

Career Development

careers.dom.edu

Job Search Guide

**7900 W. Division Street, Parmer 010
River Forest, Illinois 60305**

**Phone: (708) 524-6786
careers@dom.edu**

1. Create Resume

- Write a draft (see attached example), then make an appointment in Career Development to have it reviewed. It may take several revisions before you are ready to send your resume to employers. Don't use a pre-formatted template for your resume.
- Upload your resume into the CCN and ISCPA resume books

2. How to find employers:

- Access the Internet to find out about opportunities, start by visiting Career Development's site: www.careers.dom.edu. Browse for jobs on the CCN site.
- Update your account and review **ISCPA Jobs** at www.iscpa.org. Over 20 schools in Illinois post their jobs in this database.
- Create an account on **LinkedIn** and search for employers and groups related to your major. Join the **Dominican University Alumnae/i** group to network with other professionals.
- You can contact companies that interest you directly and ask about opportunities. Many students find employment by simply calling an employer (targeted networking!).
- Use the **CareerShift** database to identify employers by industry and location. Call these employers to tap into the "hidden job-market."
- Make sure to attend local **job fairs**. Dominican participates in the off-campus ISCPA CareerFest event in the spring. Job fairs are a great way to network with potential employers.

3. Submit your resume and cover letter (see attached example) to prospective employers. Follow up with employers 2 days after you send your resume to confirm that they received it. It may take a few more follow-up phone calls before an interview is scheduled.
4. Before you go on an interview, make sure to practice and prepare in advance. Use the Mock Interview feature in **Optimal Resume** to test your interviewing skills. Read the advice in the interviewing handout from Career Development. Make sure to send a thank you note to the employer after the interview.
5. Once you are offered a position, make sure to evaluate the entire offer, including benefits, don't just base your decision on the salary.
6. When you accept a position, please let us know. Email careers@dom.edu and tell us where you are working... we'd love it if you sent us your first "official" business card!



Career Advisor Offers Job-Hunting Strategies

Four months after receiving a bachelor's degree in professional writing, Shaneé Laurent still didn't have a job in her field. Despite having applied for several positions, she hadn't been called for a single interview. It didn't help that she lacked direct experience in her field and had been working as an administrative assistant for three years. When she came to our campus career-counseling office, I asked to see her resume. Immediately, I saw an opportunity to improve its presentation. She'd developed strong skills in writing, editing and graphic design at school. Mention of these were buried under her work history, which had little to do with her career aspirations. Together we rearranged the text. At the end of our meeting, we both felt confident she'd taken a step in the right direction.

If you're still job hunting after graduation, your search may need a helping hand. Consider making your college career-services office your first stop. A good adviser can provide insight, motivation and moral support. Many colleges and universities offer free career assistance to alumni, particularly new graduates. Here's what I tell new graduates seeking help in finding meaningful employment:

1. Define your goals.

Where would you most like to apply your skills? I've met grads who feel pressured to get a "real" job in the business world, when their heart is calling them to work for a nonprofit cause. Others say they feel guilty because their friends are pursuing nonprofit careers, and they prefer the fast pace of a corporation. In either case, I remind students: "It's your life." Not sure where your skills would best fit? Consider doing more research, both on the job market and on your interests and expectations. The more excited you are about a potential career, the more energy you'll put into your search.

2. Make a plan.

When you had to complete a large project in school, chances are you broke it down into smaller tasks -- then you worked on each task until the project was complete. Apply these same planning skills to finding meaningful work. Here are some key ingredients of a successful job search:

- Job target (your preferred job function, work setting and location; for example, "Web-site producer for an online-game maker in California")
- Job leads
- Tailored resumes and cover letters
- Interview skills
- Stationery (for writing thank-you notes after your interviews)
- Deadline for having a job

How long your search lasts depends partly on how much time you invest. Someone who devotes 20 hours per week will surely find work faster than the person who spends 90 minutes. Even if you miss your deadline, your search will be more productive for having set one.

3. Take the initiative.

Whenever I ask employers what qualities they look for in job candidates, initiative almost always makes the list. When you're searching for work, initiative can mean identifying the types of organizations that interest you, contacting them directly, and presenting yourself as a professional with a great deal to contribute. In an interview, having initiative can mean bringing copies of your resume and list of references, doing enough research to form opinions on the organization or industry, and anticipating typical interview questions. Once on the job, initiative can mean

contributing ideas at staff meetings, going out of your way to help a customer, or even putting paper in the office copier when you see it's running low.

