

# GRADUATE CAREER SERVICES



Career Planning  
& Development  
Guidebook



# Graduate Career Services

The Graduate School and Division of Student Affairs

## Table of Contents

We hope the contents of this guidebook will provide you with valuable information as you begin to plan your career exploration and develop the necessary documents for application success. If you have any questions about the content contained herein or how it applies to your own individual search, please don't hesitate to contact your graduate career consultant at [gradcareers@nd.edu](mailto:gradcareers@nd.edu). We look forward to working with you!

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## Welcome to Graduate Career Services

Over the past few years, graduate career and professional development programs across the nation have evolved in response to changes in economic conditions, graduate students' career outlooks, and employment trends regarding advanced degrees. Graduate Career Services at the University of Notre Dame is a recognized leader in this transformation. We endeavor to equip our graduate students with the skills and capabilities they need to compete successfully in today's dynamic job market and to support them as they pursue their goals as the next generation of educators, leaders, and global innovators.

In collaboration with campus partners, we prepare graduate students to obtain meaningful careers after their time at Notre Dame. Whether you choose an academic career or pursue options beyond academia, our comprehensive portfolio of services can aid you in exploring possible careers, developing transferable skills, enhancing your professional brand, networking with alumni and employers, and landing career opportunities.

While finding the right opportunity after graduation can seem daunting, we believe we can position you well for the career you envision. We encourage students to:

- Begin the career planning process early and use the resources available to you.
- View graduate training as an opportunity to develop a broad, transferable skill set.
- Take advantage of professional learning opportunities and experiences.
- Make time to explore various careers and develop a professional network.

Regardless of where you are in your career exploration, Graduate Career Services can empower you to take ownership of your career and facilitate a smooth transition to a professional role.

Welcome to Notre Dame!

Our model is founded on the premise that career development is a lifelong, cyclical process. Although this is a self-initiated process, graduate students will also draw essential support and resources from their department, faculty advisor, and mentors as well as from the Graduate School and Graduate Career Services. Our office uses a three-stage model – **Career Exploration – Application Process - Search and Interview** to help organize and plan graduate student career development.

Utilize the checklist on the following page to identify potential activities you can do throughout each stage of the process.





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## Career Checklist



Check the checkbox with a  when a task is completed.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have viewed the GCS website (gradcareers.nd.edu).
--------------------------	---

*Exploration*

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have completed a self-assessment of my professional skills and abilities.
--------------------------	---

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have outlined my career, professional, and personal goals.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have created a FULL profile on LinkedIn and invited people to connect with me.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have had a professional head shot taken and have uploaded to social media (LinkedIn, Research Gate, etc.).
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have registered on Go IRISH and have updated my profile information.
--------------------------	--

*Applications*

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have created a CV and have had it reviewed by my Graduate Career Consultant.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have created a resume and have had it reviewed by my Graduate Career Consultant.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have created a cover letter and have had it reviewed by my Graduate Career Consultant.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	My professional documents have been uploaded to the Go IRISH system.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have had my LinkedIn profile reviewed by my Graduate Career Consultant.
--------------------------	---

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have reviewed and updated my social media profiles and have eliminated any content that may affect my professional brand.
--------------------------	---

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have joined professional organizations and have become an active member through initiating internal and external networking opportunities.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have found leadership and service opportunities within my department, college, and/or the greater Notre Dame community.
--------------------------	---

*Search & Interview*

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have created a system for keeping track of my contacts, interviews, job sites and other job-search activities so that I can remember who I talked to, emailed, phoned and followed up with (maybe a Word doc, Excel, Google calendar, etc.).
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have developed a list of people who have jobs or work in organizations that I like and am conducting informational interviews with them.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have identified and reached out to potential networking contacts through ND Alumni on LinkedIn and IrishCompass.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have identified potential references and have specifically asked permission to use them as such.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have attended at least one 3MT Qualifying event as a spectator and/or I have participated in at least one 3MT event.
--------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have conducted a practice interview with my Graduate Career Consultant and/or someone from my department.
--------------------------	---

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have determined my value and calculated my salary expectations.
--------------------------	---

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## Self-Assessment: Defining Your Values

Determining the qualities that you value most in your work can help guide your search for a meaningful career. Start by assigning each of the values on this list a number from 1 to 4.

1. Absolutely essential to me
2. Desirable, but not essential
3. Of neutral value—neither important nor unimportant to me
4. Not of value to me, I would prefer to avoid

Don't worry about spreading the numbers out evenly, but do try to limit yourself to just a few 1's and, most importantly, make sure to be candid with yourself about your current priorities.

### Mission and Impact

- \_\_\_ Social change: I want to make a contribution to society at large.
- \_\_\_ Service: I want to be directly involved in helping individuals.
- \_\_\_ Influence: I want to play a meaningful role in directing the thinking of others in my field.
- \_\_\_ Ethics: I want my work to connect directly with my own principles and morals.
- \_\_\_ Community: I want my work to be of direct benefit to the community in which I live.

### Social Interaction, Collaboration, and Teamwork

- \_\_\_ Sociability: I want to engage regularly with people as part of my daily work.
- \_\_\_ Solitude: I want to work alone or mostly alone, without substantial engagement with others.
- \_\_\_ Teamwork: I want to work as part of a collaborative team on projects and assignments.
- \_\_\_ Management: I want to lead and directly supervise the work of others.
- \_\_\_ Autonomy: I want to work independently with minimal direction or supervision.

### Routine and Stability

- \_\_\_ Pace: I want to work under time-sensitive conditions where there is pressure to deliver.
- \_\_\_ Variation: I want my tasks and responsibilities to vary regularly.
- \_\_\_ Consistency: I want a routine of tasks and responsibilities that remains largely the same.
- \_\_\_ Detail: I want to engage in work that requires attention to detail, precision, and/or accuracy.
- \_\_\_ Flexibility: I want the ability to influence my schedule in a way that works for me.
- \_\_\_ Travel: I want to travel regularly for work, experiencing new places.
- \_\_\_ Location: I want to have control over the geographic location where I work.
- \_\_\_ Balance: I want to have plenty of time to spend with family or other pursuits outside of work.

### Reward

- \_\_\_ Recognition: I want to receive public acknowledgment for my professional accomplishments.
- \_\_\_ Compensation: I want my work to deliver significant financial reward.
- \_\_\_ Security: I want a position and a salary that are likely to remain secure.
- \_\_\_ Prestige: I want to work in a role or at a company that is valued by others.
- \_\_\_ Advancement: I want to have the opportunity to advance rapidly in my field.

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## Challenge and Expression

- ☐ Expertise: I want to work hard toward expertise and mastery in my field.  
☐ Creativity: I want my work to have a strong element of creativity.  
☐ Competition: I want a work environment that tests my skills against the skills of others.  
☐ Adventure: I want to experience a sense of excitement and risk-taking in my work.  
☐ Entrepreneurship: I want to develop my own projects and ideas.  
☐ Physical engagement: I want my work to involve physical activity and skills.

List all of the values you've ranked as 1 and write them here:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## Functions and Industries

Now use the following list of functions and industries to identify several areas where your professional interests lie. Try to check several boxes in each section.

### Functions

- |   |  |   |                                |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academics & Teaching     | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing & Advertising  | <input type="checkbox"/> PR    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative & Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship              | <input type="checkbox"/> Operations               | <input type="checkbox"/> IT    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business & Strategy      | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance & Accounting          | <input type="checkbox"/> Editorial                | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consulting & Advising    | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising & Development     | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Management       | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative and Design      | <input type="checkbox"/> General Management            | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service         | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare & Medical Practice | <input type="checkbox"/> Science/R&D              |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data Science & Analytics | <input type="checkbox"/> HR & Recruiting               | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media & Community |                                |

### Industries

- |   |   |   |                                  |
|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising & Agencies | <input type="checkbox"/> Fashion & Beauty             | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Law     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture & Design  | <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Beverage              | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit & Social Good    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tech    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts & Music           | <input type="checkbox"/> Government & Policy          | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharma & Biotech           | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare             | <input type="checkbox"/> Client Services & Consulting | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate                |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer               | <input type="checkbox"/> Journalism                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media               |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media & Publishing     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education (K-12 & Higher Ed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing & Recruiting      |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel & Hospitality   | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy & Natural Resources   | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement & Security |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment & Gaming | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing & Industrials  | <input type="checkbox"/> Telecommunications         |                                  |

Jot down the functions and industries that stood out to you as most interesting or exciting.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Now that you've identified some guiding values and pinpointed some potential industry and position types, use this information as a springboard for exploring potential careers. Because your values will likely change over time, we recommend revisiting this exercise every few years to make sure your current path aligns with your evolving priorities.

Worksheets adapted from The New Rules of Work, Kathryn Minshew and Alex Cavoulacos.

Original worksheets available at <https://www.themuse.com/thenewrulesofwork>.

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## Self-Assessment: Discovering Your Skills

Identifying your skills is an important part of the career exploration process. Knowing what skills you possess, enjoy, and excel at can help you find occupations that align with your strengths. Self-assessment can help you discern what skills you may need to develop in order to succeed in a given field. Additionally, being able to articulate your skills is required for the application process, from developing your materials to interviewing.

### DISCOVERING YOUR SKILLS

The following approach will help you translate your experiences into skills.

- List all activities you've been involved in—both academic and nonacademic.
- For a chosen activity, consider the associated tasks. Be thorough!
- Consider and list the skills required to accomplish these tasks.

Complete this activity for at least three experiences. You should include activities related to your teaching and research as well as service and extracurricular activities.

#### Example

##### **Activity: Served as a Teaching/Graduate Assistant**

##### **Tasks:**

- Planned and organized lessons
- Established reserve materials
- Met with and advised students on their progress
- Maintained grades in electronic gradebook

##### **Skills:**

- Able to clearly organize materials for others
- Read and understand large quantities of material quickly
- Clear communication skills, both verbal and written
- Ask questions to probe for understanding
- Provide tailored instruction based on students' needs in classroom and small group settings
- Keep detailed and accurate records



### NEXT STEPS

Read over the lists of skills you have developed. Are there any gaps? Make sure you have included technical skills specific to your field as well as skills that are transferable to other areas. Start brainstorming career options that utilize your skills. Use career exploration resources to learn about what skills are required for different professions. Are there particular skills that you would like to use more frequently? Are there others that you would like to use less often?

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## Self-Assessment: Identifying Your Interests

Identifying your interests often helps focus you on what ideas and pursuits keep you engaged, an important element in satisfying work.

### PAST EXPERIENCES

One way to consider your interests is to think about past experiences that you found satisfying or intellectually stimulating.

- Create a list of previous experiences that you enjoyed, gave you a sense of accomplishment, or challenged you in an exciting way.
- Select five to seven of these and write a few sentences summarizing the experience.
- Focus on what you did and what you particularly enjoyed.
- Re-read these descriptions and identify any themes that emerge. What do you know about the topics or activities that interest you?

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Take time to consider your interests outside of scholarly life. Ask yourself the following additional questions:

- What are your hobbies or extracurricular activities?
- If you were browsing in a bookstore, where would you start?
- What are some topics that you feel very strongly about?
- What are your favorite entertainment options (books, movies, restaurants, travel destinations, conversation topics)?
- What was the most stimulating conversation you had recently?
- If you had no financial limitations and a week of vacation, where would you go?
- If you could be introduced to anyone, who would he or she be?
- What topics do you frequently read in print or online?

