow up?

- During the panel, you may have questions for the panelists that your moderator does not ask. Take notes to help you remember them.
- Introduce yourself after the panel if you have more questions. Ask if the panelist has time to speak with you.

4. Go further—who will you connect with?

- Follow up with any panelists who agreed to connect. Personalize messages (via email, text, or LinkedIn), mentioning something specific the person shared.
- Consider this the time to request future connections, like an informational interview.

Adapted from Bridgewater State University

FOLLOW UP AFTER EVENTS

Right before you leave the event, take a moment to make a note for yourself regarding your plan for following up.

It is best to **send follow-up emails** within 24 hours of the event to company representatives with whom you had meaningful conversations.

Mention your school so the contact knows where they met you.

Try to make the note worthwhile and memorable. **Include something you talked about together** to help remind the employer representative of who you are (e.g., *I was glad to learn that we both are Alpha Psi Omega members!*).

Send an invitation to connect via LinkedIn, especially if that is the employer's preferred way to stay in touch.

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

Visit go.gmu.edu/careers-connections and make at least one connection with other students, alumni, and employers. They can help you whether you are choosing a major, looking for an internship, or figuring out your first step after Mason.

INTERVIEW

In an interview, your brand statement can be used when asked, *"Tell me about yourself."*

A key element of successful interviewing is positively presenting yourself to demonstrate how your qualifications meet the employer's needs. Preparation, practice, and a well-articulated presentation are critical. Remember that the employer has asked you to interview because of genuine interest in you. For additional information, visit go.gmu.edu/careers-interview.

Be sure to use examples to discuss your qualifications, such as class projects, academic classes, work in a student organization, volunteer experience, athletic activities, and part-time or full-time jobs. It is a good idea to do a practice interview with someone you trust.

Before the interview make sure to research the employer so you can design the best marketing strategy for your skills and experiences to show:

Position Fit

- Show your understanding of the position and provide examples

Organizational Fit

- Convey genuine interest in the organization's mission, goals, and values
- Tailor your questions and attitude to show off your enthusiasm

Part of accepting the job offer is compensation negotiation. When it is time to discuss salary and other elements of your compensation, employers expect you to know about salaries and the market rate for a specific position. Doing your research (and knowing your expectations) will help you negotiate the best deal for yourself. See the website go.gmu.edu/careers-compensation.

THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

The behavioral interviewing approach assumes that past performance is the best predictor of future success. More than 80 percent of employers who recruit at Mason use a structured competency-based behavioral interviewing approach. Behavioral questions require job candidates to give specific examples of how they handled specific real-life situations.

S — Identify the **SITUATION** or problem you solved or encountered

T — What was the specific **TASK** or **THOUGHT** process—who, what, when, what was required?

A — Detail your specific **ACTION**. What did you do? How did you do it?

R — Explain **RESULTS**. Mention savings, accomplishments, recognition, etc.

QUICK TIP

If you genuinely don't have an example from your past that fits the question you're asked, it's okay to say so and try to come up with something reasonably close. You can say

- "I haven't had anything exactly like that, but something close was X."
- "I haven't encountered that at work, but I had a similar situation at school/in a volunteer role."
- "Honestly, it hasn't come up yet for me, but my thoughts on how I'd approach it are…"

EXERCISE 4: PRACTICE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

The following questions are typical behavioral questions. When thinking about how you would answer them, remember to use the STAR technique. Below are sample answers for two questions.

Step 1. Include your answer for each question.

Questions	S Identify the **SITUATION** or problem you solved or encountered.	T What was the specific **TASK** or **THOUGHT** process—who, what, when, what was required?	A Detail your specific **ACTION**. What did you do? How did you do it?	R Explain **RESULTS**. Mention savings, accomplishments, recognition, etc.
Example 1 Tell me about a time when you exhibited leadership skills.	Each year, Mason Recreation hires multiple student employees, aiming to attract qualified candidates.	As the marketing assistant for Mason Recreation, I was tasked with marketing a recruiting event to attract new student employees.	I created and led a committee of three other campus partners to reach multiple audiences, established a timeline, and developed and implemented a month-long social media campaign to promote our event.	As a result, 30 students attended the event, which increased our applicant pool by 23 percent. I was proud of how everything turned out.
Write Answers for the Example 1 Question				
Example 2 Tell me about a customer or stakeholder who made unreasonable demands of you or your team.	While working at the AT&T store, you can imagine that I ran into some frustrated customers.	My main role was to ensure customers who were eligible to upgrade were aware of the promotion. I had a customer who wanted a different promotion that his friend recently had and was frustrated that he was ineligible.	I spent 15 minutes explaining that the company policy is to attach certain upgrades to certain plans and I explained why. I did the math with him to show the thing he wanted would cost him more than what I was able to offer him, and also called into our corporate office while he stood in front of me to clarify and verify that what I was telling him was accurate. He left the store without doing anything.	Although I was unable to satisfy his request, I felt confident in how I handled the situation. I stayed calm and offered the best information I had while also reinforcing our message.
Write Answers for the Example 2 Question				

Step 2. Select other questions listed on the next page and practice the STAR technique when answering.

Questions	S Identify the **SITUATION** or problem you solved or encountered.	T What was the specific **TASK** or **THOUGHT** process—who, what, when, what was required?	A Detail your specific **ACTION**. What did you do? How did you do it?	R Explain **RESULTS**. Mention savings, accomplishments, recognition, etc.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

PRACTICE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

The following questions are typical behavioral questions. When thinking about how you would answer them, remember to use the STAR technique.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Tell me about a time when you had to juggle several projects at once. How did you organize your time? What was the result?

Give an example of a time when you delegated an important task successfully.

Tell me about a time when you simplified a process or streamlined operations at work.

ADAPTABILITY

Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something you had never done before.

Describe a situation in which you embraced a new system, process, technology, or idea at work that was a major departure from the old way of doing things.

Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a colleague's working style in order to complete a project or achieve your objectives.

LEADERSHIP

Tell me about a time when you needed to make a firm decision without adequate data to back up the decision.

Give me an example of a time when you led by example.

Can you give an example of an idea you had at work that you were able to bring to life?

RESULTS DRIVEN

Tell me about a time when you implemented a project from strategy to execution. What were the results?

Describe a situation when you had to lean on data to inform a decision.

Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond a specific project ask/scope.

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Tell me about the toughest work problem you had a part in solving.

Tell me about a time when you anticipated a challenge and what you did to prevent it.

Have you ever had anyone who worked with you do or say something that was inaccurate or misleading? How did you handle it?

