CAREER GUIDE

CAREER & MAJOR EXPLORATION | RESUMES & COVER LETTERS

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES | INTERVIEWING | GRADUATE SCHOOL

DegreePlus

Building Transferable Skills for Success Through Extracurricular Experiences

Professionalism **Leadership** **Teamwork** **Cultural Responsiveness**

Get valuable experience, learn important skills for success, build your resume, stand out in your application for internships, jobs, graduate or professional schools. Earn rewards at each level.

DP3
Reflection & Articulation

DP3 begins when you apply your skill in an experience of your choice. A DP3 Experience can be an internship, academic capstone assignment, study abroad, volunteer or paid work project, leadership role, or anything that helps you further explore the skill area you have selected. You complete DP3 when you share what you've learned with students and DegreePlus Mentors at DegreePlus Day.

DP2
Integration & Application

At DegreePlus Day, staff and faculty DegreePlus Mentors help you deepen your understanding of the skill you've chosen to learn and guide you in how to apply the skill in your DP3 Experience.

DP1
Experience & Exposure

You attend 5 DegreePlus extracurricular events in one skill. Online or in-person, you can choose your own adventure!

Center for Career and Professional Development | Undergraduate Studies

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3

DEGREEPLUS.WCU.EDU | ENGAGE.WCU.EDU | DEGREEPLUS@WCU.EDU

"The DegreePlus program is a terrific opportunity to take advantage of; it equips students with a mind-set of challenging themselves and exceeding expectations. In today's increasingly competitive world, it's important to continuously find new ways to grow and stand out amongst other college graduates. Through deep reflections of skills with one's chosen career path, DegreePlus allows oneself to be better prepared for the post-collegiate world."

Aaron Speyer
Finance Major
May 2021 graduate

"I decided to do DegreePlus because I love being in extracurricular activities and experiences. Seeing that this extracurricular program focuses on earning different skills through 3 levels, I saw it as an opportunity to continue to improve my skills to help me now and in the future. Gaining the skills of professionalism, cultural responsiveness, teamwork, and leadership are vital to become a successful individual. I believe DegreePlus is beneficial to me because earning the skills provided can help me reach my goals/dreams for school, employment, and graduate school. I can also use these skills in my daily life as it enhances my self-awareness and social relationships."

Ani-Yah Shead
Criminal Justice & Psychology dual major
May 2022 graduate

YOUR NEXT STEP IS HERE

OVER 45 GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

6 Doctoral Degrees
27 Masters Programs
14 Certificate & Licensure Programs

Western Carolina UNIVERSITY

Graduate School and Research

3 LOCATIONS

Asheville, NC
Cullowhee, NC
Online

GRAD.WCU.EDU

BUNCOMBE COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO MATCH OUR MOUNTAINS.
APPLY NOW!

Buncombe County has an average of 1,600 employees who serve as sheriff deputies, nurses, social workers, librarians, emergency medical workers, park rangers, environmental health specialists, planners, tax assessors, administrators and more - all working to serve the residents of Buncombe County.

SCAN ME

APPLY NOW!

buncombecounty.org/careers

BENEFITS:

- Health Insurance
- LGERS Pension
- Paid Family Leave
- Eblen Employee Assistance Fund
- Sick and Leave Accrual
- Annual PTO
- Dental & Vision Hardware Insurance
- Employee Health Clinic
- BE Well Wellness Program
- Additional Wellness Offerings
- 401(k) Retirement Savings Plan
- 457 Retirement Savings Plan

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Let's talk about your nursing career!

The Mission Health Specialty Training Apprenticeship for Registered Nurses (StaRN) is a year-long nurse residency program designed to give you hands-on experience helping establish valuable clinical and critical thinking skills.

You will be surrounded by a supportive community of nurse educators, experienced nurses and fellow residents that promote learning, clinical application and socialization. This program will guide you through the transition from student nurse to registered nurse.

Benefits:

- Sign-on and Relocation Bonuses
- Affordable Online MSN Degree
- Education Assistance and Tuition Reimbursement
- 401(k) Plan with a 100% match on 3% to 9% of pay.
- Career growth and professional development.
- And so much more

Speak 1:1 with a recruiter:
Beth at Elizabeth.Cannone@HCAHealthcare.com

Scan QR code to apply or to learn more!