While it may seem odd to consider outside interests, they can help inform elements of your career. For example, an interest in photography does not mean you should become a professional photographer. However, you might enjoy career options that require creativity and an attention to detail.





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## What are the differences between a CV and a Resume?

At the functional level, CVs and Resumes both serve to communicate information about your background to a potential employer. While they share some similarities in appearance, there are fundamental differences you should be aware of:

	CV	Resume
<b>Audience</b>	Fellow academics in your field	Employers seeking to hire for a variety of positions
<b>Length</b>	Highly flexible	1-2 pages
<b>Focus</b>	Academic achievements & scholarly potential	Experiences; job-related, extracurricular & volunteer, accomplishments
<b>Essential Elements</b>	List of publications, presentations, teaching experience, education & training, honors, and grants	Skills and experiences related to the job you seek
<b>Extraneous</b>	Activities unrelated to academic pursuits	Complete list of publications, presentations, and classes you've taught
<b>References</b>	Include	Don't include
<b>Goal</b>	Full history of academic credentials – teaching, research, awards, and service	Brief snapshot of your skills and experiences that communicates your ability to perform the job you seek
<b>Content</b>	Static. Categories can be re-ordered to emphasize teaching vs. research	Dynamic. Fully customized and tailored to the requirements of each individual job application

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## Curriculum Vitae (CV)

The purpose of a curriculum vitae (or CV) is to display a full history of your scholarly identity and academic credentials (e.g., teaching, research, awards, publications, and related academic or professional affiliations). It will be easier to develop and organize your CV if you make a habit of consistently listing your accomplishments and experiences immediately following their completion during your graduate tenure. The CV is the key document to securing an interview with academic search committees. Therefore you want your CV to represent your experiences, accomplishments, expertise and special professional qualities in the most positive manner possible. Tailor your CV to highlight how your skills meet the requirements of each job you are applying for.



### Make your CV visually appealing and easy to scan:

- ✓ Keep styles, fonts, and abbreviation formatting consistent.
- ✓ Only list entries once, not in multiple categories.
- ✓ Use short phrases, bullets, action verbs and little punctuation.
- ✓ Carefully proofread for spelling and grammar mistakes.

### Getting Started

Check out [Academic iNDEX](#)

Academic iNDEX is a secure, easily accessible, online repository for Notre Dame graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to store their academic and professional history. You can quickly create a CV (and other documents) from your record of scholarly activity, including publications, grants, biographical sketches, presentations, awards, etc. If building your CV from scratch, consider using Academic iNDEX to get started.

### Sample Curriculum Vitae

[Research Emphasis Example](#)

[Teaching Emphasis Example](#)

[Science Example](#)

[Humanities Example](#)

[Engineering Example](#)

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## Category Guidelines:

Your CV should be long enough (2-4+ pages) to thoroughly present all your qualifications in the categories below, which should be listed in order of relevance for the position you seek (e.g. for a position that emphasizes teaching, place the Teaching Experience higher on the CV than you would for a position that emphasizes research). In general, information contained within each category should be arranged in reverse chronological order (most recent first).

### 1. Identifying Information

Name, address, phone number, email. Text should be no smaller than 11 point. Be sure your name is 1-2 font sizes bigger than the rest, so it stands out. Include your name on each page of your CV. Some people also include a URL for their website, where more complete information is posted. Leave off date of birth, marital status, number of children or other information unrelated to the job and your qualifications.

### 2. Educational Background

List all earned academic degrees beginning with the most recent (exclude high school). Include name of institution, location, dates of completed degrees/certificates. You can also provide a brief description of your dissertation here as well.

### 3. Teaching Experience

List the courses, institutions, and dates where you have taught, and also include courses you are prepared to teach. Use 1-3 bulleted phrases to describe the course and your role in teaching it (i.e., formulated, assisted, devised syllabus, lectured, administered grades, etc.). If your background would allow you to teach in several fields, you may want to include a list of graduate courses taken, as an appendix to your CV. The format and depth of this section will depend on whether you are targeting a teaching college or research institution.

### 4. Research Experience

Include the name and location where the research took place and the advisor or faculty member that led the project. Use 1-3 bulleted phrases to describe the research and your role in it.

### 5. Publications, Invited Papers, Exhibits, etc.

This category may be modified to read "Papers and Publications," "Programs and Workshops," or other titles which reflect production of professional work in your discipline. Include the bibliographic citations of your articles, monographs, research, book chapters, etc. using the standard format for your field. If you only have one publication you might want to create a section titled "Publications and Presentations." The information may be divided into subsections. In sciences and engineering disciplines, first authors, number of papers, and quality of journals will all be carefully assessed, so clarity of presentation is important.

### 6. Presentations

Describe the talk title, name of conference, dates, and location. It is important to distinguish between those presentations to which you were specifically invited and others.

### 7. Awards, Honors, Fellowships and Grants

List all fellowships, scholarships, grants, teaching or research awards and the name of the related institution and dates. For grants include how much they were worth and for how long.

### 8. Academic Service

List all departmental and university groups, committees, or task forces which you served on. Student groups are valid as well. You should demonstrate that you have exhibited leadership qualities and you will assume certain departmental administrative duties if hired.

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## 9. Memberships or Professional Affiliations

List all professional groups and offices held.

## 10. Skills or Languages

List any skills or languages that are particularly important in your field. Note those which you speak and/or read and those which you are fluent in. Example: "Reading and basic speaking competence in French, Spanish and modern Greek. Translation competence in Italian."

## 11. References

List them at the end of your CV. List 2-4 references including their name, title, institution, location, telephone, and email.

### Other commonly used category titles:

Academic Training	Internships	Workshops/ Conventions
Scholarly Presentations	Assistantships	Conference Leadership/Participation
Professional Studies	Thesis/Dissertation	Professional Papers
Distinctions	Professional Competencies	Work Submitted/Work in Progress
Areas of Expertise/Concentration	Committee and Service Work	Departmental Leadership
Leadership and Activities	Research Interests	Administrative Experience

### Frequently Asked CV Questions

**Q:** Can I use bullets on my CV?

**A:** Yes. When used sparingly, bulleted information on job accomplishments can help add clarity to generic titles like lecturer, teaching assistant, intern, fellow, etc.

**Q:** Can I include articles that are in progress but not yet published?

**A:** Articles listed as "submitted" or "in progress" are acceptable (especially when your CV already has previous publications) but should be kept to a minimum. Never include works that are only in the planning stages or that you could not show to someone if asked.

**Q:** Should I only have one version of my CV?

**A:** No. While CVs are less customized than resumes, they should still be tailored based on the type of institution and type of position you apply for. CVs for research-oriented positions should promote your research experience first, whereas CVs for teaching-oriented positions should promote your teaching experience first.

**Q:** Should I have someone else proofread my CV?

**A:** YES! Always ask others to read through your CV. Their eyes will see issues you may miss. To schedule an appointment with a Graduate Career Consultant, contact us at [gradcareers@nd.edu](mailto:gradcareers@nd.edu).

**Q:** Do you recommend another resource for more information about CVs?

**A:** Vick, Julia Miller, Jennifer S. Furlong, and Rosanne Lurie. *The Academic Job Search Handbook*. Fifth ed. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. Print.

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## Resumes

A resume is a 1-2 page document that provides an overview of your professional skills, experiences, and accomplishments, and is used to communicate them to a potential employer. It helps you distinguish your education and skill set from that of other applicants, and is a positive reflection of your achievements in school, work, leadership, and service. It is often your chance to make a positive first impression, with the purpose to pique the employer's interest so that they will invite you in for an interview. It should be customized and tailored for each employing organization. Unlike a CV, your resume is not a record of everything you have done academically, but rather a snapshot of those elements of your education and experience that align to the requirements of the job.

### What does the perfect resume look like?

There is no such thing as the perfect resume, but all resumes must be perfect (i.e. free from typos, spelling errors, formatting inconsistencies, and grammar mistakes). Use spell check, but carefully proofread multiple times and have someone else review it, too. Employers have hundreds of resumes to review, so their first step is to look for a reason to stop skimming yours. Typos offer a perfect reason, as they cause employers to question your attention to detail.

### Examples of consistent formatting

Instances of the following elements should be formatted the same throughout the resume.

#### EDUCATION

##### UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Degree, Major or Concentration

Academic Honor(s)

Relevant Coursework/Thesis topic (if applicable)

Notre Dame, IN

Graduation Month & Year

##### PREVIOUS INSTITUTION(S)

Degree, Major or Concentration

Academic Honor(s)

City, STATE (or Country if non-US)

Graduation Month & Year

#### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

##### MOST RECENT RESEARCH INSTITUTION NAME

Title, Department

City, STATE (or Country if non-US)

Starting-Ending Dates (Month year – Month year)

- Briefly describe the research and your role/accountability in conducting the research
- Describe any results that have been achieved or what the objective of the research is intended to accomplish (*action verb + accomplishment + results*)
- Highlight specific skills, qualities and attributes demonstrated
- (*maximum of three bullet points*)

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

##### MOST RECENT EMPLOYER COMPANY NAME

Title, Department

City, STATE (or Country if non-US)

Starting-Ending Dates (Month year – Month year)

- Accomplishments and accountabilities in following formula:  
*action verb + accomplishment/accountability + results (example below)*
- Designed and managed implementation of 2,000 PC WAN across five regional offices, streamlining division's communications and knowledge sharing
- Highlight specific skills, qualities and attributes demonstrated
- (*maximum of five bullet points*)

##### PREVIOUS EMPLOYER COMPANY NAME

Title, Department

City, STATE (or Country if non-US)

Starting-Ending Dates (Month year – Month year)

- Accomplishments and accountabilities in following formula:  
*action verb + accomplishment/accountability + results (example below)*

Alignment  
using right-  
justified tabs

Space between  
items in a section

Space  
between  
sections

Style of dates

Punctuation



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## What information should I include on my resume and how should it be organized?

There are numerous websites and articles online to help you write an effective resume. What's important is to ensure you select a format that is appropriate for the employing organization where you are applying and that, in general, it helps to showcase your specific skills and experiences. Here are some basics to get you started.

### Name and Contact Information

There are many ways to format the contact information section of your resume. The most important factor is to efficiently use the space at the top of the page to maximize the available room elsewhere for content. We recommend centering your name and listing your contact information on one or two lines below it.

Include the following:

- Your full name (First and Last), formatted with a slightly larger font than the rest of the resume.
- One phone number where employers can reach you during regular business hours, typically a cell phone.
- Professional e-mail address, either your Notre Dame e-mail or one that is your first and last name rather than a nickname.
- The URL to your website or LinkedIn profile, if you have one (optional).

### Professional Summary

A professional summary is a brief statement or set of bullet points that highlights key aspects of your relevant skills and experiences for a particular job. Consisting of three to five bullets or phrases, it should summarize why you are the right person for the position.

How to write a professional summary:

#### **1. Identify the employer's needs and how you fulfill them.**

- Closely read the job description.
- Identify the skills and experiences that match the needs in the description.

#### **2. Tailor the summary to you.**

- If what you have written reads like it could be applied to anybody, rewrite it.
- Include your specific skills and experiences.
- Avoid generic lines like "Highly-motivated scientist/historian with excellent problem-solving skills."