COMMUNICATION

Tell me about a time when you had to communicate an uncomfortable message to your manager or your client.

Tell me about a time when your active-listening skills really paid off.

Describe a situation where you felt you had not communicated well. How did you correct the situation?

CREATIVE THINKING

Tell me about a time in a professional setting when you took a big chance to achieve your goals.

Can you give an example of a new process or product you have implemented at work recently?

What is the most innovative project, program, etc. that you've been a part of? What was your role, the impact, etc.?

COLLABORATION

Tell me about a time when you were communicating with someone and they did not understand you.

Tell me about one of your favorite experiences working with a team. What was your contribution?

Can you share an experience when a project dramatically shifted direction at the last minute?

10-MINUTE CHALLENGES

These are suggestions for brief activities to advance your career readiness when you don't have a lot of time or feel overwhelmed. You can create a daily routine by completing at least one challenge. Try any of these activities for 10 minutes a day and keep going if you have extra minutes to spare.

Behavorial Interview

1. Create a list of five to 10 stories that you want to tell in the interview. These should be stories that highlight your skills, successes, things you did well, or show what you will bring to the workplace.
2. Write the answer to a question using the STAR technique.
3. Practice the two-minute answer to one question.

INTERVIEW PREP CHECKLIST

Prepare Your Material

No matter what type of interview you're having, you'll always want these items and information with you.

- ☐ Interview details
  - ☐ Location
  - ☐ Time
  - ☐ Date
  - ☐ Contact info
- ☐ A copy of your application documents
  - ☐ Resume
  - ☐ Cover letter
  - ☐ Other
- ☐ Something to take notes with
- ☐ Questions to ask the employer (see the next section, Questions to Ask at an Interview)
- ☐ Water

In-Person Interview Tips

- ☐ Arrive 5–10 minutes early
- ☐ Be respectful of everyone you meet
- ☐ Greet the interviewer with a traditional U.S. handshake or alternative such as:
  - "I cannot shake hands due to cultural/religious beliefs. It is very nice to meet you."
  - "I'm sorry, I'm not shaking hands right now to help limit the spread of germs."

Phone Interview Tips

- ☐ Fully charge your phone before the interview
- ☐ Take your call in a location with good reception
- ☐ Speak slowly, pausing briefly between sentences
- ☐ Ask, "Did I answer your question fully?"
- ☐ Convey enthusiasm while speaking
  - Smile
  - Gesture
  - Stand

Video Interview Tips

Whether recording your responses or interviewing live, these tips will help you present your best self.

- ☐ Practice video interviewing using InterviewPrep
- ☐ Prepare your space before the interview
  - ☐ Minimize background noise and distractions
  - ☐ Alert family or roommates
  - ☐ Remove pets
  - ☐ Declutter your space and consider staging some Mason gear or books behind you
  - ☐ Use a tripod, a shelf, or stack of books to prop up your phone or laptop
  - ☐ Center yourself on the screen and face the light source
- ☐ Check your device audio and video quality
- ☐ Be sure your screen name is your chosen name
- ☐ Clean your camera lens
- ☐ Close all other tabs, mute system notifications
- ☐ For virtual backgrounds, choose something neutral or consider these Mason-themed options from the George Mason University Alumni Association

Recording Tips

- ☐ Record videos in landscape mode (i.e., horizontally)
- ☐ Avoid zooming in or selfie mode
- ☐ Record in the best natural light possible
- ☐ If possible, review and re-record your responses until you are satisfied with the result

Learn more: careers.gmu.edu/interviewing

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT AN INTERVIEW

PERSON OR GROUP	GOAL FOR QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES
Recruiter	Insight into the role, organization, and interview process	• What does a typical career path look like in this company? • What is the interview process and timeline?
Search committee or future colleagues	Details about the role and the team	• What are some of the organization's greatest opportunities and challenges over the next 3 years? • What is a typical day in this role and who would I work with most closely?
Hiring manager or supervisor	Supervisory style and expectations of your future boss	• What are expectations for the first 30, 60, 90, 365 days in this role? • How is success measured?
Human resources	Benefits and company policy to help evaluate a job offer	• What is the parental leave policy? • Do you offer transgender-inclusive health insurance coverage?

SAMPLE CAREER CHANGER – FROM TEACHING TO EVENT PLANNING

Formatting: Calibri; Font Size: name (18), headline (14), category headers (12), text (11); 15% shading around career goal; Margins: .5" all around.

VICTOR LOPEZ

571.999.1111 | vlopez@gmu.edu | linkedin.com/Victor-lopez-event-planning 1

EVENT COORDINATOR 2

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY 3

Enthusiastic, creative problem solver with proven track record of executing small- and large-scale events. Skilled in menu planning, coordinating staff and vendors, and designing event spaces. Proven experience in recruiting, organizing, and training volunteers. Acumen for creating memorable events with tight budgets and deadlines.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Volunteer Recruitment & Retention | Logistics & Scheduling | Vendor Negotiations | Proposal/Grant Writing
Event Coordination | Client & Customer Relations| MS Office Suite, Outlook & Teams

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE 4

PTA BOOSTER CLUB VICE PRESIDENT, Robinson Secondary School, Fairfax, VA 2019-Present 5

- Spearhead fundraising events partnering with local restaurants and businesses, which successfully drove donations up 125% over the past 2 years.
- Collaborate with 10-member board to create recruitment and promotional materials including ads in yearbooks, parent newsletters, and flyers at PTA monthly meetings.
- Facilitate bi-monthly meetings and oversee 3 large-scale annual events.
- Source, schedule, and train up to 75 volunteers for large-scale events. Tapped into PTA network, after-school clubs, and athletic programs to vastly increase membership and volunteerism.

EVENTS TEAM ADVISOR, 12th Marine Regiment, Okinawa, Japan 2013-2014 6

- Developed event schedule featuring guest speakers, lunch and learn breakout sessions, cocktail parties, and formal dinner reception.
- Recruited and coordinated 150 family members as volunteers.

SPOUSE CLUB VICE PRESIDENT, Peterson Air Force Bases, Colorado Spring, CO 2010-2011 7

- Planned and managed all aspects of Spouses Expo 2010, with 110 attendees, 30 vendors, and 15 base
- organizations. Developed cooperative relationships with vendors, managers, and caterers. Negotiated contracts and maintained $5K budget.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE 8

MUSICAL THEATER DIRECTOR, Center Stage Performing Arts Center, Fairfax, VA 2015-2020

- Created rehearsal schedules for theater program and monitored enrollment for more than 30 students.
- Oversaw vocal, acting, dancing, singing, stage positioning, and scene work, and developed theater games to teach all
- aspects and prepare cast for annual competition and performances.