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CAREER GUIDE

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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REID 150

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On behalf of the Center for Career and Professional Development at Western Carolina University, I would like to introduce you to our Career Guide. This resource was crafted for you to showcase some of the best practices for career management and skill development. We hope that this resource will serve you well in your path to find meaningful employment in your field of interest.

The Center for Career and Professional Development is comprised of dedicated and experienced professionals who are here to help you through your career journey. Many of the services we offer can be obtained through one-on-one appointments, drop-in sessions, workshops, or through resources such as this handbook. We strive to assist all Western Carolina University students in building career-relevant skills in our DegreePlus program, identifying career and major paths, developing impressive application materials, articulating their expertise during interviews, and effectively searching for job, internship, and graduate school opportunities. We also host a variety of events throughout the year that connect employers and students together to explore potential career paths. Some of these events include our career fairs, employer panels, on-campus interviews, and other meet-and-greet events. All of our events and services can be found on our career center website, careers.wcu.edu.

It is my personal goal to ensure that each student is prepared to face the next steps in your life with confidence. Our team is prepared to help you do so with customized services and individualized attention. All you need to do is to take advantage of this opportunity. By preparing early, we are positive that you will be successful in whatever your plans are during school and after graduation. You have a team of career professionals, caring faculty, and engaged employer partners who are here to support you in your process. I hope to see you soon at one of our events or in our office. You've got this!

Theresa Cruz Paul
Director, CCPD
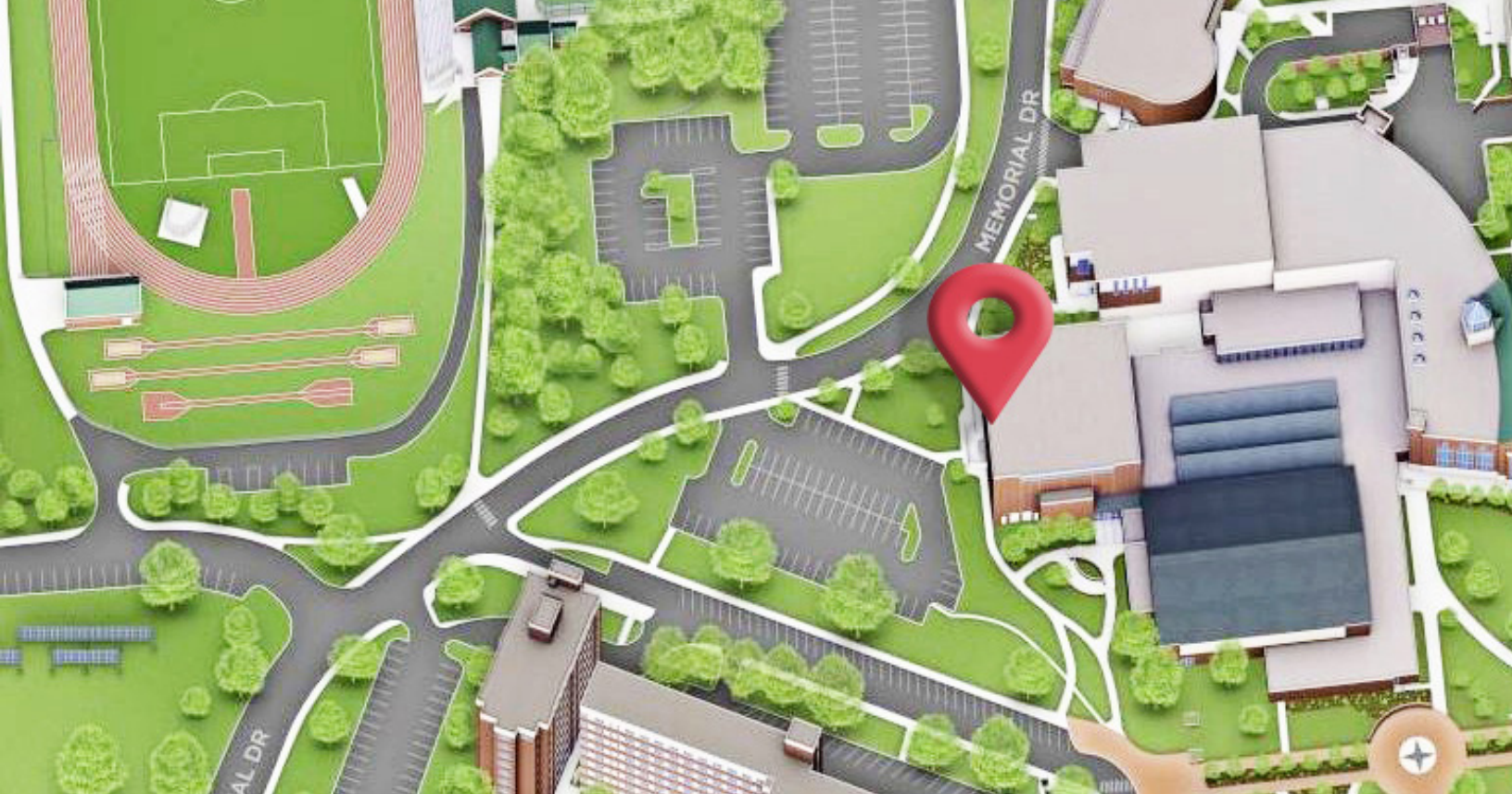
DIRECTIONS
to the Career Center