4. Think like an employer.

Employers look for competent, self-motivated, strong team players. Even in a tight economy, such candidates can be tough to find. Some employers avoid placing ads, knowing they may have to comb through literally hundreds of resumes to find a handful of qualified applicants. If you are responding to an ad, here are some ways to make your resume and cover letter stand out:

- **Match your achievements to the job requirements.** For example, if the ad says, "must be willing and able to learn quickly," you might describe how you taught yourself to use a challenging software program, adapted to a foreign culture while studying overseas, or learned office procedures in your work-study job.
- **Proofread carefully.** I've seen resumes that had the words "manger" for *manager* and "asses" for assess. Don't rely on spell-check alone.
- **Don't use a template or "resume wizard."** You're unique -- you want your resume and cover letter to be unique. Templates are boring. They also can make a candidate look lazy.

When your resume is top-notch, employers may worry that you won't live up to their expectations. To alleviate this concern, spend as much time on your interviewing skills as you do on your resume. A practice interview through your college career center can help you overcome nervousness and present yourself more effectively.

5. Act confident, even if you're not.

Many job candidates say they want to avoid "bragging" to potential employers. Describing your accomplishments in a social setting, such as a wedding reception, would be considered bragging. In a job search, a bit of self-promotion is expected. Ironically, employers sometimes complain that job seekers are too timid. One employer told me when a candidate's demeanor says, "You don't want to hire me, do you?" he thinks to himself, "No, I don't." Aim for a happy medium: The ideal candidate is confident, without being cocky, and humble, without being a doormat. If you follow the guidelines in this article, you'll have reason to exude confidence.

6. Get your foot in the door.

One of my students -- a broadcast major -- took an unpaid internship with a local sports radio station. Now he has a part-time paid position with the same station, and another on-air sports internship starting in the fall. "It isn't much, but you have to start somewhere," he wrote in his last e-mail to me. Not much? This is how great careers are born -- by being willing to start where you have to and work your way up. Even after graduation, there's no shame in completing an internship. If you're in a creative field such as advertising, an internship may be the best place to start.

7. Stay open to the unexpected.

Some grads will accept a job offer only if it's related to their college major, others say they want a job that requires just a degree. When weighing any job offer, consider not how it will look to the outside world, but how it feels to you. Laurent, the new grad who was working as an administrative assistant, eventually received an offer from her employer for a position as a software-support engineer, and she gladly accepted. "Since my degree is in professional writing, it didn't exactly help me get the job," she wrote in an e-mail. "But I have been with the company for three years, and they saw me stick with college and graduate." Her new goal is to write while traveling for her job.

--[Ms. DeLapa](#) is an assistant director at the Grand Valley State University career-services office in Allendale, Mich.

Career Exploration

Career Development has many tools to help a student determine what career path to follow. The following is a brief summary of the Resources available to our students.

FOCUS II is an online computerized career guidance system that helps you assess your interests, values, and skills. It can also be used to explore and analyze occupational and educational options, and to map out realistic goals and plans. The database of occupations gives you information about the nature of the work, qualifications, outlook and salary projections. You can access Focus by clicking the link on our webpage at www.careers.dom.edu, just use access code "dom672" to self-register.

Occupational Outlook Handbook The Government's career reference book on occupations and tomorrow's job market. This book is available in Career Development, or online at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

What Can I Do With a Major in ... ? Have you ever wondered what you could do with your degree? This site provides descriptions of career paths as well as needed skills and related web sites. <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/>

Mock Interview This online program allows you to "practice" for your interview. You can use a webcam to record your interview and ask a career advisor for advice. Create an account on Optimal Resume with your DU email and then click on "Interview"
<https://ducareers.optimalresume.com/>

Illinois Department of Employment Security: The Career Information System offers the ODEAS Assessment and the O*NET Interest Profiler to match your strongest work-related interests to occupations.
<http://ilcis.intocareers.org>, username: illinois, password: careers

What NOT to do on an interview (true stories!):

- "After answering the first few questions, the candidate picked up his cell phone and called his parents to let them know the interview was going well."
- "At the end of the interview, the candidate expressed her interest in getting the position, but only if her boyfriend liked the company and the hiring manager. She then said, 'He's waiting outside. Can I bring him in to say hello?' "
- "When asked why she wanted to work for this company, the candidate replied, 'That's a good question. I really haven't given it much thought.' "
- "After being complimented on his choice of college and the GPA he achieved, the candidate replied, 'I'm glad that got your attention. I didn't really go there.' "
- "The candidate asked for an early morning interview. He showed up with a box of doughnuts and ate them during the interview, saying this was the only time he'd have to eat breakfast before going to work."
- "When asked by the hiring manager if he had any questions, the candidate responded by telling a knock-knock joke."