TRAINER AND MENTOR, Marine Corps Base, Okinawa, Japan 2004-2007

- Promoted to Mentor Manager after one year of acting as Mentor supporting Marine and Navy families; managed team of 24 mentors and trained 14 new mentors.
- Planned and executed all aspects of a three-day quarterly training session with up to 25 attendees.
- Produced and compiled all meeting materials and handled logistics such as room set up, AV, food, and beverages, while remaining within budget.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER AND DANCE INSTRUCTOR, 15 years

EDUCATION 9

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

TRAINING

Proposal Writing & Development, Graduate Course, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

1. Use a symbol to separate contact information. Hyperlink email and LinkedIn. **Tip:** Personalize your LinkedIn URL
2. Start with a career goal or job title as the HEADLINE. This informs the reader of the position you are seeking and frames you in the way you wish to be viewed.
3. Summary instead of an objective. Headline acts as objective. Write a summary to concisely describe your experience and skills as they relate to new career field.
4. RELEVANT EXPERIENCE as category header, or you can refer to it by the field (e.g., Event Planning Experience) to draw attention to positions and skills relevant to the new field of interest. **Hint:** Volunteer experience counts and does not have to be specifically labeled as such.
5. Consider changing your job title to one that is more accurate. For example, if your official title was Support Specialist II but you were on the events management team you can revise your title to Events Management Support Specialist.
6. This was not the actual title but reflects the role better than using the military term.
7. Years only, gaps are less obvious.
8. ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE acknowledges your work in a different field. Can use number of years instead of dates, especially if that work was nonconsecutive; also it is a way to hide dates if the experience goes further back than you wish to show.
9. EDUCATION and TRAINING can be included on the bottom when relevant experience is more recent. For example, if the job requires a college degree you would want to include name of school, location, and type of degree and major, but year not required.

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT RESUME

Formatting: Font: Times New Roman; Font Size: title (16) and text (12); Margins: 0.7″ all around

SALLY JONES

Fairfax, Virginia 22030 · 703-555-5555 · sjones99@gmu.edu 1

EDUCATION

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia
BA, History, GPA: 3.23/4.0, May 2023
- On schedule to complete degree in four years while working 25 hours per week to finance tuition.

Universidad de Valencia, Valencia, Spain 2
- Studied the life of Francisco Franco, including guided site tours, January 2022–May 2022.

English Language Teaching Assistant, Colegio Martí Sorolla, Valencia, Spain, January 2022–May 2022
- Assisted in the instruction of the English language to 25 Spanish students, ages 7-10.
- Translated documents from English to Spanish for the purpose of creating marketing materials for two school events.

Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, Virginia
AA, General Studies, GPA: 3.41/4.0, May 2020

RESEARCH PROJECT 3

The Relationship Between Britain and Imperial Russia August 2022–December 2022
- Researched diplomatic issues for the era using multiple databases, including EBSCO.
- Analyzed primary source documents via National Archives.
- Conducted interviews with subject matter experts.
- Presented findings at Celebrations of Student Scholarship Day.

EXPERIENCE 4

The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. January 2021–Present
Curatorial Intern
- Organize research goals for a team of 10 interns.
- Investigate the origins of donated artifacts.
- Review documents for upcoming exhibit proposals, demonstrating strong attention to detail.
- Maintained a database of artifacts using Microsoft Access.

American Apparel, Arlington, Virginia April 2018–December 2020
Customer Service Clerk
- Provided excellent customer service to approximately 100 customers per evening.
- Trained new staff on an as-needed basis.
- Recommended clothing options to customers based on expressed tastes.
- Recognized four times as Employee of the Month.

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

Pi Kappa Phi, February 2019–May 2020
- Philanthropy Chair, 2020

Habitat for Humanity, March 2019–March 2020
Dean's List, two semesters
Arlington County History Scholarship, February 2019
- Awarded to outstanding college student majoring in history and maintaining a 3.0 GPA

1. Use your Mason email address or other email that reflects your professionalism (e.g., firstname.lastname@gmail.com).
2. Having a job or an internship while studying abroad enhances the experience. It can be listed in the EDUCATION section.
3. You can create a separate section to include class projects.
4. Experiences are listed in reverse chronological order. Start bulleted statements with action verbs; use PRESENT tense for current accomplishments and PAST tense for completed tasks or past experiences.

SAMPLE CONTEMPORARY STUDENT RESUME

Formatting: Font: Times New Roman; Font Size: title (18) and text (12); Margins: 0.5" all around

Pat Simmons

Herndon, Virginia 20171 *703-993-1333* PatSimmons@gmail.com* www.linkedin.com/in/PatSimmons

EDUCATION

BA Psychology, Concentration: Educational Psychology, GPA: 3.66 — Expected: May 2024
George Mason University (Mason), Fairfax, Virginia

ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECTS 1

Exploring the Connection between Sibling Relationships and Academic Success — Fall 2022

- Designed and conducted a mixed-methods research study on the impact of number of siblings on academic success, in partial fulfillment of Psychology Independent Study course work
- Analyzed qualitative and quantitative data using SPSS and NVivo
- Presented findings at Mason's annual Spring Psychology Symposium

The Economics of Diverse Classrooms — Spring 2024

- Developed protocol and conducted interviews of four kindergarten educators and one administrator in team research project for Adolescent Development course
- Collaborated with team to draft research paper and delivered findings via presentation

RELATED EXPERIENCE 2

Externship, Educational Psychologist — Winter 2020
Herndon High School, Herndon, Virginia

- Leveraged connections and secured a self-initiated shadow opportunity with the school psychologist during Mason semester break
- Shadowed classroom presentations related to bullying and a small group therapy session
- Discussed industry trends, interviewed key staff, and held informational interviews

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Secretary, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) — Fall 2021-Present
Floris Elementary School, Herndon, Virginia

- Attend monthly meetings; capture unbiased, factual meeting minutes and distribute to executive committee members; and post to PTA notice board
- Work closely with the PTA treasurer to track membership, dues, and voting eligibility
- Maintain accurate copies of previous meeting minutes, prepare meeting agendas, and update and edit bylaws and standing roles

Senior Sales Assistant — May 2011-August 2015
Van Metre Companies, Ashburn, Virginia

- Educated and trained new sales assistants on properties and products
- Managed inventory of sales and marketing brochures and supplies
- Input prospective buyers into proprietary database and demonstrated advanced level knowledge of MS Word, MS Excel, Outlook, and Adobe Acrobat
- Maintained and exhibited excellent communication, professional demeanor, and time management skills

SKILLS AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- Proficient in NVivo, SPSS, Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint
- Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) background check
- Red Cross CPR/AED certified, expires May 2024
- Assistant Soccer Coach, Mt. Vernon Soccer Club, August 2018-November 2020
- LinkedIn Learning Courses: Measuring Learning Effectiveness, Visual Thinking Strategies

1. Emphasize academic experiences as relevant experience.
2. When your related experience is not the most current, create a RELATED EXPERIENCE section to list it before other experiences.