How to find us: Use the sidewalk by Reid Gym, and walk around to the very back of the building. The CCPD entrance faces the metered lot (Lot #30).

Operating hours: The CCPD is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, Reid 150.

Drop-in hours: Students may use drop-in services for resume and cover letter review, interview preparation, or job search strategies. Drop-in hours are from 12 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday in the CCPD Career Studio, Reid 150.

How to make an appointment: Students who wish to make an appointment with a career counselor may do so via Navigate. Log into your MyWCU, click on Advising/ Tutoring, choose Center for Career and Professional Development, and follow prompts.

Have GPS?
For some, the easiest way to find us is to type Lot #30, Western Carolina University into your GPS app. Our entrance faces Lot #30.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT:
finding *your* way

The Career Development Cycle, below, describes the process in which one might explore and think about making their career decisions. Although someone might go through each of these stages at different points in their life, we generally recommend first-year students focus on the Know Yourself stage; second-year students on the Explore Your Options stage; third-year students on the Narrow Down stage; and fourth-year students on the Take Action stage. On the next page is a checklist of things students should consider doing as they move through each stage of the development cycle.

gain experience | job search | network

TAKE ACTION

KNOW YOURSELF

values | interests | skills

NARROW DOWN

action planning | goal setting | decision making

EXPLORE OPTIONS

industry trends | career research | carrer options
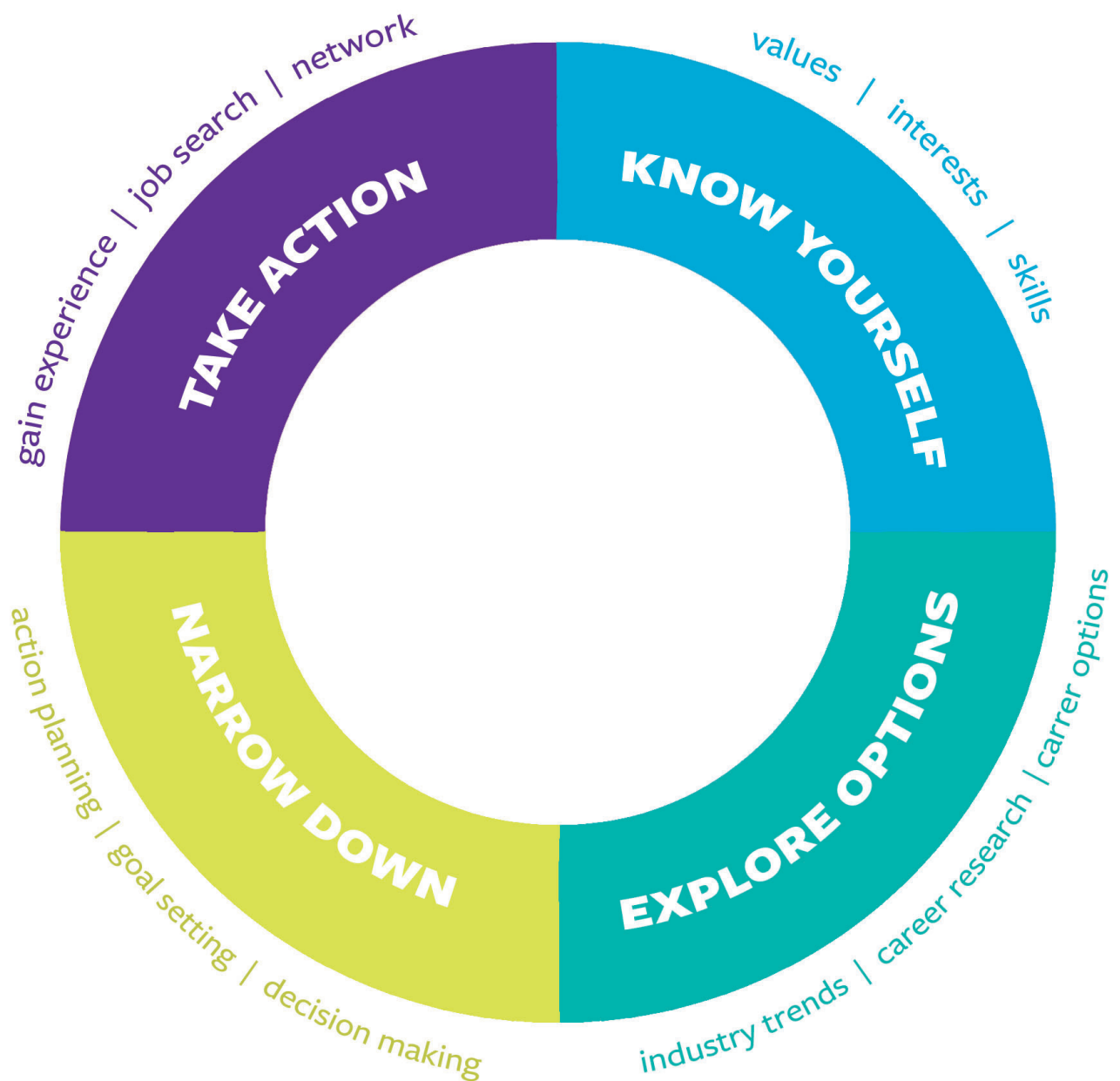
four-year *career plan*

1ST YEAR: KNOW YOURSELF

☐ Complete the FOCUS 2 assessment via careers.wcu.edu. Your access code is Catamount.

☐ Make an appointment with a career counselor to review and interpret your results.