#### **3. Write the bullet points.**

- Should appear directly below contact information.
- Should be 3-8 lines.
- Bullet points are recommended rather than a paragraph for ease of reading. If using a paragraph to save space, include no more than 3-4 lines of text.
- Organize as follows: initial pitch, skills, and fit.

NOTE: A professional summary may not be necessary for every situation. Consider discussing your resume with a Graduate Career Consultant to determine if a professional summary could help increase your application success.

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## Education

The Education section should include all your institutions and degrees, listed in reverse chronological order starting with your current graduate program at Notre Dame. Provide your upcoming anticipated graduation date, as well as actual graduation dates for previous degrees (month and year). Be consistent with formatting degrees (M.A. or Master of Arts). Relevant coursework and thesis/dissertation title can be included when important to the position you seek, as can study-abroad institutions and programs.

NOTE: Latin honors should be written in italics and all lowercase: *summa cum laude*

## Professional Experience

Add any current and previous positions in reverse chronological order. However, you do not need to include every job you've ever had, and the accomplishments you describe within each position should be tailored to the needs of the job you are applying for. If you have a variety of previous positions, in order to keep the most relevant positions together you could have a "Related Professional Experience" section and an "Additional Experience" one. That way the items in each section remain in reverse chronological order, but the overall sections on the page stay in order of importance.

Write your accomplishments and accountabilities in the following formula: *action verb + accomplishment/accountability + results*. For example: "Designed and managed implementation of 2,000 PC WAN across 5 regional offices, streamlining division's communications and knowledge sharing." Highlight specific skills, qualities, and attributes demonstrated, and use 2-5 bullets per position. If you need to use more than five bullets to convey the relevant information, consider breaking them into smaller sub-sectioned groups of bullets.

## Research Experience

When your research is directly related to the position you seek, or the job requires or values research experience in particular, you could have a specific Research Experience section rather than combining it with your other previous positions. As with Professional Experience, briefly describe the research and your role/accountability in conducting it. Describe any results that have been achieved or what the objective of the research is intended to accomplish (*action verb + accomplishment + results*). Highlight specific skills, qualities, and attributes demonstrated, and aim for three bullets max.

## Technical Skills & Professional Involvement

List your various technical skills, computer proficiencies, languages, memberships in professional organizations and societies, and leadership positions. Don't assume the reader will know you have experience with a particular tool just because you study a particular area; be specific and list all related information. Awards or honors can also go in a section like this.

### Grammar Rules:

Because of the limited amount of available space in a resume and the extremely short amount of time an employer will typically glance at the page (6-30 seconds), some common "rules" of grammar, such as writing in complete sentences and spelling out numbers, can be strategically bent to increase efficiency. However, employers still expect things to tie together grammatically. Use a consistent first-person voice, past tense for past experiences, and parallel structure in your verbs.

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## What else should I know?

### General Considerations

Most information within each section should be arranged in reverse chronological order (most recent first). If an older experience is more related/important than some recent experiences, consider dividing into two sections.

White space is important on the page to increase ease of skimming/reading. Margins should be kept between 0.5" and 1.0" and a consistent space should appear between sections and between items within a section. We suggest one line between sections and a half line between items.

Unlike a CV, your resume will not generally include a detailed list of your publications. However, if your research is particularly important for the job you seek, you could potentially list 1-3 selected publications or presentations to emphasize transferable skills or research focus. However, full citations are not necessary.

### Quantifying on a Resume

The fastest way to strengthen most resumes is to quantify the size of your projects and the scope of your accomplishments. Numbers catch the reader's attention and validate your experiences. Talk about how much, how many, and how often. The best numbers are the results of your work, but the context can be just as helpful. When quantifying, the number (15) will attract more positive attention than the word (fifteen), because it looks different from the surrounding text. Use symbols like \$ and % to add additional visual cues.

### Consider having a "Master Resume"

A master resume is a resume document that includes everything you've ever done at every job you've ever had. It could be five pages long, but you use it as a record or archive from which you can pull the 1-2 pages' worth of information that relates to each job you apply for. No one but you will ever see the master resume.

## Summary (Resumes)

### Basics:

- Resumes are clear, concise and organized. Focus on the employer's needs, emphasizing skills and technical expertise that show your ability to add immediate value.
- Resumes are short. Stick to one page (2 at the most). If early positions are not relevant to the search at hand, leave them off.
- Resumes are skimmable. A hiring manager's first look may last no longer than 6-30 seconds.
- Resumes are visual. Use capital letters, bold font and spacing to improve the reader's absorption of key information.
- Resumes are dynamic and should be customized for each position applied for. If you can send the same resume to multiple organizations, it likely won't separate you from other candidates.
- Resumes contain strong action verbs at the beginning of phrases. A candidate's use of strong, clear, action verbs provides a quick inventory of skills/abilities that leave a lasting impression of competence.
- Resumes contain accomplishments and/or results that quantify candidate's impact whenever possible.

- Resumes are error free. Proofread several times for spelling, grammar, and structure. Your advisor and a Graduate Career Consultant should review the document prior to posting on Go IRISH or sending on to prospective employers.

### Advanced:

- Look at LinkedIn profiles in your field. Find skills that match your education and experience and retool for use in your documentation.
- Gain new experiences. Participate in professional organizations and community activities. Update resume to showcase service/leadership accordingly.
- Research applicant tracking software (ATS). Most organizations employ software to scan resumes for keywords and match to specific job posting. Using websites such as <https://www.jobscan.co/> will allow you to see how your resume matches up.
- Dump your resume into a word cloud generator to see what skills and experiences are highlighted.
- Remember, it's easier to edit than create. Keep your resume dynamic and up-to-date. Never stop revising and tweaking content.

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## Action Verbs

Strong action verbs enliven resumes, CVs, and cover letters. Use the action verbs below to best position your skill set. Action verbs are delineated by skill type.

### COMMUNICATION

Aided  
Addressed  
Arbitrated  
Clarified  
Consulted  
Coordinated  
Drafted  
Enlisted  
Influenced  
Mediated  
Negotiated  
Persuaded  
Recruited  
Translated

### HELPING/TEACHING

Adapted  
Advised  
Clarified  
Coached  
Collaborated  
Counseled  
Diagnosed  
Ensured  
Facilitated  
Guided  
Rehabilitated  
Simplified  
Volunteered

### RESEARCH

Collected  
Diagnosed  
Examined  
Extracted  
Interpreted Investigated  
Proved  
Tested

### CREATIVE

Acted  
Composed  
Conceptualized  
Developed  
Directed  
Fashioned  
Founded  
Imagine  
Improvised  
Instituted  
Revitalized  
Shaped  
Synthesized  
Visualized

### MGT/LEADERSHIP

Achieved  
Chaired  
Convinced  
Delegated  
Directed  
Executed  
Handled  
Implemented  
Improved  
Initiated  
Oversaw  
Recommended  
Streamlined

### TECHNICAL

Assembled  
Designed  
Engineered  
Operated  
Programmed  
Remodeled  
Repaired  
Trained

### DATA/FINANCIAL

Administered  
Allocated  
Analyzed  
Audited  
Balanced  
Budgeted  
Calculated  
Computed  
Evaluated  
Forecasted  
Marketed  
Planned  
Projected  
Researched

### ORGANIZATIONAL

Arranged  
Catalogued  
Contracted  
Coordinated  
Established  
Generated  
Monitored  
Operated  
Prepared  
Prioritized  
Summarized  
Surveyed  
Systemized

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## Academic Cover Letters

Included as part of your job application materials, a cover letter is essential for introducing yourself to the search committee and conveying the experience and expertise that make you the best fit for the open position. Take into account the characteristics of the department and institution in order to identify the most relevant aspects of your teaching, research, and service, and show great enthusiasm for joining their community. Will the position focus primarily on teaching (e.g. a 4-4 class load) with some research requirements, or will the main emphasis be on research with a reduced teaching load (e.g. 2-2)? Does the University have a Catholic identity like Notre Dame, a mission to provide educational access to underrepresented groups of students, or some other feature that can guide your message? Showing that you have the experience, background, and desire to grow the department's faculty composition in meaningful ways will help catch the committee's attention.



### HOT TIPS

- Customize your cover letter to the needs of the school, department, and position.
- Catch the reader's attention with a unique opening line.
- Focus on your teaching, research, and interests.
- Present information in order of importance to the position.

There are three main sections to most cover letters: introduction, body, and conclusion.

Here's what to include in each:

### Introduction Section

The initial paragraph of the letter should identify the position you are applying for by name, how you learned of the opportunity (e.g. posted on the Chronicle website or your professional organization), what you study, and when you will graduate if A.B.D. (All But Dissertation).

In order to attract the reader's interest, avoid opening your letter with the phrase "I am writing to apply for \_\_\_\_." Because the phrase is commonly seen, it does not help you make a positive impression on the search committee. Consider these options as alternatives:

- "Having graduated with a Ph.D. in [your field] from the University of Notre Dame, I am writing to apply for the [position rank/title and field]."
- "My interest in the [position rank/title and field] position can be traced to the [course name] course I taught last Spring as a Ph.D. candidate in [your field] at the University of Notre Dame."
- "Researching [your broad topic] with [your advisor's name] has generated a deep interest that I will bring to the [position rank/title and field] position."



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## Body Section

While the CV offers a record of your past accomplishments, the cover letter describes how those experiences will help you serve the department and institution in the future. Unlike the body of cover letters used in business, industry, government, or non-profit, which include only 1-2 paragraphs focusing on the two main skills or experiences that qualify you for the position; academic cover letters are broader and can include significant detail on the following areas:

### Teaching

Start by identifying the courses you have already taught, in order to show your experience. Describe the effective and engaging pedagogy skills you incorporated into the classroom, especially if a separate Teaching Philosophy statement is not required for the application. For your Teaching Assistant (TA) positions, discuss the nature of your contributions to the success of the class and your direct involvement with students or course development. If you have been awarded or nominated for any teaching accolades, or if you have high Course Instructor Feedback (CIF) scores, be sure to include that information to show your success. In a separate paragraph, identify the additional classes you are capable of teaching, mentioning the specific names of courses currently offered by the institution as well as new, innovative ones you would offer.

### Research

Begin with an overview of your general research interests, and show how they are incorporated into your dissertation project. Acknowledge a track record of scholarly success by including any noteworthy publications, and close with a description of your future research goals. Connect your research background to the goals and needs of the department, if possible.

### Interests

Use a portion of the cover letter to demonstrate your fit with the department and institution. For large universities, does your research complement the area of a current member of their department? For small colleges, does their mission spark your interest in particular ways? Do you have a particular desire for working with their specific type of student population? Customizing your letter in these ways for each position can help differentiate your experience and goals from other applicants.

The above information should be presented in order of importance for the position to which you are applying. Lead with your teaching experience for positions with high teaching loads, but present your research background first when applying to positions that emphasize research.