SAMPLE EDUCATION-RELATED RESUME

Formatting: Font: Calibri Light; Font Size: (16) and text (11); Margins: 0.5" all around

Georgia Mason

703-123-4567, gmason@gmu.edu

1

EDUCATION

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia
Bachelor of Individualized Study (BIS): Early Childhood Education Studies Concentration — May 2023
Honors: Dean's List, Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 — GPA: 3.65/4.0

Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, Virginia — August 2021
Associate of Science in General Studies — GPA: 3.72/4.0

2

EXPERIENCE

Mentor, **Akoma Circle**, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia — August 2021–Present

- Coordinated three community service fundraisers, raising more than $3,500.
- Mentor two incoming first-year Black students through transition to college while assisting them with academic and social issues. Guide students in the development of skills and strategies for dealing with challenges.
- Maintain confidentiality relating to mentored students' issues of concern.
- Refer students to campus and community resources as appropriate.

3

Project Lead, **Undergraduate Research Symposium,** George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia — April 2021

- Proposed legislative and policy solutions to transplant organ shortage from multidisciplinary perspectives (e.g., scientific, legal, and moral) as part of an interdisciplinary research team of five.
- Reviewed and analyzed relevant legislation and scholarly journals, articles, and reports impacting strategies for routine organ donation, and special considerations prohibiting organ donation from prison inmates.
- Coordinated team members' schedules, ensuring full participation; assessed progress via weekly meetings with members and professor.
- Designed and completed a presentation communicating research findings to faculty mentor and four other research teams.
- Selected as one of 50 College of Humanities and Social Sciences students to present findings at college-wide symposium.

4

Host and Server, **Bonefish Grill**, Fairfax, Virginia — November 2020–December 2021

- Interacted with more than 50 customers and handled an average of $750 nightly.
- Developed and maintained constructive working relationships with supervisors and coworkers.
- Communicated effectively in English and Spanish with a diverse group of customers and staff.
- Earned a raise after six months of demonstrating a high level of responsibility, maturity, and initiative.

5

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Social Media Coordinator, **Active Minds,** George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia — May 2022–February 2023

- Maintained group's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts; became the first member to hold the title of social media coordinator. Increased followers by 73 percent.
- Launched online marketing campaign to generate interest in recruitment events, yielding 15 percent increase in new membership.
- Promoted online club presence and recruited new members for every meeting.
- Coordinated with the president to plan and host biweekly meetings to discuss current club events and activities.
- Informed members of updates to events/activities of social media marketing and direct email/text outreach.

SKILLS

- Computer/Software: Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; Adobe Photoshop; Lexis-Nexis; JSTOR; MailChimp
- Languages: Spanish (limited working proficiency verbal, reading, and writing) and English
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter

1. Email and phone number are sufficient contact details.
2. EXPERIENCE section may include the following:
   - Full-time and part-time experience
   - Internships and co-op positions
   - Significant volunteer, leadership, field, and practicum experiences
   - Significant course projects
3. Highlight a significant academic project as relevant experience.
4. Illustrate your transferable skills. Qualify and quantify your accomplishments. Well-chosen descriptive details help communicate your initiative, follow-through, and problem-solving skills.
5. Create a separate section for your campus experience.

SAMPLE FEDERAL STYLE RESUME

Formatting: Font: Arial; Font Size: title (16) and text (10); Margins: 0.5" all around

Mahad Ibrahim

1234 Maple Lane, Fairfax, VA 22032 * 703-123-4567 * mahad.ibrahim@live.com 1

U.S. Citizen 2
Clearance: None
Languages: Fluent in Arabic
Highest Previous Grade: GS-04 Pathways Intern
Geographic Preference: Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia

PROFILE

Skilled researcher and analytical problem solver committed to public service. Strong written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills gained through course work and internships. Bilingual with interest in learning new languages.

EDUCATION

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

- Bachelor of Arts in Global Affairs, Concentration: Middle East and North Africa, GPA 3.51, May 2023
- Relevant Course Work: Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa, The Middle East in the 20th Century, International Economic Policy, Global Conflict Analysis and Resolution
- Economic Development Research Project: Researched and wrote 20-page paper on trade and international finance in the Middle East based on literature reviews. Compared economies, analyzing similarities and differences among countries in the region. Assessed influence and consequences of trade and protectionism. Presented overview of paper to class. October 2022
- Conflict Analysis Team Project: Led four-member team project on intercultural communication and conflict resolution. Analyzed the influence of globalization on conflict using case studies. Delegated tasks and organized meeting schedule. Conducted a 60-minute presentation based on research findings. April 2022

RELATED EXPERIENCE

10th District Constituent Services Office, **CONGRESSIONAL INTERN**, Herndon, Virginia, August 2022 to December 2022, 8 hours per week, ($0.00), Supervisor: Ms. Jane Doe (703-234-5678), may contact 3

- Management Information Systems: Utilized and updated Capital Correspondence Database Information System to respond to written and verbal inquiries from the public. Planned and organized work, coordinated with others to solve complex problems. Demonstrated professionalism and courtesy. Shared information with and sought input from internal and external sources.
- Proven track record for providing excellent customer service to a diverse body of constituents.
- Recognized for interpersonal skills with customers and coworkers. Regularly received and responded to high priority requests from constituents. Managed more than 50 inbound and outbound call traffic and 70 email requests from constituents each day. Worked successfully under deadlines to achieve daily objectives. Willing and able to work extra hours and take over additional tasks to complete projects.
- Built rapport and maintained liaisons with internal and external offices to improve operations and flow of information in a high-pressure environment under tight deadlines. Participated in 2022 Congressional Grant Conference for researchers and businesses, held at Northern Virginia Community College's Sterling Campus. Managed supporting logistics, information dissemination, and security.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Recognized and received awards twice for exemplary internal and external customer service by supervisor.
- Made recommendations to enhance the Congressional Grant Conference that were implemented for the next year.
- Streamlined data entry process for the Capital Correspondence Database Information System allowing the public to easily submit inquiries.