SALLY STAR
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Chicago, Illinois 60611
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OBJECTIVE To obtain an entry-level employment position in _____

EDUCATION **Dominican University** River Forest, Illinois
Bachelor of Arts Anticipated Graduation, May 2016
Major: _____ GPA: X.X/4.0
Minor: _____
Dean's List 2012-present
Achievement Award Scholarship 2012-2016

RELEVANT COURSES

Financial Management	Abnormal Psychology
General Biology	Computer Information Systems
Fashion Illustration	American Government
Modern American Fiction	Business and Professional Speech

EXPERIENCE **TCF Bank**, River Forest, Illinois September 2014-Present
Banking Intern

- Suggest financial services to customers and opened new accounts
- Count vault deposit in excess of \$100,000 and resolve balance discrepancies

Target, Chicago, Illinois September 2012-July 2014
Sales Associate

- Processed customers' transactions averaging \$10,000 per week
- Balanced deposit of an average \$5,000 at end of evening shifts
- Maintained visual displays and re-stocked merchandise

LANGUAGE SKILLS Fluent in reading, writing, and speaking Spanish
Conversational in speaking Italian

ACTIVITIES **Italian Club**, Vice President 2013-present

- Coordinate annual St. Joseph's Day Table fundraiser earning over \$300
- Facilitate bi-monthly meetings for approximately 15 members
- Organize monthly cultural outings and/or guest speakers

Dominican University Study Abroad: London, England Fall 2014

- Researched British Museum's Ancient Greek & Roman collections

Student Volunteer Tax Assistance Program 2013, 2014

- Assisted underprivileged families in completing federal tax returns

San Miguel Elementary School, Service Learning Spring 2015

- Mentored 2nd grade children and helped them with math homework

Dominican University Women's Varsity Basketball 2012-present

- Nominated by teammates "Most Improved Player" for Fall 2013 season

COMPUTER SKILLS Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator
Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Publisher, Outlook

ACTION WORDS

Accepted	Dealt	Handled	Participated
Achieved	Defined	Headed	Performed
Adapted	Delegated		Persuaded
Adjusted	Demonstrated	Imagined	Planned
Administered	Designed	Implemented	Prepared
Advised	Detailed	Improved	Presented
Allocated	Determined	Improvised	Presided
Analyzed	Developed	Increased	Prioritized
Anticipated	Devised	Indexed	Produced
Appraised	Diagnosed	Informed	Programmed
Approved	Directed	Initiated	Promoted
Arranged	Discovered	Innovated	Protected
Assembled	Displayed	Inspected	Provided
Assessed	Dissected	Inspired	
Assigned	Distributed	Installed	Questioned
Assisted	Drafted	Integrated	
	Dramatized	Interviewed	Recognized
Balanced		Invented	Recommended
Budgeted	Earned	Investigated	Reconciled
Built	Edited		Recorded
	Effected	Justified	Recruited
Calculated	Empowered		Rectified
Catalogued	Encouraged	Keynoted	Reorganized
Checked	Enforced		Reported
Clarified	Engineered	Led	Researched
Classified	Enlarged		Retrieved
Collected	Enlightened	Made	Reviewed
Communicated	Enlisted	Maintained	Revised
Compared	Established	Managed	
Compiled	Estimated	Mapped	Scheduled
Composed	Evaluated	Mastered	Screened
Computed	Examined	Measured	Served
Conceived	Executed	Mediated	Shaped
Conceptualized	Expanded	Motivated	Simplified
Conducted	Experienced	Monitored	Solved
Confronted	Experimented	Moderated	Strengthened
Constructed	Explained		Supervised
Consulted		Navigated	
Contracted	Facilitated	Negotiated	Tailored
Controlled	Financed	Nominated	Trained
Converted	Formed		Translated
Conveyed	Formulated	Observed	
Coordinated	Founded	Operated	Unified
Copied		Ordered	Utilized
Correlated	Generated	Originated	
Counseled	Governed	Organized	Verified
Created	Grouped	Overcome	
Critiqued	Guided		Wrote

There are very important writing guidelines to keep in mind as you develop your resume.