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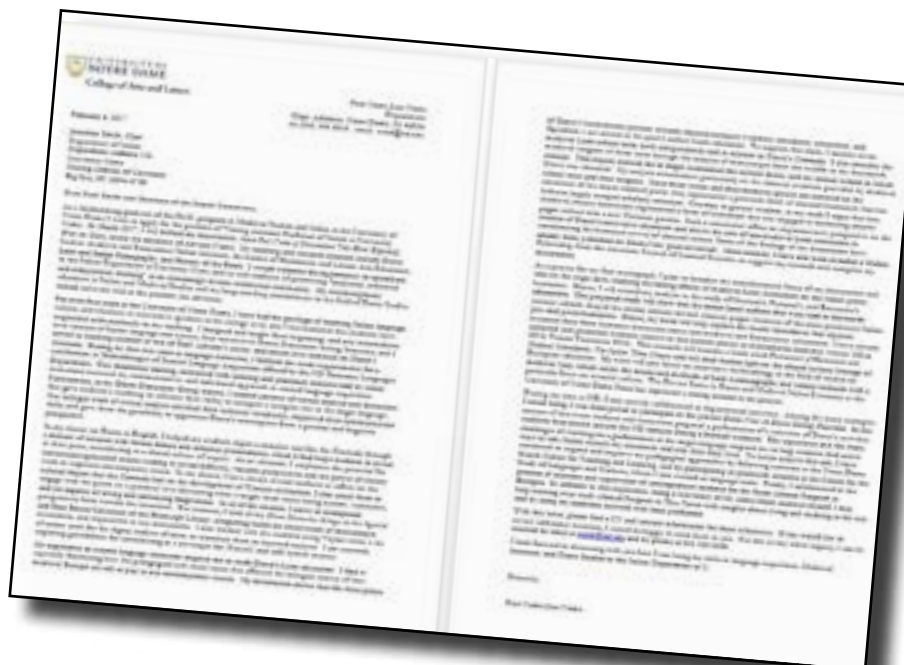
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## Conclusion Section

List the enclosed documents that were requested in the application requirements, and indicate your interest in further discussing how your background fits the department and role (i.e. an interview). Provide personal closing comments and observations to personalize the letter in some way, showing a connection to the institution. Provide your phone and e-mail address for their convenience, and thank the reader for the consideration.

### Additional Tips

- Print your cover letter on department letterhead if permitted.
- Your cover letter represents a sample of your writing, and therefore must be well written and free from all spelling and grammatical errors. Ask multiple people to proofread it before you apply. Your Graduate Career Consultant can be another set of eyes as well.
- Cover letters in STEM tend to be shorter (one page) than those in Arts and Letters (two full pages). Check with your advisor to learn cultural norms in your field.
- Address your letter to the search committee chair by name, including appropriate titles. When the chair is unknown, the letter can be addressed to the search committee.
- If you plan to attend the annual conference for the primary professional organization of your field (e.g. AHA for scholars in History), and it is customary for organizations to conduct interviews at that conference, mention that you will be available for interviews there.



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## Cover Letters

The purpose of a cover letter is multifaceted in that it provides a means to introduce yourself to the company, demonstrates fit between your skillset and the advertised position, and serves as an example of your written communication skills. Each cover letter should be tailored specifically to the opportunity that is being applied for and should serve as a complement to your resume. The challenge for those seeking an advanced degree is how to communicate your skills and expertise in a manner that facilitates company interest. The following will outline essential cover letter components and provide a paragraph-by-paragraph guide to creating content.

### Requirements and Tips:

- 8 ½ x 11 paper
- Typically, one page
- Address your letter to a particular person/recruiter whenever possible (otherwise use either "Dear Human Resources" or "Dear Hiring Manager" rather than "To whom it may concern")
- Be sure to customize every cover letter to the individual job and employing organization
- Go beyond your resume and the skills listed in the posting
- Always have someone proofread your cover letters before sending them out

**Reminder:** The purpose of the cover letter is to accentuate what you bring to the role and how you could potentially be an asset to the organization...NOT why you want the job.

### Opening paragraph:

This is your introduction paragraph – it should clearly state who you are and why you are writing this letter. Be sure to identify the opportunity you are applying for, how you were made aware of it, and any contacts from within the organization that may have referred you to the position. After your introduction, briefly touch upon why you are interested in the role and what makes you an excellent candidate. Drawing upon personal experiences, such as a conversation you've had with a current employee, is an excellent way to differentiate your interest in the company.

### Body paragraph(s):

The body of your cover letter enumerates why you are the best candidate for the job. You can do this by drawing upon your background, skills, character traits, and achievements. A successful cover letter answers the following questions:

- Why are you a good candidate?
- Why does your experience suit the role?
- What can you do for the employer?
- What related skills have you developed?

It is imperative to customize your responses to the questions above to explicitly address the requirements in the job description (e.g. for a posting that requires "strong communication skills," highlighting a teaching experience would be more beneficial than your technical skillset). Focus the body on the 1-2 primary aspects that uniquely and directly qualify you for the position rather than trying to cover your entire history.

### Conclusion paragraph:

To conclude your cover letter you will want to express interest in the process following the submission of your application. Indicate that you would like to further discuss your background in an interview. Identify the documents that are attached or included with your application (e.g. resume), and offer to provide any follow-up or additional information that may be required. Share both your e-mail address and phone number, and thank the reader for their time and interest. End your letter with a professional closing such as "Sincerely."

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## The Philosophy Of Teaching Statement

Some applications, especially for positions that focus more on teaching than research, will require a Teaching Statement, often as part of a larger Teaching Portfolio (see below). Sometimes called a Philosophy of Teaching, the Teaching Statement is a 1-1.5 page document that describes your views on pedagogy, including: your goals for student learning; the specific strategies you incorporate into your teaching; a description of the learning environment you create in your classroom; and a reflection on your past successes, challenges, and plans for improvement.

The goal of the Teaching Statement is to show that you are ready to teach professionally, able to improve your teaching over time, and capable of managing simultaneous teaching and research loads. To do this, the statement should convey to the hiring committee what you actually do in the classroom, using general statements followed by specific examples of things you have already done rather than hypothetically what you would do. If describing a concept you have not applied, show how you have previously witnessed it to make it less hypothetical (e.g. you shadowed a colleague, or your former professor incorporated it into his or her teaching). Whenever possible, describe how students responded positively, and show the results of initiatives you tried. To help customize your thoughts for different applications, view statements of philosophy, missions, and goals on the website of your hiring institution, and incorporate aspects of each into your own statement of teaching philosophy to show you align well with the university.



Successful teaching statements should demonstrate that you have reflected on the profession and act of teaching, that you can apply innovative strategies in a wide range of classroom environments and for diverse student populations, that you have been successful in the past, and that you continue to develop and improve your teaching skills.

### To aid in your reflection, consider the following questions:

- How do students learn best?
- As an instructor, how are you engaged in the process of learning?
- How do you address the diverse needs of your students?
- How does student identity and background make a difference in how you teach?
- What motivates you to design your courses the way you do?
- How have you successfully achieved your goals for teaching in the past?
- What specific classroom strategies have worked best?
- What evidence can you supply to demonstrate the success of your strategies?
- What are your strengths as a teacher?
- What are your teaching weaknesses, and what are you doing to improve in those areas?
- What teaching goals (specific or general) do you want to achieve in the future?

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## HELPFUL HINTS:

- One of the biggest mistakes you can make is relying on abstract general statements without supplementing them with concrete examples. Hiring committees review hundreds of applications. Make yours stand out by including compelling stories about things you've had your students do and specific techniques you have applied.
- Avoid using too many buzzwords or packing it full of jargon. Your own words and experiences will be more persuasive.
- Thinking about what you didn't like in past teachers can help determine what kind of professor you strive to be.
- Research the institution and consider how class size and institutional type influence your teaching style.
- Don't just rehash your CV by listing your past teaching positions. Discuss what you learned from your previous roles and how you implement effective teaching in the classroom.
- Your ability to think critically about teaching is an essential skill that can be shown through the teaching statement. Committees do not expect you to be a perfect teacher. Instead, they want to see how you have reflected on the lessons learned and then creatively revised your approach in successful ways.
- Ask for feedback from your mentors, faculty members, Graduate Career Services, Kaneb Center, EAP, etc.

## Materials to include in a Teaching "Portfolio"

### Teaching Documents

1. Teaching Statement (Philosophy of Teaching) – see above
2. Teaching Biography
  - a. One or two syllabi from courses you have taught
  - b. A paragraph describing one or two projected courses you can teach (some applications may require an example syllabus for such a course)
3. Selections of innovative sample assignments, rubrics, lesson plans, graded student work

### Professional Development

1. Pedagogical Training
  - a. Kaneb Center seminars and workshops, certifications, completed courses related to teaching, other training
2. Assessments and Evaluations
  - a. Student CIF results
  - b. Third party feedback (Kaneb, peers, faculty)





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## Diversity Statements

Diversity Statements, sometimes called a “statement of commitment to diversity” or your “contributions to diversity statement,” are becoming an increasingly common requirement when applying for academic faculty positions, post-doc opportunities, and fellowships. The prompts can be quite open ended, leaving the applicant to decide what to write about and how to structure the statement. Keep in mind that yours can be multi-faceted, there is no one right topic to cover, and you should provide examples to reinforce your claims.

### Three common elements that could be included:

1. A past experience or event that helped shape or enhance your understanding of diversity and inclusion. Note: if you have not had exposure to different cultures or ideologies, describe how you have sought (or how you plan to seek) learning opportunities.
2. The specific ways in which you have incorporated elements of diversity and equity into your teaching, research, and service.
3. Plans for how you will incorporate them into your future work at that specific university.

### When should I include a diversity statement in my application?

A statement may be explicitly required, implicitly requested, or not requested but still important.

#### Explicit:

The job description requires a diversity statement as part of the application portfolio (either on its own or combined into a teaching or research statement). Follow the application instructions.

#### Implicit:

The job description does not require a separate diversity statement, but includes language that describes a commitment to inclusion or equity as an important feature of the successful candidate. Distribute elements of your diversity statement throughout the other application documents (cover letter, teaching statement, etc.).

#### Not requested but still important:

The University's stated mission and community involvement demonstrate that a commitment to diversity is valued by the institution. Distribute elements throughout your application documents to show you align with these institutional values.



### How do I begin writing a diversity statement?

These reflection questions and examples can help guide your writing:

#### On Awareness:

- Was there a moment when your perception of issues surrounding diversity changed or shifted?
  - Encounter with a new culture, family member expressed new identity, a book or research paper increased awareness of an issue.
- Was there an event where your values were challenged and changed?
  - Realization that presupposed common experiences are not universally shared by all people.

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## On Teaching:

- How do you handle diverse perspectives and abilities in the classroom?
  - Encouraging open dialogue, validating all opinions, developing techniques to sensitively draw out participation from students whose cultural backgrounds encourage passive deference.
- How are your teaching materials and methods influenced by concepts of diversity?
  - Incorporating a variety of teaching styles and activities, being mindful to use images and other media that show people from diverse backgrounds, offering multiple views on a subject to show how it can affect people from different socioeconomic or geographic locations.
- How do you relate to individual students from different backgrounds?
  - Educating yourself on cultural norms of international student countries of origin through \_\_\_\_\_, using inclusive language.

## On Administration/Service:

- How have you supported initiatives of equity and inclusion on your campus or in your community?
  - Involvement in \_\_\_\_\_, mentoring student leaders in organizing \_\_\_\_\_.
- How have you supported fellow faculty and staff in their own contributions to or struggles with diversity?
  - Volunteering for their events, offering a listening ear, validating their stories with your own.
- How have you encouraged students to engage with diversity outside of the classroom?
  - Promoting campus events to your classes, showing examples of external opportunities that reflect the learning topic.

## On Research:

- How do you address issues of diversity and equity in your research and writing?
  - Your topic inherently relates to social justice or improving access among underrepresented groups; you are developing a technology, system, or process that can be used to benefit such groups in the future; you are testing a pre-existing method or theory against modern understandings of diversity and inclusion.
- How do you create an environment of inclusion in your lab or among your colleagues?
  - Welcoming and mentoring incoming team members, fostering open dialogue and acceptance of cultural differences.