Department of Defense Chief of Staff, **PATHWAYS PROGRAM INTERN**, Arlington, Virginia, June 2021 to June 2022, 8 hours per week, ($13,000/yr.), Supervisor: Mr. John Doe (703-345-6789), may contact

- Demonstrated outstanding customer service while managing logistics and support of multiple missile defense agency conferences attended by military officials, defense department employees, and foreign dignitaries. Provided a wide range of direct support and proactive assistance to the Protocol Section of the chief of staff for the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). Maintained professionalism and courteous attitude in a fast-paced, high-pressure environment. Used Arabic language skills to assist foreign dignitaries.

1. Federal resumes are longer than private sector resumes (two to three pages minimum).
2. Include your citizenship and clearance but not your social security number.
3. It is unique to the federal resume to include information such as former supervisors and their contact info, your salary, and hours worked.

SAMPLE FEDERAL STYLE RESUME, CONTINUED

- Engaged in effective oral communications and personal interaction at various retirement ceremonies, Senior Executive Service and flag officer events, weekly organizational staff meetings, and with transportation arrangements to events.
- Researched and prepared a comprehensive History and Missile Defense Bibliography for use by missile defense researchers and international strategic partners by compiling information from a variety of sources, including the Pentagon library, the Pentagon intranet, and materials from the MDA Military History Office.
- Analyzed, evaluated, and interpreted information from missile defense history sources to actively assist the military historian with creating speeches for the Director of MDA to use in congressional testimony given in front of senators justifying budgets and programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 4

- Wrote sections of a speech for the Director of the Missile Defense Agency to present at the MDA Conference that was praised by more than 10 senators.
- Selected to represent the Department of Defense at multiple meetings and ceremonies.
- Created formal brochure explaining the support of the MDA to be used again in the future for Japanese speaking dignitaries.

Fairfax County Public Schools, SUBSTITUTE TEACHER, Falls Church, Virginia, January 2021 to June 2021, 24 hours per week ($21,000/ yr.), Supervisor: Dr. John Doe (703-732-0123), may contact

- Monitored, tracked, evaluated, and executed complex daily action plans while adjusting for changing priorities in a fast-paced emotionally-charged environment. Supervised and taught up to 30 students while promoting teamwork and communication. Disseminated written materials and effectively communicate oral instructions while maintaining order using a variety of creative methods. Supported and promoted primary instructor's vision in tense situations.
- Evaluated and documented progress of action plans. Prepared and delivered in-depth analysis reports and briefings to primary instructors. Anticipated and responded to needs, maintaining flexible, service-oriented attitude.
- Managed and oversaw support and action plan implementation for 30 elementary-aged children while primary instructor was on leave due to an unexpected illness. Demonstrated quick thinking to adapt schedules and routines, creating lesson plans without guidance to ensure that learning continued uninterrupted.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 4

- Repeatedly selected as a long-term substitute for teachers on maternity or extended medical leave as a result of demonstrated teaching ability.
- Frequently recognized for enthusiasm, dependability, organization, and effectiveness as one of Fairfax County Public Schools' most in-demand substitutes.
- Awarded Substitute of the Year in 2017 for exceptional dedication to the classroom and students.

The Green Turtle, HOST/SERVER, Fairfax, Virginia, March 2020 to August 2021, 10 hours per week ($10,000/ yr.), Supervisor: Jane Doe (703-156-8897), may contact

- Demonstrated excellent interpersonal communication skills while interacting with more than 50 customers and handling an average of $750 nightly. Engaged in effective teamwork in a fast-paced environment to ensure accuracy and timeliness of order.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Selected as employee of the month two times in a 12-month period.
- Frequently recognized for initiative, being a team player, and having a positive attitude.

Asian Bistro, KITCHEN PREP ASSISTANT, Fairfax, Virginia, April 2018 to May 2019, 10 hours per week ($8,000/yr.), Supervisor: Jeremy Miller (703-726-1559), may contact 5

- Consistently followed the prep list created by chefs to plan duties. Labeled and stocked all ingredients on shelves.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Assigned to reduce sauces and parboil food after six weeks in the position.
- Received 100 percent sanitation compliance in food prep area on a daily basis.

TECHNICAL SKILLS
HTML, Dreamweaver, JAVA

4. One area that the federal government specifically looks at when evaluating resumes is accomplishments. Be sure to clearly highlight how you improved things, increased sales, earned awards or promotions, etc.
5. You will need to include every job that you have had over the last 10 years or since age 18, whichever is more recent. This includes short-term positions that may not be career-related. Each position must also be in strict reverse chronological order.

SAMPLE HUMAN SERVICES RESUME

Formatting: Font: Calibri Light; Font Size: title (18) and text (11); Margins: 0.7" all around

Joan David

Fairfax, VA 22030 * 703-497-XXXX * jdavid@gmu.edu

EDUCATION

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
B.A., Sociology, GPA: 3.45
Expected May 2025

Relevant Course Work: Methods and Logic of Inquiry, Classical Sociological Theory, Sociological Analysis and Practice, Sociology of Culture, Social Structure and Globalization 1

RELATED EXPERIENCE 2

Center for Social Work and Research, Fairfax, Virginia 3

Human Services Assistant September 2022-Present

- Assess resident health status, document biweekly reports, and coordinate with executive director to determine options.
- Conduct and process evaluations for social service eligibility and financial assistance availability.
- Complete interviews and case reviews for individuals to determine eligibility.
- Act as a liaison between families and case workers, relay important updates and information.
- Coordinate the benefit programs and case work while assisting the social services director.
- Communicate with residents and families to determine proper case options and planning.

Grants Coordinator Intern August 2021-April 2022

- Researched best practices, policies, and procedures of external universities. Identified audit findings and recorded them in the manual.
- Contributed to the development of the post-award database for managing sponsored awards.
- Developed trainings and provided key members of the university with comprehensive training and professional development.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE 2

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia 3

Resident Advisor, Residence Life August 2020-Present

- Advise 75 first-year students with academic and personal issues during transition to college.
- Assist students with effective conflict resolution; refer students to appropriate University Life resources and services available on campus.
- Assess student needs and interests, and develop suitable programs on academics, personal growth, and community development; arranged presenters and handled logistics for three programs each semester.

Office Assistant, LGBTQ+ Resources Center May 2019-May 2020

- Organized and accurately maintained database with confidential information for the LGBTQ Resources team.
- Utilized social media to promote LGBTQ student engagement via Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.
- Co-facilitated Safe Zone trainings and other workshops.
- Supported planning of several annual events: Coming Out Week, LGBTQ History Month, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Pride Week, Transgender Day of Visibility, and Lavender Graduation.