- **Write your own resume...** your resume should be authentic and accurately reflect your goals and achievements; you are the best person to accomplish this task. Writing your resume also forces you to organize, analyze and articulate your experience, a process that enhances your interview technique.
- **Find your thesaurus...**and keep it close at hand. Select specific action verbs that convey your experience, results, etc., as clearly as possible. Do not repeat the same verbs or nouns throughout your resume. Do not use first person (don't say "me" or "I").
- **Brief is better...**phrases can be used instead of sentences. Avoid paragraphs. Make your point and move on.

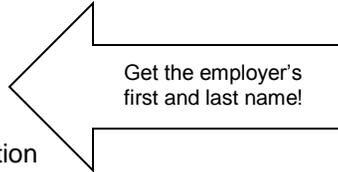
Your contact info
Address
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
Email

(Use the same heading that is on your resume)

SALLY STAR
1234 S. Main Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
773-555-1212 • Sally_Star@gmail.com

Date

Employer's Name
Employer's Title
Name of Company/Organization
Address
City, State Zip Code



Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

First Paragraph -- Answer three questions: Who are you, what do you want and how did you find out about it? (this does **not** mean, start the paragraph by saying, "My name is ...") Provide information showing your specific interest in the company. Also indicate how you became aware of the opening (newspaper, website, etc.) and the specific job title if you have it.

Second Paragraph -- Sell yourself! Highlight one or two qualifications you feel would be of greatest interest to the employer. Be specific!! Don't just say "I'm organized" say "I have demonstrated strong organizational skills as the Secretary of Dominican University's Accounting club" If you have had related experience or specialized training, point it out as well.

Third Paragraph -- Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration. Indicate that your resume is enclosed. Invite the reader to schedule an interview at his/her convenience.

Sincerely,

<sign your name>

Type your name

Enclosure

February 15, 2016

Theresa Pierce
Human Resources Manager
XYZ Corporation
7500 W. Lake Street
River Forest, Illinois 60305

Dear Ms. Pierce:

Through Dominican University's Career Development office, I became aware of the full-time position currently available with XYZ Corporation. I have recently graduated from Dominican University and received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in _____. I am submitting my resume for your review for this position.

This position requires someone with the ability to communicate well with a diverse customer base. I have demonstrated my strong communication skills in my internship with TCF Bank. I interacted with customers every day, assessed their needs, and recommended the best financial product to serve their needs. I also translated from English to Spanish several marketing materials used by the bank. As a result, our branch saw a 15% increase in new accounts which is directly attributed to this new marketing initiative. My ability to communicate well with others, in both English and Spanish, would make me an asset to your company.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to meeting you in person to discuss the employment opportunities with XYZ Corporation. I can be reached at 708-366-2490 to schedule an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Sally Star

Sally Star

Enclosure

SALLY STAR
1234 S. Main Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
773-555-1212 ▪ Sally_Star@gmail.com

(Use the same heading that is on your resume)

Karen Smart, Vice-President
Supervisor at Hill and Knowl, Inc
1000 Corporate Drive
River Forest, IL 60305
(708) 555-1212

Stanley Best, Ph.D., Associate Dean
Professor at Dominican University
Dominican University
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River Forest, IL 60305
(708) 524-6000
beststan@dom.edu

Cary Cool, Bookstore Manager
Supervisor at Family Bookstore
315 E College Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305
(708) 524-6000

Remember:

- Obtain permission to use your references before you give them out. Be sure you have the correct information about where they want to be contacted. Most references will not want you to give out their home address information. Each time you give an employer your references, let your references know who will be calling them. That way they can prepare in advance to say something nice about you!
- Note that your reference sheet should be printed on the same paper that you used for your resumes, cover letters, and thank you letters.
- References usually are not given out when you send your resume. You should bring them in when you interview with an employer, and offer them at the close of the interview. If you **do not** want your present employer contacted before an offer is extended for the new position, you could add a comment to the reference information for your present employer such as “May be contacted after an offer for employment has been extended.” Be sure you clarify this on the application as well.