### **I have a unique background or identity. Should I write about that?**

Rather than focusing on your own diverse background, write about how it has shaped your actions in the classroom, the topic of your research, or the service commitments you have been involved in throughout grad school. How has it allowed you to mentor students who face challenges that may have resulted from their identity?

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## Research Statements

One of the common documents you may be required or encouraged to submit when applying for academic positions is a Research Statement that shows you have begun thinking about your current and future research interests and goals. It should demonstrate how you will continue to focus on doing work that is both significant and unique, and how it ties into your previous efforts without simply being an extension of your dissertation or your advisor's research.

### Q) What is the purpose of a research statement or plan?

**A)** In addition to helping you get hired, it also aids your development as a scientist, engineer, humanist, etc. by serving as a map for your career as a research professional. It helps demonstrate your intellectual vision and aspirations, and is an opportunity to begin demonstrating the creative and independent thinking required of a successful researcher.

### Q) Are there different kinds of research statements?

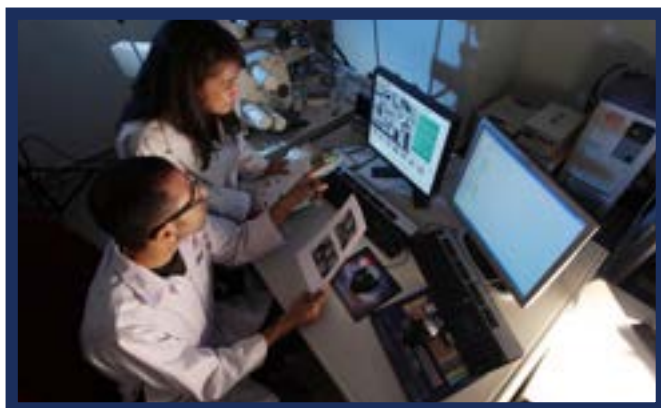
**A)** Yes. Tenure-track applications at large research institutions are not the only ones that require a research statement. For Small Liberal Arts Colleges (SLACs), it might be combined into a "Teaching and Research Statement" and will describe how your research interests relate to excellence in teaching. Postdoctoral fellowships might request a "Research Proposal," which is a longer document that includes a more detailed plan for your research goals and focuses more on the near future than your past research accomplishments or potential long-term variations.

### Q) How is it different from the research aspects of my cover letter?

**A)** The research statement should complement the cover letter and consistently describe the dissertation and its next steps, but show a greater trajectory for future research interests. Be careful not to repeat information verbatim from your cover letter.

### Q) Should I prepare a research statement even if none of my applications require one?

**A)** Yes. Reflecting on what you want to research, the skills you have for generating successful research, and how your interests differentiate you from other researchers is an important exercise that can benefit you throughout the interview process.



### Important aspects

- 1-2 pages single spaced, with some detailed postdoc proposals extending to 3-5 pages. Make note of requested page limits.
- Describe current research, as well as publication plans (e.g. journal articles, book-length manuscript, etc.).
- Discuss plans for future research directions and projects extending beyond current work.
- Show the progression or developmental trajectory of your past, present, and future research efforts.
- Avoid being too general or too specific. Broad concepts may not appear focused enough, but narrowing too sharply will appear too limited.
- Include any relevant facilities or resources required to complete your research, and identify potential sources of external funding to support the plans.
- Differentiate yourself from others who have studied a similar topic.
- Be inspiring. You want the committee to desire more information and to value your contributions to the field.
- Convey an expertise in both your area of study and particular research methodologies relevant to the trends in your field.

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## Academic Interviews



While many aspects of interviewing are universal, such as what to wear, how to prepare, and how to structure the stories you share, interviews for teaching and research positions in academia have subtle differences when compared to their counterparts in business, government, industry, and non-profit.

### Early Rounds:

Most first-round academic interviews will occur via telephone, video conference (e.g. Skype) or in person at an annual conference. They are typically 30 minutes long and focus primarily on your teaching, current and future research goals, and interest in the role and institution. Positions that are heavily research oriented will focus mainly on your research, while teaching positions will emphasize your teaching experience and methods. Because of the short time limit, it is essential that you convey your qualifications and experiences in a concise and interesting way for maximum efficiency.

Applicant pools during this early stage of the process can be quite large depending upon the position. Therefore, it's important for you to be as engaging as possible to sustain the search committee's interest and to showcase your academic performance. Consider how your scholarly work and experience are distinctive or could be impactful to the department you are interviewing, or an unusual skill such as a unique language fluency or research methodology that will help you stand out from other candidates.

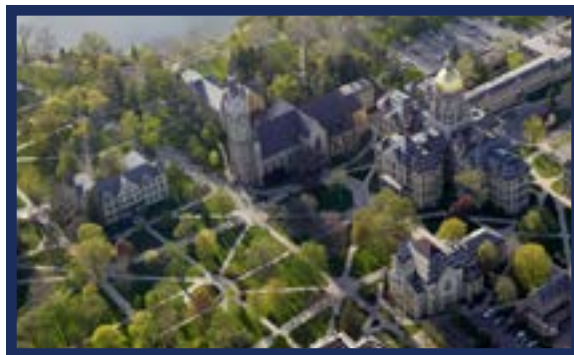
### Campus Visits:

The second round of interviews will take place on site at the University. Remember that the interview starts the moment you leave your house, and doesn't end until you get back. That chance encounter with a fellow traveler could be an individual on your search committee.

Campus visits typically are comprised of a series of interviews and meetings with various constituents from across the institution. Request a detailed itinerary prior to the interview so you can be prepared.

#### **The visit may include some or all of the following activities:**

- Presenting your research (sometimes called the "Job Talk")
- Teaching a class
- Sharing at least one meal with committee members, other faculty, and/or students
- Interviewing individually or in groups with the following people:
  - Search committee chair and search committee members
  - Department chair and College Dean(s)
  - Provost/Vice President of Academics
  - Directors or Deans of various additional campus departments with whom you may work closely on projects or committees
  - Students
  - Human Resources representative(s)
  - President of the University
  - NOTE: Each constituent may be interested in different aspects of your background, and some may simply be there to answer any questions you may have.



With such an extensive itinerary sometimes for the campus visit, it is essential that you carry a few items in your interview "survival kit." Take some high-energy snacks to pep you up during the day. Carry with you breath mints, personal hygiene items such as a toothbrush and floss, a small container of spot remover, and aspirin or other medications you may need. Also, consider eating light during lunch to avoid becoming overly sleepy.

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## The “Job Talk” research presentation

During the campus visit you may have an opportunity to present your research in a seminar or workshop. This is one of the more important aspects of the interview process, and it may be attended by other members of the campus community such as faculty and/or students from other departments. Many features of your candidacy can be evaluated from the talk, including the strength of your research skills, your ability to speak and reason well while standing and talking in front of an audience, your potential for performing well in the classroom and when representing the department at conferences, and more. Your audience should leave with an understanding of the importance of your research and scholarly work, the validity of your methods, and the distinctive nature of your findings. Deliver a compelling narrative to keep everyone engaged, and demonstrate energy and enthusiasm for your research. Be prepared to respond to questions that challenge different aspects of your research and presentation, as the committee may want to see how well you handle yourself under stressful situations.

## Teaching a sample class

Particularly when interviewing at a Small Liberal Arts College or for a teaching-intensive position, you may need to give a demonstration of your teaching skills. A common scenario for this would be as a guest lecture within an existing course. Request the course syllabus in advance to gauge the students' background knowledge of your chosen or assigned topic. Rather than lecturing for the entire class period, utilize a mix of instructional methods and discussion to create an engaging atmosphere for the students.

### General Interview Considerations:

- When discussing your current research, your brief overview should quickly convey what you did, why it was important, and that you are enthusiastic about building upon it in the future. It should also be understood by experts and non-experts alike.
- Have a plan for the next steps of your research agenda beyond publishing your current work. Be detailed enough to demonstrate significant foresight, and express a contagious level of energy and excitement to generate interest from the committee.
- Teaching loads will vary based on the role and institution. Irrespective, the committee will have interest in your teaching methodologies. Offer examples of specific experiences where you fostered “aha moments” in your students. Be prepared to discuss courses you could teach that are currently offered at the institution as well as new ones you could also develop for them.
- Even if you have not incorporated technology into your previous classes, identify potential opportunities for future use.
- Always convey a genuine interest in working for the institution. Prior to the interview, research the school, department, faculty members, current research initiatives (opportunities for collaboration), awards received, funding sources, classes offered, student involvement in the community, local culture, amenities, and other items that might be of interest during the interview.
- During the interview, approach the conversation as if you are a colleague rather than a graduate student. You want the committee to envision themselves working together with you as academic professionals.
- Remember that you are an expert in your own sub-field of research. Use that knowledge to feel confident throughout the interview.
- Immediately following the interview, organize and submit your travel receipts if being reimbursed by the institution.
- Remember that the faculty you interact with may be peer reviewers or grant approvers in the future. Treat everyone you meet in every interview with respect and collegiality.



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## Interview Questions:

Academic interviews focus mainly on your teaching, research, service involvement, interest in the institution, and your ability to be an enjoyable colleague. Here are some common questions to anticipate:

### #1 What class are you looking forward to teaching?

Consider preparing a level of detail that includes what textbook you would use and what assignments you might give.

### #2 How will you involve undergraduates in your research?

This might be easy to answer if you'll be running a lab, but if your research utilizes archives in international locations, then you'll want to think of how you could support other research projects for these students as an alternative.

### #3 Tell me about your funding.

External funding sources are especially important in the Science and Engineering fields. Make sure you can demonstrate prior successful grants and that you have leads on other sources to support your future research initiatives.

### #4 What is the biggest challenge facing higher education today?

Keep the bigger context in mind, remembering that the "industry" for a university is higher education.



## Additional Possible Questions:

### Your Background

1. Tell us about yourself. (NOTE: provide a one or two-minute summary).
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses? (NOTE: be honest, but don't offer anything that would negatively affect your job performance).
3. Why did you choose to get a Ph.D.? What got you interested in this field?
4. How would moving to this university affect you personally (and your family)?

### Research

1. Describe your current research and dissertation. What contribution does it make to the field?
2. Tell me about the broader implications of your research outside of your field.
3. What motivated you to choose your dissertation topic?
4. If you had to start over, what changes would you make to your topic?
5. How will you be able to bring external funding to the department?
6. What are the next steps for your future research plans?
7. What do you know about the research of the current faculty in our department?
8. What influence has your advisor had on your research?
9. Tell us about a time where your research was stuck. How did you move forward?
10. With the teaching load for this position, how many papers do you anticipate publishing per year?
11. Why should we believe you can earn tenure here?

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## Teaching

1. Tell us about your teaching experience and philosophy.
2. What classes have you taught, and what others can you teach?
3. Describe an original course that you want to develop and teach.
4. How would you structure your first semester classes?
5. What would you do to encourage new students to major in our field?
6. What makes a good teacher? Are you good at teaching? Why?
7. How would you teach a basic intro course in our field? What three goals would the students have accomplished in the course?
8. Some students can be difficult. How do you reach the unmotivated students?
9. In what ways do you incorporate your research into your teaching?
10. Tell us about a time when you were challenged by a student.