SKILLS 4

SOFTWARE: Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; Adobe Photoshop; Lexis-Nexis; JSTOR; MailChimp
LANGUAGE: Spanish (limited working proficiency verbal, reading, and writing)
SOCIAL MEDIA: Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn
ACADEMIC: Designed studies and appropriate instruments to find answers; prepared tables, graphs, fact sheets, and wrote reports summarizing research results; applied sociological theory and concepts to social issues.

1. Include a subsection, Relevant Course Work, to list up to six courses—title only and no course numbers. This section is important for employers who require specific course work.
2. Use two experience headings, RELATED EXPERIENCE and ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE. It allows employers to connect the skills that you have with skills required for the proposed position, while allowing you to keep your experiences in reverse chronological order.
3. When you have multiple roles with one employer, list the employer first and include the roles and dates in reverse chronological order.
4. Organize your skills using categories.

SAMPLE LIMITED EXPERIENCE FIRST-YEAR RESUME

Formatting: Font: Times New Roman; Font Size: title (18) and text (12); Margins: 1" all around

CARLOS BODEGA

Fairfax, VA 22030 — 1
703-222-2222
cbodega@gmu.edu

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, Communication — Expected May 2027 — 2
George Mason University — Fairfax, VA
Student Athlete, Track and Field Team — 2023 – Present

Advanced Diploma — June 2023 — 2
Broad Run High School — Ashburn, VA — 3

EXPERIENCE — 4

Volunteer Coach, Special Olympics Track and Field, Fairfax, Virginia, May 2020–June 2023

- Organized more than 100 track meets for Special Olympics athletes by scheduling meet times and individual heats, and securing locations for each event.
- Coached five athletes by planning practices and providing advice during track meets.

Lawn Care Specialist, Dream Lawns, Ashburn, Virginia, May 2020–July 2021

- Managed 25 residential and business accounts, ensuring customers' full satisfaction with service; advised customers on plant selection and care.
- Followed planned landscaping designs to determine where to lay sod, sow grass, or plant flowers and foliage.
- Cared for established lawns, problem-solving as necessary and demonstrating excellent attention to detail

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Student Athlete, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) August 2023–Present
Member, Public Relations Student Society of America, August 2023–Present
Captain, Broad Run High School Track and Field Team, August 2021–June 2023
Student Member, Key Club, August 2020–June 2023

SKILLS

- Written and verbal fluency in Spanish
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Moderate proficiency in WordPress and Dreamweaver
- Type over 80 wpm — 5

1. List contact information vertically on the page to fill space if you do not have enough experiences or work history to fill a page.
2. For each degree include the month and year when the degree was awarded; include "Expected" for anticipated dates.
3. You may include your high school information until the end of your sophomore year of college, but remove it starting with your junior year.
4. State your experiences in phrases that begin with action verbs and show the scope and results of your activity.
   - Avoid passive phrases, such as "Responsible for," "Duties included," or "Assisted with."
   - Describe your most responsible functions first even if they occupied only a small percentage of your time.
5. To assess your typing speed use typingtest.com.

SAMPLE LIMITED EXPERIENCE THIRD-YEAR RESUME

Formatting: Font: Calibri Light, Font size: name (18), text (12); Margins: 0.8" all around

Rosella Albano

Fairfax, VA 22030 * ralbano@gmu.edu * 703-993-2222 1

EDUCATION 2

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

Bachelor of Arts in History, Minor in Dance, Expected May 2025

Education-Related Experiences/Skills 3

- Articulate historical events and their causes, indicators, and effects on civilizations and cultures
- Gather relevant historical data and evidence from sources (e.g., archives, court records, diaries, news files, photographs, books, pamphlets, and periodicals) to inform and support well-written, clearly expressed, coherently organized arguments
- Write well-researched reports based on analysis and synthesis of a variety of sources derived from database search results
- Experience working successfully in teams on complex, extended projects
- Time-management skills in individual and teamwork settings, including meeting all deadlines
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Moderate proficiency in WordPress and Dreamweaver

EXPERIENCE 4

Customer Service Representative (remote), Wayfair, Boston, MA, February 2023-present

- Troubleshoot and resolve customer service inquiries via phone, email, chat, and social media
- Use de-escalation strategies to calm irate customers and reach a positive outcome
- Routinely exceed efficiency, customer satisfaction, and issue resolution standards
- Communicate trends in customer calls to leadership as appropriate
- Navigate multiple software applications and technologies to work effectively independently

Group Lead, Mason Impact Creative Project, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, Fall 2022

- Created a choreography proposal, detailing the concept and ideas for group choreography
- Collaborated with others on the creative process and successfully influenced dancers and orchestra on all choreographic decisions
- Engaged in self-assessment as creator and performer; met all production schedule deadlines
- Performed with experienced and creative professionals to achieve a well-received performance

Waitress, Sweetwater Tavern Restaurant, Fairfax, VA, November 2020–July 2022

- Provided outstanding customer service in a friendly and efficient manner
- Selected to serve for several VIP dinners

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND HONORS 2

- Activities Reviewer for the *Fourth Estate* student newspaper, March 2022-present
- Campus Ambassador and Tour Guide for Admissions Office, January 2022-present
- Recipient of the Fairfax Professional Women's Association Scholarship, October 2021

1. You can add a line to separate contact information from the resume body.
2. Use all caps for the section headings.
3. Create a subsection with a summary of skills, abilities, and experiences.
4. For each experience, include the job title, name of the employer, location of the employer (city and state only), and dates of the experience (month and year only).

SAMPLE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING RESUME

Formatting: Font: Times New Roman; Font Size: title (16) and text (11); Margins: 0.5" all around

Kai Chen

U.S. Citizen / U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

Springfield, VA / 703-839-9484 / kchen79@outlook.com

PROFILE 1

Experienced project manager with strong communication and coordination skills proven in dynamic fast-paced environment. Committed to improving safety and effectiveness of our nation's warfighters through research, development, and implementation of mission-critical systems.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering **May 2023**
George Mason University, Fairfax, VA **GPA 3.9**
Related Course Work: Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, Design of Thermal Systems, Finite Element Analysis, Controls, Project Management 2

Associate of Science, Engineering **May 2020**
Germanna Community College, Fredericksburg, VA **GPA 3.2**
Related Course Work: Statics, Dynamics, Mechanics of Materials 2

RELATED PROJECTS

Senior Design, Mine Detection Robot for Office of IAD Detection August 2022–Present
Team Lead

- Organize efforts of the team to stay on schedule and meet predetermined deliverables
- Direct design team meetings focused on meeting customer requirements using applied engineering skills
- Maintain a $20,000 budget provided by the Department of Defense's Office of IAD Detection

SKILLS

Finite Element Analysis/Method
Autodesk Inventor/Mechanical Simulation
Matlab & C++
Microsoft Office Suite 3

AWARDS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
DOD/CPO Basic Corrosion Course Certification
Type 1, 2 CFC Certification

EXPERIENCE

Project Manager, Stark Industries, Woodbridge, VA February 2018-Present

- Supervise the implementation of a company-wide site management software upgrade and training system to reduce man hours associated with data entry and data management. Currently on-call to troubleshoot and repair technical issues dealing with customer equipment.
- Maintain, service, and repair HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and network systems to ensure proper function of all company locations and maximum profitability for the company by reducing maintenance costs.