☐ Pick at least one DegreePlus competency you wish to explore and develop.

☐ Take a wide variety of classes to further explore your academic interests.

2ND YEAR: EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

☐ Visit a career counselor to brainstorm area and regional opportunities to further explore your major or career interests.

☐ Use O*Net Online (onetonline.org) and FOCUS 2 to explore careers and industry trends with your chosen major.

☐ Explore your interests through on-campus employment, job shadow experiences, volunteer work, and/or connect with faculty for research opportunities (Connect with these opportunities at a career fair)

☐ Consider participating in DegreePlus, study abroad, or community involvement via the Lilly Award.

3RD YEAR: NARROW DOWN

☐ Gain tangible experience through internships, study abroad, research, volunteer work, student clubs/organizations, and/or student employment.

☐ Start networking with employers in your field at career fairs, employer panels, etiquette receptions, and other events hosted by the CCPD.

☐ Update your targeted resumes and cover letters and have them critiqued by the CCPD.

☐ (For potential graduate students) Start visiting potential graduate or other professional schools of your choice. Familiarize yourself with the admissions process.

4TH YEAR: TAKE ACTION

☐ Plan your upcoming job search with CCPD staff.

☐ Apply for full-time positions between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

☐ Learn effective interview strategies (use Big Interview to practice!) and research the employers with whom you interview. Perfect your 30-second commercial to use during networking events.

☐ Participate in career fairs to seek full-time employment opportunities.

☐ (For potential graduate students) Prepare and perfect your application materials and apply to graduate or professional schools of your choice.

MAJOR & CAREER EXPLORATION

You don't have to have your whole life planned out, but you should be exploring your career and academic options. Read on to find out how.