## University involvement

1. What can you contribute to our faculty team that is unique?
2. Tell us about your engagement with university committees and activities outside of teaching and research. How do you plan to continue that with our department?
3. What are the primary professional contributions you will make in the next five years?

## Other

1. What does an optimal balance of teaching and research look like?
2. What could an undergrad learn from working with you in your lab or in the field?
3. There were a hundred applicants for this position. Why should we hire you?
4. What motivates you to work for our type of university (i.e. liberal arts, research)?
5. If you receive more than one employment offer, how will you choose which to accept?

## How you will be evaluated by the search committee:

As you enter the interview process, it can be helpful to know how the committee members you meet with will be evaluating you. Here are some thoughts/questions they might ask themselves:

- Is your background a good fit for the department and college?
- Is your research plan well thought out, and does it add value to the department's current research agenda?
- If you taught a sample class or gave a presentation of your research, was it delivered effectively and passionately?
- Would you contribute to the growth and leadership of the department as a colleague?
- Did you show genuine interest by conducting effective research into the department and institution prior to the interview?

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## Questions to ask:

You should be asking questions during your interview, especially during those moments when an interviewer asks the inevitable, "Do you have any questions for us?" Prepare a few questions in advance. Take advantage of your opportunity to learn more about the position, and ask questions that will help you determine if it will be a good "fit" for you should you receive an offer. Be sure to ask questions that are relevant to the individual you're speaking with, as a Dean will be able to answer different questions than a panel of junior faculty. It is also important to gain clarity on what to expect during the tenure process.

### **Here are some of the more "natural" questions for a new academic hire:**

- Can you describe the timeline and process of renewal and then promotion/tenure? What are the procedures by which I will be assessed? How will my teaching and scholarship be evaluated? Can you give me an example of what a "typical" successful promotion case looks like in your department?
- What is the teaching load in this department?
  - Is there a different teaching load for untenured versus tenured faculty?
  - Is there a different teaching load for "research active" versus "non-research active" faculty? How is that determination made?
- How are teaching assignments made?
- Tell me about the undergraduates in your department. Tell me about the graduate students in your department (for departments with grad programs).
  - *NOTE:* consider adding a level of specificity relating to their backgrounds, motivations, nuanced career interests, and involvement both in and out of the classroom or department.
- What resources does the university provide to support faculty research? (Especially in science & engineering, some universities provide "startup packages" that enable the new hire to buy equipment, support grad students, etc. However, even in departments where such packages are not the norm, there may be additional sources of funding for travel, supplies, or other items).
- Looking back over the last five or six faculty members you have hired who would normally be tenured in your department by now: How many of them were in fact tenured in your department?
- Is there a formal mentoring program in the department or college?
- To be asked of potential peers - i.e., not department chair or other administrator:
  - What is the best thing about working in this department?
  - What is the most difficult thing about working in this department?
  - What is the department culture like?
- What kind of service activities are expected of untenured faculty?
- What is one challenge the department is currently trying to overcome?
- Where are you in your selection process? What comes next? (Typically asked at the end of the day.)

### **Practice, Practice, Practice!**

The more prepared you are, the better. Your advisor and other department members can help you develop your talks and materials or discuss potential interview responses.

You can also discuss your strategic approach or set up a one-on-one practice interview with your Graduate Career Consultant by contacting us at [gradcareers@nd.edu](mailto:gradcareers@nd.edu).

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## Interviews

Congratulations, you've been offered an interview! This is your chance to show your future employer that you are a great fit for their organization. "Fit" is the alignment of your interests, skills, and values with the firm's cultural values and desired skill set. With a little preparation and practice, you can turn an intimidating process into a confident conversation. Here are the main elements of interview success.

### How to Prepare:

The single most important thing you can do to increase your chances of success and reduce interview anxiety is to prepare by researching both yourself and the company. Think of (and write down) all the experiences and skills you bring to the table. Were there unique classes you took? What classes have you taught? What challenges have you overcome in the lab? What professional situations have you been in? For the company, look at their mission, history, product lines, services, and news items. Their website is a great place to start. Also, what is the status of their industry in general? How are their competitors doing? What innovations have popped up recently? Who is merging or going out of business? Your goal during the interview will be to place the stories you share about your background into the context of the company you will be working for so they understand how you fit in.

Your answers should be clear, concise, and confident, and that's where your preparation comes in. The more familiar you are with your background and how that fits with the company, the easier it will be to give well-organized answers with confidence. If you're trying to remember the details of an experience on the spot, you will fumble around until you get there.

### Do Your Research!

*Researching the organization achieves two goals: it shows the interviewers you are serious about the job, and you will give better answers by placing your background in the organization's context.*

### Prepare stories. Think about times when you:

- Solved a problem
- Overcame a challenge
- Made a mistake
- Worked as a leader
- Worked in a team
- Did something interesting/unique

While you don't want to make your answers sound memorized, the stories and information should be very familiar so you can discuss them in different ways depending on the unique questions you are asked.



**What to watch out for:****#1 Introductory Questions** *"Tell me about yourself/Tell me more about your background"*

Answering this question is similar to giving your elevator pitch, but focused on the unique aspects related to the position you are interviewing for. Provide a brief overview to peak the interviewer's interest. Keep it short (30-60 seconds), and consider including these elements when relevant to the position or industry:

- The basics of your program and year
- Information about how you became interested in your field initially and what brought you to Notre Dame
- Highlights of your experience so far, including research, leadership roles, related courses you taught or took, and other professional experiences
- A description of what interests you in the position and organization.

**#2 General Questions** *"What is your biggest strength/What are you most proud of?"*

When answering general questions, it is essential to avoid responding only with general information. Instead, always include a specific story or example of a time when you used that biggest strength in a successful way. Interviewers relate to stories, and the example helps substantiate your claim.

**#3 Self-Reflection Questions** *"What is your biggest weakness/What is something you are trying to improve?"*

This can be one of the most difficult questions for candidates, primarily because they don't understand what employers are looking for. Avoid trying to make it sound like a positive (I'm a perfectionist). Employers want to see some genuine self-reflection, and most importantly they want to see some problem-solving skills. Pick something that you are actively trying to improve but is not centrally important for the job, acknowledge it, and then focus on 2-3 specific strategies you are applying to develop or grow in that area. Spend 25% of your answer identifying the weakness, and 75% discussing your improvement plan.

*Example:* John does not have much experience using Microsoft Excel, but is actively trying to learn it. He is applying for a job that does not directly require Excel skills. He could answer by saying: "I realized recently that one program I have not yet had the chance to learn is Microsoft Excel, but I know it can be a helpful and important professional resource. To gain an initial understanding of the basics, I reviewed the Microsoft tutorials in the help menu. I have also found a number of helpful video walk-throughs online for some of the more advanced features. Finally, one of my colleagues has been using Excel extensively for her dissertation work, and I have established monthly meetings with her to discuss the various ways she has incorporated into her own research. I'm still not an expert, but will continue to follow these steps to refine my skills further when utilizing Excel in the future."

**Hint:**

*It is difficult to overcome negative personality traits and bad habits such as time management, organization, or punctuality, even if you are actively trying to do so. It is easier to learn new knowledge or develop a new skill than to change who you are.*

Note: Prepare today for future interviews by actively working to develop new skills through multiple strategies.

**#4 Behavioral Interview Questions** *"Tell me about a time when..."*

This is where the stories you have prepared will come in handy. Employers are looking for very specific examples of things you've previously done that were successful.

Use the STAR approach to guide your answer: **Situation – Task – Action – Result**



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First step, if they say "tell me about a time when" then tell them about the time. What was the situation you were in? What task were you facing? It's all background information, so if you prefer "BAR" give them background info, or "CAR" give them context. Without that they won't understand the rest of your answer. Most of your answer should focus on your action. What steps did you take in that situation to be successful? Finish by including the results. Employers need to see that you had success.

**Odd Scenario 1:** If you can only come up with an example that featured a negative result, be sure to say what you learned from that experience and how you have applied or would apply what you learned in the future.

**Odd Scenario 2:** If you have never had an experience that fits a question, you have two options. You could offer to say what you would do hypothetically if it came up, or you could offer to talk about something similar but not quite the same. In both instances the important aspect is to offer. Say "Well to be honest I have never had the opportunity to do that before, but have done something similar. Would you like to hear about that?" or "...would you like to hear how I would handle that situation if it comes up?" That way the employer can move on if they only want to hear about actual things you have done.

## #5 Wacky Questions *"Tell me a joke/ Sell me this pen/ What kind of animal would you be?"*

A general theme of interviews is to expect the unexpected. You really can't know exactly what is going to happen, and employers may throw you a curveball from left field to see what happens when you're out of your comfort zone. You can prepare for other questions, but you can't prepare for these. It might even be something tricky like "why does a curveball curve?" Sure, you might have a physics background and be able to come up with something about air pressure, but in reality many of the weird questions they could ask might not even have one right answer. They just want to see how you handle a little stress, and if you can process information to come up with something that sounds reasonable. Take a moment to think about it and analyze the information. Employers need to know that you will get through a tricky spot on the job if something comes up that you're not prepared for.

### Sample Additional Questions to Expect:

- Can you tell me a little about yourself?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Why do you want this job?
- Why should we hire you?
- What is your greatest professional strength?
- What is your biggest weakness?
- What is your greatest professional achievement?
- Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it.
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- Why are you leaving academia/your current job?
- What's your management style?
- Tell me about a time you had to step up as a leader.
- Tell me about a time you disagreed with a decision that was made at work.
- How would your boss and co-workers describe you?
- Why was there a gap in your employment?
- Can you explain why you changed career paths?
- How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?
- What would you do in the first 30, 60, or 90 days to ensure your success in this role?
- What are your salary requirements? For help, see: <http://www.glassdoor.com> & the [GCS website](#).
- What are your hobbies outside of work?
- What do you think we could do better or differently?
- What questions do you have for us?

*NOTE: Do not prepare answers specifically for these questions. Interview questions can take many forms. Prepare stories and information that relate to questions like these so you won't feel stuck if asked more unique questions.*

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## What Questions to ask:

Always be prepared to ask open-ended questions at the end of an interview. Prepare more questions than you might need so you never have to say "you already answered all my questions." Basing the questions on your company research is always good, and all of your questions should help you determine if this is a great position and organization for you. At the very end, always remember to ask for information about the rest of the interview process, which will confirm your interest and help guide your follow up.

### Questions about the job

Ask questions that will help you determine if you would actually like the job and be able to do it well.

- What can you tell me about this job that isn't in the description?
- What is the key to success in this position?
- What are the prospects for growth for the person in this role?
- What is a typical (day, week, month, or year) for a person in this job?
- What is the biggest challenge facing me in this position?
- How will success in this position be defined and measured?

### Questions about their process and the next steps

The answers to these questions will help you understand how their hiring process works and how soon you should expect to hear from them.

- What does the rest of the interview process look like?
- How will you get back in touch with me (telephone, email, or something else)?
- When do you anticipate the person in this position will start?
- Who should I follow up with (get name, job title, and contact information)?

### Questions about the organization

Do not ask Q's that could be answered by a quick search of the employer's website or Google.

- What can you tell me about this organization that isn't widely known?
- What is the key to success in this organization?
- How many people are in this group (department, office, and/or company)?
- How do you define (or measure) "success" here?
- How would an employee know if they were considered a success or not?
- How does senior management view this group?
- Where do you see this group in five years?
- When and how is feedback given to employees?
- I read that one of your company values is [value]. How is that integrated into the daily operations of the firm?