Manager, Wayne Enterprise, Lorton, VA June 2013-February 2018

- Managed day-to-day operations of the company including sales, purchasing, accounts payables, accounts receivables, and deliveries. Built and maintained close relationships with clients to meet requirements and maintain high levels of customer satisfaction.

HVAC Service Technician, Oscorp, Alexandria, VA August 2011-June 2013

- Performed routine maintenance and inspections on commercial and residential HVAC systems. Troubleshot systems and removed/replaced failed components as required to ensure proper system operation.

Aircraft Maintenance Inspector, United States Marine Corps, Charleston, SC July 2006-October 2010 4

- Delegated and supervised all maintenance activities on 17 aircrafts for 20 Blackhawk helicopter mechanics and crew chiefs within the work center to ensure squadron readiness in peacetime and combat.
- Inspected work performed by Blackhawk helicopter center mechanics and crew chiefs to ensure correct maintenance procedures were followed and to ensure proper functionality of the aircraft.

1. The PROFILE (optional section) can be helpful if you have an eclectic background, have several years of experience, or are in the process of changing careers.
2. Include up to six upper-level and/or relevant courses.
3. By listing Microsoft Office Suite, you communicate that you are familiar with all applications: Word, Excel, Power Point, Access, and Outlook.
4. For additional information on Military Occupational Classification, visit onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC.

SAMPLE RELATED EXPERIENCE AND TECHNICAL RESUME

Formatting: Font: Century Gothic; Font Size: title (16) and text (10); Margins: 0.8" all around

ALI MOHAMED

Fairfax, VA 22030 · (703) XXX-1234 · amohame45@gmu.edu · linkedin.com/in/alimohamed

1

EDUCATION

2

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA — May 2023
Master of Science in Computer Science — GPA 3.67

University of Tehran*, Tehran, Iran — May 2021
Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering — GPA 3.91
* Top-rated university in Iran, admission limited to top 1% of applicants

TECHNICAL SKILLS

3

Programming: C, C++, Java, Python, .NET, PERL
Databases: Oracle, Access, SQL
Operating Systems: Windows, OSX, Unix, Linux
Applications: Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office Suite, Netbeans

RELATED EXPERIENCE

4

XYZ Corporation, Dubai, UAE — May 2021–June 2022
Computer Programmer I

- Created Java-based projects for contracted companies
- Tested software for rollout on Windows and Linux platforms
- Led a team of seven programmers in completing a nine-month audit
- Designed a cost-saving module for the corporation that saw net savings of $5M

5

University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran — June 2018–May 2021
Project Manager-Senior Design

- Led a team of five students in developing software to standardize course registration for a university of over 30,000 students
- Consulted with university officials to determine the needs and capabilities of the institution
- Designed, developed, and tested code from creation to completion
- Organized team meetings on a weekly basis to provide regular project updates

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

4

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
Graduate Teaching Assistant — August 2022–Present

- Instruct 100 students in an Introduction to Java course
- Provide feedback and personal instruction to students on an as-needed basis
- Create lesson plans based on recommendations from the professor

Sales Clerk, Patriot Computers — August 2021–July 2022

- Installed new software on store computers and demonstrated use to customers
- Provided exemplary service to students and faculty purchasing computers and computer supplies

Freelance Musician, Tehran, Iran/Fairfax, VA
Guitarist and Singer — April 2017–Present

- Perform live shows for 20 to 250 people and record and sell original music
- Mix and master quality music for clients on digital and analog hardware

ACTIVITIES

Member, Association of Computing Machinery, September 2021-Present
Member, Tehran Cultural Society, April 2018-June 2021

1. Use bullets to separate details of contact information. Include links to your LinkedIn profile or website to show your projects.
2. Include degrees in reverse chronological order.
3. List your technical skills in a separate section and organize them by categories. If you have certifications, you can include them here in their own category.
4. Present your experience in two specific sections: RELEVANT EXPERIENCE and ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE when your career-related experience is not most recent.
5. Academic projects can be included.

SAMPLE RELATED PROJECT RESUME

Formatting: Font: Abadi; Font Size: title (14) and text (10); Margins: 0.8" all around

Jack Bauer

U.S. Citizen · Alexandria, VA 22306 · (703) 345-XXXX · jbauer@gmu.edu

EDUCATION

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA — Expected May 2025
Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering — GPA: 3.65

- Dean's List standing (four semesters)

Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, VA — May 2022
Associate of Science, Electrical Engineering — GPA: 3.61

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming Tools:	Cloud9, MATLAB, PSpice, TI Code Composer, and Xilinx Coding
Languages:	C, JAVA, Python, and VHDL
Hardware Dexterity:	Arduino, Beaglebone, breadboard prototyping, and MSP430
Applications:	Microsoft Office Suite, OSX, Unix, and Windows

RELATED PROJECTS

1

Parking Availability System, Senior Design — August 2022-May 2023

- Collaborated with a group of five teammates to provide drivers with parking availability data
- Developed sockets to communicate between sensors, server, and smartphones
- Tested ultrasonic sensors to establish optimal operation placement
- Designed microcontroller algorithms to exclusively forward accurate readings

Image Processing Using 2D Convolution, Signals and Systems — November 2022

- Detected horizontal and vertical edges using a 3x3 pixel mask
- Blurred images using an averaging mask
- Sharpened images using a Laplacian 2D operator

Audio Equalizer Using Shelf Filters, Signals and Systems — April 2022

- Designed filters using pole-zero plots to attenuate desired frequency spectrum
- Analyzed results in the time domain to determine amplitude attenuation
- Examined spectrograms for required frequency attenuation

Single Cycle MIPS Processor, Computer Organization — August 2021-December 2021

- Designed the Arithmetic and Logic Unit in accordance to the MIPS instruction set
- Configured the datapath for R-, I-, and J-type instructions
- Implemented the processor on a Basys 2 FPGA board

Control of a Computer Disk Drive, Classical Systems and Control Theory — December 2021

- Configured a lead compensator to reduce the settling time of the controller
- Developed a lag compensator to reduce errors without interfering with the settling time
- Analyzed system results using MATLAB to determine successful execution.