UNDERSTANDING
the decision-making process

1) Knowing you need to make a decision:
Hey, good news! You're already past this point! If you weren't aware that you needed to make a decision, or question a decision you have made, then you wouldn't be reading this.

2) Knowing yourself and your options:
You cannot make an informed decision until you have done the reflective work in understanding who you are and how your **personality, academic and professional strengths, skill sets, values**, and **interests** work together. You also need to know your options -- in this case, which of the 65 majors will you choose to study here at WCU?

3) Expanding/narrowing your options:
We encourage all students to broaden their knowledge of all the majors here at WCU. Even if you know you want to study X, our question to you is: How do you know you want to study X until you've considered other options? Keep an open mind as you explore! And as you explore your options, then narrow it down.

4) Making a choice:
At some point, you'll be making a decision based on the information you know about yourself and your options. Once you've made a choice, it's important to still explore career paths and be as involved as you can in a variety of ways on and off campus.

5) Implementing your choice:
Once you've made a decision on what to study, you then need to work with your advisor to declare that major. Please note, many of the majors here at WCU require an admissions process while others are open to anyone.

6) Knowing you've made a well-informed choice:
This is the most important part of the cycle. Sure, you could wake up one day, close your eyes, and point to a major to study. *Technically,* that's making a decision -- but it's not making a well-informed one. Making a well-informed decision means you have done the work to collect the data you need -- both about yourself and your options -- and you've made a sound decision based off the information you have collected.

Common Myths About
majors and careers

- **There is only one career for me, and I will only have one career. (false!)** Most people end up in a variety of careers and jobs throughout their lives. There is no "one-size-fits-all" method to career development.

- **My major *has* to lead to my career. (false!)** Your major *can* lead to a linear career path, but it doesn't have to. Majors do not have to equal your career.

- **Most students know their major and career path before they enter college. (false!)** Some students will declare a major before coming to college and stay in that major, but most people don't. In fact, about 75% of incoming students will change their major at least once.[1]

- **Career assessments will tell me what career is right for me. (false!).** We administer career assessments, but no test will tell you what you *should* do. The only person who is an expert on you is *you*. We use career assessments as a starting point to get you thinking about the possibilities, but it's up to you to do the research and reflection work needed to make a career move.

- **Most people have a solid understanding of careers and the world-of-work and if I don't, then I am the only one who is confused. (false!)** Did you know researchers predict that roughly 60% of incoming Kindergartners this year will go into careers that don't even exist yet?[2] And if that's the case, there's absolutely no way for everyone to know everything about careers and the world-of-work -- especially when it changes frequently. The key is to develop flexibility and a curious mindset throughout your life and look for new opportunities along the way.

- **If I wait long enough, luck will eventually bring me to the right career. (false!).** Although chance events *do* happen and many chance events lead to a variety of career paths, they don't usually happen if you spend all your time in your room. Life happens when you put yourself out there. We recommend you get involved on campus through clubs, sports, jobs, and volunteer to clarify what type of work you enjoy.

Need more help exploring careers & majors?

Schedule an appointment with a career counselor through your MyWCU portal, choose Advising/ Tutoring from your Quick-Links dashboard, select the Center for Career and Professional Development, and follow the prompts.

1. Gordon, V.N., Habley, W.R. & Associates (2000). Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
2. World Economic Forum (2016). The Future of Jobs Report. reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2016/preface.

Major & Career Exploration:
an introduction

Major exploration is the intentional process of exploring academic fields of study, whereas career exploration is the intentional process of exploring career options and whether they are a good "fit" for you. Some students prefer to search for majors first and then explore career options in a linear fashion within that major. Others prefer to think about career choice first and then make their academic decisions based off their long-term goals. Others search for majors that will keep them engaged, interested, and motivated to do well in their courses and will teach them a variety transferable skills that could point to any number of career paths. All students are different and no one path is "better" than another! There is a lot to choose from at WCU, and there are many factors to think about as you consider potential majors and career paths.

Common *Considerations* when researching:

Academic Majors

Admission requirements: Some majors have admission processes and requirements you must meet before applying.

Eight-semester plans & sequences: All majors have a suggested eight-semester plan of study; some majors have a prescribed path through their program. *NOTE: If you declare a major later than anticipated, it could mean spending additional time on your degree.*

Required & elected classes: All majors have a list of required & elected courses. Research the titles and, where possible, descriptions of these classes.