*Ask about anything else from your preparation that raised questions for you.*

### Questions about your interviewer

Particularly if the person will be a co-worker or your manager, understanding what motivates them will give you more insight into both them and the job. If you know who your interviewer will be ahead of time, you can search for some of these answers on LinkedIn or other online sources.

- How long have you worked here?
- How long have you been in this job?
- What do you enjoy most about working here?
- What has contributed to your success here?

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## How to dress

How you present yourself to potential employers is an important part of the interview process. Here are some tips to help you be prepared. Your goals in wearing appropriate interview attire are to make a positive first impression, feel confident about your appearance, and project a professional vision that aligns with the position responsibilities and cultural expectations of the company.

*NOTE: If you have questions about any of the attire recommendations below, please contact a Graduate Career Consultant at [gradcareers@nd.edu](mailto:gradcareers@nd.edu) to discuss.*

## Recommendations for Women

- Outerwear: Conventional business pantsuit or skirt and jacket. A modest dress in dark colors or beige can also work. Skirts should end at or below the knee. Avoid clothes that are too clingy or too loose.
- Shirts and tops: Can provide a touch of color, but avoid plunging necklines and excessive patterns, frills, and decorations.
- Shoes: Closed-toed pumps with heels no higher than 2 inches. Align the color with your other clothes, and make sure they are clean and polished.
- Purse: Not required, but if desired make it small or medium and align the color with your other clothes.
- Jewelry: Choose either a subtle necklace or one earring in each ear. Avoid large or distracting jewelry.



## Recommendations for Men

- Suits: Dark blue or gray are recommended. Pin-stripes are ok but must be subtle. Dark brown or black can also work. Quality suits made of wool or other natural fibers are most professional.
- Shirts: High quality button-down dress shirts in white or blue are most common and accepted. A subtle stripe can also work. Always iron your shirt, especially when traveling for the interview.
- Shoes: Dress shoes should be brown or black, and can be lace-up or slip-on. Ensure they are clean & polished.
- Ties are REQUIRED: High quality silk works best. Avoid bright colors and bold patterns. The tie should complement your shirt and suit.
- Facial hair: Clean shaven or neatly trimmed/groomed.



## Recommendations for Both Women and Men

- Hair should be trimmed and well-groomed
- Bathe with soap and wear deodorant
- Cologne and perfume should be avoided or lightly applied
- Nails should be clean as well as trimmed or manicured
- Remove facial piercings and cover tattoos if possible.
- Be sure to SMILE, it's your #1 accessory

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## Business Casual Attire

Business casual is not the same as casual. For men, business casual means either a dress shirt or polo shirt and non-denim slacks in khaki or dark blue. A sport coat can complete the look, and ties are optional. For women, choose a shirt, blouse, sweater, or knit top, and non-denim pants or knee-length skirt that complement it. Consider adding a stylish jacket as well.

*NOTE: Business Casual Attire is generally not professional enough for an interview. For more tips on professional interview attire, check out our Pinterest page: <http://www.pinterest.com/ndgradcareers>*

## What to bring to an Interview

Bring along a carry-on bag, briefcase, or computer bag which includes a padfolio containing information you may need, such as:

- Copies of your resume or CV
- Application materials and job announcement
- Examples of teaching materials (sample syllabi, list of classes you have taught, etc.)
- Dissertation abstract and research plan
- Papers you have published
- Notes about your interviewers (who they are, what they do)
- Paper and pen

Make sure to include emergency items such as:

- Non-perishable snacks – you don't want your stomach growling if you haven't been able to eat much at lunches when you are doing most of the talking
- Umbrella – it is hard to be yourself if you are self-conscious about soaked hair or clothes
- Back-up items that will help you get through the trip without any major issues (e.g., alarm clock, ear plugs, mini sewing kit, individual stain removers ("Shout Wipes"), band-aids, extra contact lenses, glasses, tissues, allergy medications, eye drops, etc.)

## Other things to consider

- Arrive at least 10 minutes early for your interview
- Leave your cell phone in the car, or turn it OFF completely (not on vibrate)
- Don't assume the employer or committee has read your CV or resume
- Make eye contact with people you meet, and have a firm handshake
- Make polite conversation/chit chat at the beginning of the interview
- Don't apologize about your background or lack of experience
- Be yourself but always stress the positive

## Thank you notes:

- Make sure to thank the hiring manager or search committee chair for his/her time and effort
- Thank specific committee members, graduate students, and administrators with whom you might want to follow-up with
  - Although they may not expect a thank you note, this may help when you become a future colleague
- Keep notes professional but friendly
- If you learned something about the position that fits your qualifications particularly well, be sure to mention it
- E-mail the message or send via mail within 24 hours of the interview



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## Phone Interviews

Phone interviews are very similar to in-person interviews, with the primary difference being the inability to utilize non-verbal communication. All the interviewer has to go on is what you say and how you say it. A few tips can help.

**Attire:** Even though they can't see you, dress like you would for an in-person interview (i.e. business professional). This can put you in a professional frame of mind and prevent you from slipping into an overly informal tone.

**Don't forget to smile:** It actually affects how you talk, and they can hear the difference in your voice.

**Notes:** Since the interviewer can't see you, you can have notes in front of you. Just don't rustle them, take too long finding your information, or read them word-for-word.

**Vocal clarity:** Many times the interviewer will be on speaker phone, so speak more slowly and over enunciate so you don't get distorted. This is especially true if English is not your (or their) primary language.

**Visual aid:** While it seems silly, having something in front of you like a stuffed animal, mirror, or picture can actually help you feel like you're having a real conversation and not just trying to imagine some faceless person on the other end of the line.

**Environment:** Make sure you go to an area free from noise and other distractions. No kids or pets running around or roommates watching TV.

## Video Interview Tips

- Make sure you have a plain background with nothing distracting or inappropriate behind you
- Avoid sitting in front of a window or other backlighting, or else your face will be in shadow
- Remember if you want to make eye contact you need to look at the camera not the screen, so when they look at your eyes you'll be looking at them
  - When they talk you can go back and forth so you get some visual cues from their facial expressions, but anytime you want to make eye contact look at the camera not their face.

### Confidence Tips:

A sense of confidence should permeate the interview. Not just in how you answer the questions, but in how you carry yourself walking into and out of the interview and in your posture.

Here are seven tips for projecting confidence:

- Stand (or sit) tall – use good posture so that your muscles and frame are supporting your weight, not the chair arms and back
- Maintain good eye contact – don't stare at the interviewer, but the more you break eye contact or look around, the more indecisive or shy you will seem
- Stay still – fidgeting is a key indicator of nervousness and low confidence
- Speak slowly and clearly – practice articulating your words to avoid speaking too quickly
- Be comfortable with short silences – don't start talking as soon as every question is asked, but rather give some thoughtful consideration to show you are listening and are confident in your speaking abilities
  - If you will need a longer-than-normal pause, feel free to say “that's an interesting question, may I have a moment to think about that?”
- Take bigger, slower steps – walking with short, frantic steps may betray your nerves

### Power Poses:

Harvard researcher Amy Cuddy has found that “power poses” (those with open, expansive postures) can reduce stress and increase confidence. Holding a power pose prior to entering an interview helps you to maintain your composure, overcome nerves, articulate more compelling stories, and project more confidence.



For more information about this research, view her Ted Talk: [http://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are](http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are)

### Practice, Practice, Practice

The more prepared you are, the better. Set up a one-on-one practice interview with your Graduate Career Consultant by contacting us at [gradcareers@nd.edu](mailto:gradcareers@nd.edu).



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## STAR Method (Behavior Based Interviewing)

**BEHAVIORAL** based interview is a style of interviewing that many companies and organizations use in the selection process. The basic principle behind behavioral interviewing is that: *The most accurate predictor of future performance is past behavior in a similar situation.* These questions often start off with "Tell me about a time." The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral based interview question by discussing the specific **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, and **R**esult of the example you are describing.



### PREPARING for a behavioral interview:

- ★ Review the desired skills, characteristics, and qualifications noted on the job description.
- ★ Identify examples of situations from the experiences on your resume where you have demonstrated the behaviors a given company seeks.
- ★ i.e. If the company is looking for leadership ability, brainstorm an example of a time you led a group to success.
- ★ Use examples from past job, research, volunteer, class, extracurricular, or other relevant experience.

### DURING a behavioral interview:

- ★ Listen carefully to the question. Ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely.
- ★ Be specific and detailed. Tell about a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one.
- ★ Be honest. Do not embellish or omit any part of the story.
- ★ Choose ONE situation to describe, not 2+ unless the interviewer asks for multiple examples. Give a detailed accounting of that one event.
- ★ Keep it POSITIVE.
- ★ Vary your examples; do not draw from just one experience.
- ★ Be results and action oriented; do not forget to describe the RESULTS! Quantify your results whenever possible.

### SITUATION

Set the stage for the interviewer by providing an overview of the situation and any relevant background information. Be specific and succinct.

### TASK

Describe the tasks involved in that situation. What goal were you working toward?

### ACTION

Describe the actions *you* took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail. What specific steps did you take, and what was *your* particular contribution?

### RESULTS

Describe the outcome of your actions, and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. Your answer should contain multiple positive results whenever possible.

Finish with what you **learned** from the experience.

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**EXAMPLES** of behavioral interview questions:

- ★ Tell me about a time when you led a group to success. (leadership)
- ★ Tell me about a time you were part of a team. What was your part in making that team successful? (teamwork)
- ★ Tell me about a time when you had to make a quick decision without all the necessary information. (conflict/time management)
- ★ Tell me about a time when you were able to help improve a work procedure by making good suggestions to your supervisor or co-worker. (initiative/leadership)
- ★ Tell me about a time you were able to strengthen a relationship by communicating effectively. (communication)

**PRACTICE!**

★ Question:

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

★ Question:

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

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## Professional References Best Practices



IRISHCOMPASS



Professional references are people who employers can contact to verify your skills, experiences, qualities, and attributes for a given role. Lists of references are typically brought to an interview or submitted with the application when required. Keep these items in mind when developing your list of references.

### DO

#### Select References Appropriately

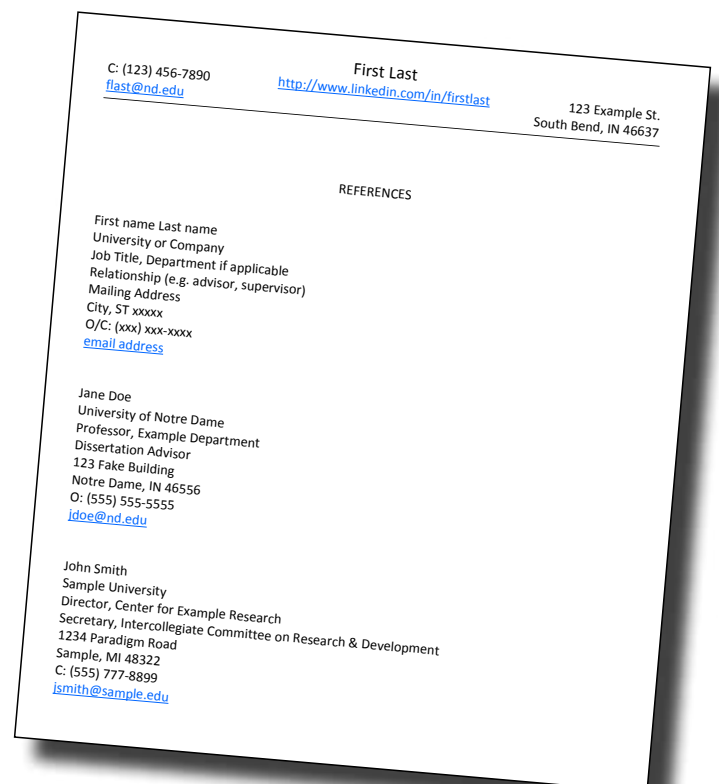
- Select references who know your work and have seen your work ethic in action.
- Seek their permission to be listed as a reference, and confirm they are both *willing* and *able* to provide you with a positive recommendation.
- Ask them for their preferred contact information, and include their name, organization, title, phone number and e-mail address at a minimum.
- Send them the job description you are applying for, or general information about the types of opportunities you are seeking.
- Provide them with your resume and cover letter, so they can reinforce the message you are sending to employers about yourself.
- Keep your references apprised of your progress periodically throughout your job search, and thank them for their contributions to your success.