ACTIVITIES

Events Vice-President and Member, **Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers** — August 2021–present

- Organized and supervised the event arrangements for students for EE majors
- Communicated updates about the event via email, flyers throughout the campus
- Managed check-in of more than 300 undergraduate and graduate students

1. Create a RELATED PROJECTS section to demonstrate that you have experience relevant to the position you're seeking.

COVER LETTER SAMPLES

Highlighted keywords indicate skills, competencies, experience, or knowledge areas that the candidate must possess and include on his or her resume, cover letter, and supporting materials to be considered for an interview. If the key elements are not there, you won't be selected. Be prepared to discuss and give examples of your qualifications at the interview.

EXAMPLE 1: CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

Congressional Internship Student Conservation Association (SCA)

Job Function: Public Administration/Public Affairs/Public Policy/Transportation

Application Deadline: 5/15/2023

SCA and Unilever Corporation have partnered to offer a unique congressional internship opportunity that will give students a chance to change the world. Working in either a Democratic or Republican office, students will gain firsthand knowledge of how government policy shapes our national park system. After spending 15 weeks on Capitol Hill, interns will be placed in the field at a national park to help implement those policies.

Minimum Requirements

- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal [1]
- Interest in public policy and environmental issues [2]
- Strong customer service skills [3] and comfortable manner when dealing with the public
- Willingness to work in a Democratic or Republican congressional office
- Computer proficiency with spreadsheets or databases [4]
- Ability to conduct internet research [5]
- Current undergraduate or recent graduate with a GPA of 3.00 or higher [6]
- Detailed resume
- Directed writing sample and college transcript [7]

Location: Washington, D.C., and an assigned national park

Position Type: Internship—Paid or stipend

Desired Major: Public policy, government, political science [8]

To Apply: Send resume, cover letter, and college transcript via George Mason University's Handshake database or to SCA Human Resources Office at Student Conservation Association by the May 15, 2023, deadline.

EXAMPLE 1: SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Samantha Student

Fairfax, Virginia 22030 * 703-555-3456 * sstudent@gmu.edu

April 15, 2023

Dear Jennifer Moss:

Your recent posting on Handshake for the Congressional Internship caught my attention immediately. The opportunity to work on Capitol Hill and also in the field is the perfect match for my academic pursuits and career interests. As a government and international politics [8] major and environmental [2] and sustainability studies minor with a 3.2 GPA in my senior year [6], I believe I have the skills you are looking for.

The past two summers, I worked as a receptionist and group leader for Fairfax County's Hidden Oaks Nature Center [2]. In this role, I answered a multi-line telephone, provided information about the center, and performed general administrative duties. As a group leader, I educated and engaged children ages 3-12 about ecology, preservation, and woodland trails. This experience has helped me to develop my customer service [3] and verbal communication skills [1] and understand how government policies and funding affect our parks. Additionally, my volunteer experience over the past four years with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay has reinforced my interest in public policy and environmental issues [2]. My college course work is writing-intensive [1], and the attached writing sample illustrates my research [5] skills on the topic of Maryland's Annual Cleanup Day and Project Clean Stream. My skills in Microsoft Office, including Excel [4], are advanced, as I am able to create formulas, run macros, and develop pivot tables, all of which I learned in an economic policy course last semester.

Attached is my resume that highlights my customer service and research experience along with my transcript and writing sample [7]. Next week I will follow up to inquire if any additional information is needed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Samantha Student

EXAMPLE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOB DESCRIPTION

Fairfax County Public Schools

Title: School Counselor, Rachel Carson Middle School

Job Function: Counseling/Consulting/Crisis Intervention/Program Assessment and Evaluation

Duties

- School counselor will work with students from multicultural and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. [1]
- Provide developmentally appropriate information, knowledge, and skills to promote student success in academic, career, personal, and social areas. [2]
- Serve as a consultant to parents and teachers, helping them to be more effective in working with students through individual or group conferences [3], staff development activities, or parent educational workshops.
- Provide crisis intervention [4] by addressing specific concerns of students at risk or with identified needs, consulting with parents and/or teachers as appropriate.
- Assess needs of students and staff, evaluate programs, and make changes in the school counseling program to increase effectiveness.
- Act as a liaison between teachers, parents/guardians, support personnel, and community resources [5] to facilitate successful student development.
- Be an advocate ensuring equitable access to programs and services for all students.

To apply: Email resume and cover letter to aford@fcps.edu by August 15, 2023.

EXAMPLE 2: SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Florin Popescu
Fairfax, Virginia 22030 * 703-987-6543 * fpopes2@gmu.edu

August 1, 2023

Dear Alice Ford:

As a recent graduate from George Mason University's Counseling and Development MEd program with a concentration in school counseling, I believe my education and experience match the needs of your position. I was excited to see the school counselor opportunity at Rachel Carson Middle School posted on the Fairfax County Public Schools website on July 31, 2023. The possibility of working with a diverse student body at a school known for its nontraditional teaching methods and innovative programs is exactly how I would like to build my career.

For the past year and a half, I have held a school counseling internship working with students from various multicultural and socioeconomic backgrounds [1] at Irving Middle School. My experience includes leading individual and group counseling [3] sessions on anger management, social skills development, study skills, friendship, grief, deployment, and divorce [2]. In addition, I worked with a diverse student body that included many non-English speaking recent immigrants [1] at Arlington High School for the Arts and Sciences. During this practicum, I conducted individual and group sessions addressing attendance, academic, career, and social concerns. One project I initiated was to update community resources [5], brochures, and intake forms. Additionally, I had the opportunity to co-facilitate a parent-teacher [5] workshop on the topic of social media and bullying. While pursuing my degree, I balanced a part-time job at a group home for battered women and volunteered at a crisis [4] hotline. The culmination of my education and experience provides a strong foundation to provide counseling services to your student body.

Attached is my resume for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. I look forward to discussing my background and passion for supporting students, families, and staff with you. The best way to reach me is via cell phone at 703-987-6543.

Sincerely,
Florin Popescu

SUB I, ROOM 3400
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030
703-993-2370
CAREERS.GMU.EDU

Scan the QR code to access a digital version of the Career Readiness Guide.