Internship/ clinical/ field placement requirements: Many majors require some time of hands-on experience such as an internship. Make sure you are aware of the hands-on learning requirements for your major. *NOTE: Not all majors require hands-on learning, but we in the CCPD* **highly recommend** *completing at least one internship or other hands-on experience!*

Graduate school: Some majors and career paths may require additional education after you finish your undergraduate degree. Are you willing to continue your education in graduate-level study? Or would you rather enter the workforce immediately after earning your bachelor's degree?

Career Paths

Salary expectations: Your salary, or how much you make per year, will determine the level and quality of life you enjoy throughout your life. It's also important to point out that starting salaries are important, but so is earning potential -- or the salary you are likely to make after a certain number of years in your field.

Education requirements: Some professions require advanced degrees such as master's and doctoral degrees. Other careers require certifications after you finish your undergraduate degree, too. Career paths which require advanced degrees or certifications also tend to pay more (but, not always!) You'll want to pay particular attention in this area as you research your options.

Occupational outlook: Sometimes career paths become stagnant or even obsolete. Pay attention to the anticipated outlook for each career path you are interested in; do you anticipate the career path to grow? Remain stable? Decline?

Strengths, values, and interests: Perhaps most importantly, career paths should connect with your strengths, values, and interests. Check out pages 20-27 to learn more about how to consider these aspects when thinking about your own career development.

Know Yourself

The question of "Who are you?" can create some level of anxiety. You might have trouble defining aspects of who you are. Why would you need to know your interests, skills, goals, etc. before exploring academic majors or career paths? Because defining these aspects can help you identify which options are best for you! Use our assessment software system and worksheets in this section to help you reflect on these aspects of yourself.

Interests: Interests go beyond subject matter and topics. These interests focus on ways you like to spend your time and how you approach your work, schoolwork, hobbies, and free time. Knowing how you like to approach a problem, assignment, or task is a great way to begin identifying careers and majors that would work well for you.

Skills: As students, it's important to think about the skills you have as well as whether or not you enjoy using those skills. It's also important to recognize the skills you'd like to/need to gain.

Values: Values help us determine what is important to us and where we want to prioritize our time. Values also help us determine whether or not an opportunity is a great fit for us.

Goals: Like values, goals help us prioritize our time, attention, and energy. They provide us with a clear sense of what we are moving towards and can help us identify distractions and resources.

Personality: There are many factors that make up our personality, such as where we get our energy, how we take in information, the ways we approach decision-making, and more. It's extremely important to note that while personality can impact careers, it should NOT be used to determine a career field. For example, if someone is extroverted, teaching might build their energy. If someone is introverted, it doesn't mean they shouldn't be a teacher, but it means they will need to plan for ways to rebuild their energy (quiet time before the day starts, keeping lunch or break time to themselves to re-energize).

Other ways to explore interests & career options:

- Tack on a minor that either interests you or complements your major.
- Take a variety of liberal studies courses.
- Do at least one internship.
- Research while at WCU.
- Study abroad.
- Search for part-time jobs using JobCat for Work Study positions or jobs.wcu.edu for Non Work Study positions.
- Get involved in the community.
- Participate in student clubs and organizations.
- Attend CCPD workshops and events to learn more about major and career exploration.

Career & Academic Assessments

Although career and academic assessments cannot tell you what you should major in or what career path you should take, they are a great starting point for someone who is seeking to research their options. You can use the FOCUS 2 self assessment tool (instructions below) or use the worksheets in this handbook to guide you in reflecting on these key areas and how they might connect you with your ideal starting career path.