#### Format the Document

- List 3-5 references who can comment on or attest to your *professional* competencies and *academic* background related to the job; typically your advisor, supervisor, lab manager, committee member(s), teaching coordinator, mentor, etc.
- Format your name and contact information the same way as on your resume to give your documents a consistent appearance.
- Identify your professional relationship (how you know the person).
  - OPTIONAL: Consider also including a brief description of what they can say about you. This may help guide employers in efficiently following up with your references.
- Include the contact information for your references directly on your CV (but *not* on a resume).

### DON'T

- Include family members, relatives, partners, friends, or other personal connections and "character" references.
- List your references directly on a resume.
- Write "References available upon request" on your resume.
- Wait until the last minute to seek permission from your references. You may be left scrambling to find a great recommender, or they may not have time to fully prepare.



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## Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are an integral formality in any academic search, and you will commonly need to submit 3-4 letters per application. Begin the process at least two months in advance, and choose your recommenders wisely.

### Determining Who to Ask

Some of your letter writers will be obvious, such as your advisor or another faculty member or mentor with whom you have worked closely on your research. Consider choosing someone who is familiar with your academic performance and has witnessed your teaching abilities firsthand and can describe your interactions with students. A noted scholar and/or someone who might be well-known to the search committee and department can also add strength to your application, as long as they can speak directly *and positively* to your candidacy.

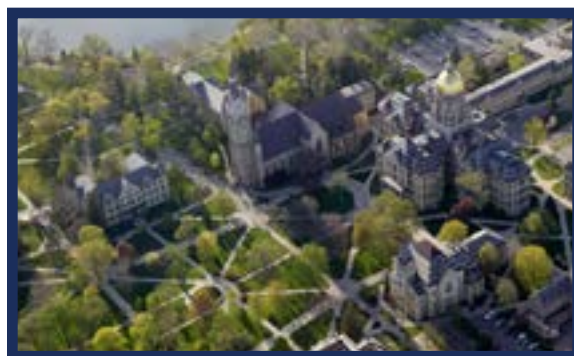
### Requesting the Letters

Approximately 2-3 months prior to when application submittals are due, reach out to your recommenders and let them know you will be applying for a specific opportunity. Indicate that you would greatly appreciate a letter of recommendation if they would be willing and able to write one, and, if so, you will follow up in a few weeks with more details. Touching base far enough in advance will provide the faculty with time to gather their thoughts, but also provide you with the chance to cultivate additional relationships if your initial inquiries don't work out.

For the faculty who agree to write a recommendation, contact them again *no less than three weeks* prior to your submission deadline. Try to give even more time if possible, and consider scheduling a meeting to discuss your experiences, professional goals, interest in the position, and particular reasons for requesting the letter from them rather than someone else (which can help them determine which aspects of your relationship they should focus on). Some faculty may have a base letter that they modify for each student, while others may write every letter anew.

**It can also be helpful to provide them with a copy of the following materials, even if they know you quite well already:**

- Up-to-date CV
- The cover letter for your application
- Research Statement, Teaching Philosophy, or any other supplemental application materials that may help convey your background and goals
- Your unofficial academic transcripts
- All the necessary links or forms, with all of your personal information already entered and as much of theirs as possible in order to reduce the administrative burden
  - If you cannot pre-fill the forms, provide your contact information and other required personal details in a document from which they can copy and paste.
- An informational letter describing when the recommendation letter is due, the submission instructions, and any other pertinent details
  - Ask them if there is any additional information you can provide, and if they would appreciate a reminder a week prior to the deadline



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## General Considerations

Faculty are extremely busy, and your letter may not be their top priority even if they are your advisor. Provide them with advanced notice, sufficient details on your background and interest in the position, and a clear effort to make the task not burdensome. Ask references to let you know when the letter has been completed. Consider sending reminder emails to those you have not heard from asking if additional information is needed.

Keep your recommenders updated as you advance through the application and interview process. Be sure to write a thoughtful thank-you note to acknowledge their time and effort.

Graduate Career Services offers an online dossier and personal website service through a partnership with Interfolio (<http://www.interfolio.com>), the premier online credential file management service for colleges and universities. *You as the student assume the fees.*

There may be a time when one of your recommenders is unable or unwilling to provide you with a positive reference. In those cases it is recommended that you have an honest conversation about the kinds of opportunities for which they would enthusiastically support your application.

Letters of recommendation can be considered either "open" or "confidential." Open letters provide you with the opportunity to view the contents, while confidential letters remain private and are sent directly to the search committee or institutions. If you have the choice between open and confidential, discuss the decision with your recommenders and consider the following factors before deciding which category to choose:

- Your confidence in the writer's willingness and ability to be positive and enthusiastic
- Your recommender's preferences
- The search committee's preferences

## DO

- Select references who know your academic performance and have seen your work ethic in action.
- Find out if your recommenders have specific recommendation policies, and follow them precisely.
- Seek their permission to be listed as a reference. Confirm they are both willing and able to provide you with a supportive recommendation.
- Send them the job description you are applying for.
- Provide them with your CV, cover letter, and supplemental application materials.
- Include the contact information of your references directly on your CV (but not on a resume).
- Keep your recommenders apprised of your progress periodically throughout your job search, and thank them for their contributions to your success.

## DON'T

- Include family members, relatives, partners, friends, or other personal connections and "character" references.
- Wait until the last minute to seek permission from your references. You may be left scrambling to find a great recommender, or they may not have time to fully prepare.



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## Career Development for International Students

"Must be authorized to work in the United States." You see this on job descriptions, but what does it mean? For U.S. citizens it means nothing, since you are automatically authorized. But for international students on F-1 or J-1 visas, it is important to note that there are restrictions on your ability to work during and after completion of your program. Working or accepting employment in the United States without proper authorization is considered a serious violation of immigration status, which can affect your ability to remain in the United States. However, you do have some options, and F-1 or J-1 students considering any type of employment in the United States should consult with International Student and Scholar Affairs (ISSA) prior to beginning work: <http://international.nd.edu/issa/>



### Contact ISSA:

**105 Main Building**

**Notre Dame, IN 46556**

**574.631.1138**

**ndintl@nd.edu**

Here are some of the employment options available to F-1 students, some of which require work authorization from the U.S. government.

### On-Campus Employment

Students with F-1 visas are permitted to work part time on campus at Notre Dame without additional work authorization. On-campus employment can include teaching, research, and graduate assistantships, as well as working in other offices at Notre Dame where a stipend or paycheck is issued by the University. There is a limit of 20 hours per week for on-campus employment, and certain other restrictions apply.

### Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a pre-completion work authorization option for employment that is an "integral part of an established curriculum" or "alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum." It is important to note that not every department will support CPT, and not all internships or jobs will qualify. CPT is used only prior to graduation, and you must be registered for a corresponding internship course in the ND catalogue. It takes only 1-2 business days to be approved.

### Optional Practical Training

F-1 students may be eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT), either before or after completing their degree. ISSA must be involved in the application process, and they have created an informational video for your convenience: <http://ntrda.me/2mn8Sms>.

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OPT generally allows students to work for a total of 12 months, and STEM disciplines may qualify for an extension of up to 24 additional months of employment authorization. Additional eligibility restrictions pertain to the STEM extension.



**Be sure to apply for  
OPT at least three  
months prior to  
starting the work!**

## Employment with an International Organization

The International Organization Immunities Act allows international students on F-1 visas to work off campus with a designated international organization. Not all organizations are eligible, and not all positions within such an organization will qualify. It is important to meet with ISSA to review eligibility and begin the application process. More details and a link to resources for identifying eligible organizations can be found at <http://ntrda.me/2ijRauy>.

## Severe Economic Hardship Employment

In rare instances, a student studying on an F-1 Visa may experience unexpected financial strain that would require income from an off-campus job in order to retain financial independence. In these cases, the student may work with ISSA to review their eligibility for Severe Economic Hardship Employment. The student must thoroughly document their financial situation and meet with ISSA to discuss their options.

## Unpaid Employment

In general, you do not need work authorization to volunteer at a charitable organization, as long as no one else is being paid to do similar work. However, an unpaid internship with a company does require authorization in most cases, and there are strict guidelines that determine whether the unpaid work can be considered employment that would not require authorization. Always check with ISSA before accepting any kind of work, paid or unpaid.

## H-1B

After graduation, one option for long-term employment is to be sponsored by an employer for an H-1B visa. Allowing for up to six years of work authorization, most H-1B visas are obtained through a competitive and limited lottery process, and a certain number are reserved for individuals who hold graduate degrees. Universities are not subject to the limited lottery, though, so faculty, research, and administrative positions may have an easier path to H-1B visa approval. See the [Office of General Counsel](#) for additional information.

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## Employment Options For Scholars With J-1 Visas

There are many rules and restrictions associated with employment under a J-1 Visa. To avoid a serious violation of immigration status, scholars are highly encouraged to work with ISSA prior to initiating any kind of employment search. All employment activities require ISSA's written employment authorization on form DS-2019 prior to beginning work.



## Resources For International Students

### Graduate Career Services (GCS)

GCS provides personalized support for career development and job search strategy, including expertise in application documents (resume, cover letter, CV, etc.), networking, business communication, interviews, and more. Are you unfamiliar with the customs, protocols, and expectations of job searching and professionalism in the United States? We can help. Email [gradcareers@nd.edu](mailto:gradcareers@nd.edu) to set up an individual appointment.

### International Student and Scholar Affairs (ISSA)

ISSA offers a variety of support services and programs to help international students and scholars make the most out of their time at the University, including providing immigration service, guidance, and support to Notre Dame-sponsored international students, J-1 scholars, and their dependents. ISSA staff members also educate and remind international students about immigration rules, responsibilities, deadlines, and benefits. International students should review the information on the [ISSA webpage](#) well in advance of conducting any level of employment search, and utilize the available services associated with employment authorization for their visa type.

## Digital Resources

### GoinGlobal

<https://online.goinglobal.com/> - Global career intelligence, including career guides, jobs & internships, visa information, and employer directory.

### Myvisajobs

<http://www.myvisajobs.com> - Job postings and information about obtaining a U.S. work visa. Create a profile, upload a resume, explore the employer database, and more.

### H1Base

<http://www.h1base.com> - USA immigration, work visa, and employment solutions.