Instructions:
1) Visit careers.wcu.edu.
2) Scroll to the bottom of the page to **Career Resources.**
3) Click on FOCUS 2.
4 Register your account using your Catamount email address and a password of your choosing.
5) **For the access code, use Catamount (with a capital C).**
6) Take the assessments offered. In total, it should take between 20 and 30 minutes to fully complete

Each assessment will generate a list of possible matching careers and majors for you to explore. You can also combine the assessments to filter results that appear in multiple results.
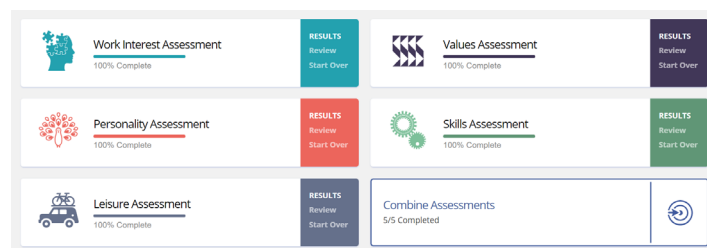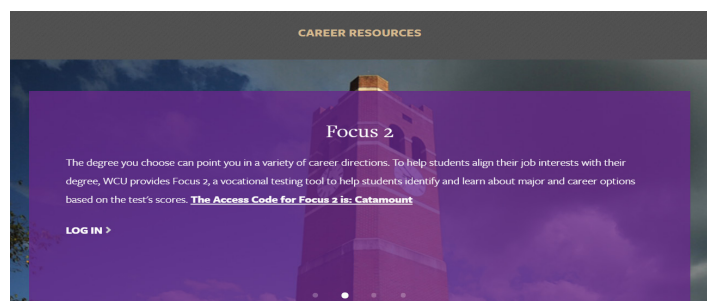
Need help interpreting your results?

Schedule an appointment with a career counselor through your MyWCU portal, choose Advising/ Tutoring from your QuickLinks dashboard, select the Center for Career and Professional Development, and follow the prompts.

Know your *work interests*

John Holland's **Person-Environment theory** states that people group themselves based off what they like to do and types of environments they prefer. The theory suggests that in order for people to feel satisfied in their career, their work interests should match the interests of the work they are doing. There are six categories of work interests, listed below. Read the descriptions and write down which groups you'd like to interact first, second, and third to self-select your work interest code, called the **Holland Code**:

_____   _____   _____

REALISTIC

People who have athletic or mechanical ability, who prefer to work with objects, tools, machines, plants or animals, or to be outdoors. Some activities they enjoy include: Working with tools; Decorating rooms; Working with animals; Cooking; Fixing household items; Doing craft projects.

INVESTIGATIVE

People who like to observe, learn, analyze, investigate, evaluate or solve problems. Some activities they enjoy include: Doing puzzles/word games; Studying astronomy; Flying a plane; Working in a lab; Creating a project for a science fair.

ARTISTIC

People who have artistic abilities for creative expression and also like to innovate and prefer unstructured situations using their imagination. Some activities they enjoy include: Designing clothes; Helping to put on a play; Learning languages; Drawing or painting; Writing stories or poetry; Playing music.

SOCIAL

People who like to work with others to enlighten, inform, help, train, or cure them, or are skilled with words. Some activities they enjoy include: Making new friends; Belonging to a club; Teaching children; Studying about other cultures; Helping people solve problems.

ENTERPRISING

People who like to influence, persuade, perform, lead, or managing for organizational goals or economic gain. Some activities they enjoy include: Leading group activities, Working on a sales campaign, Buying clothes for a store, Talking to people at a party, Selling insurance.

CONVENTIONAL

People who like to work with data, have clerical or numerical ability, carry out tasks in detail, or follow others' instructions. Some activities they enjoy include: Word processing or entering data; Keeping detailed records; Organizing paperwork; Working with a budget; Preparing reports.

Guess that Holland Code!

Now that you have read about the Holland Code, test your knowledge by completing the activity below.

1. Write down 3 to 5 careers you've ever considered doing.

2. Beside each of those careers, based on what you know about those careers, write down your guess as to what the Holland code would be for that type of work. Think of the dominant group first, then second group, and then third (*e.g.: you might guess that an Engineer might be R-I-E for Realistic, Investigative, Enterprising*).

3. Visit www.onetonline.org and type in each of the careers you've listed into the search bar. Click on the link that most accurately describes the career you've entered and scroll down to the **Interests section,** located about mid-way down the page, right after the credentials section. Record the actual Holland Code for each career path.

Name of Careers	Holland Code Guess	Actual Holland Code
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Were your guesses close to the actual Holland Codes? If not, why do you think there's a difference in what you predicted and what O*Net has assigned?

_____

_____

_____

Identify Your Holland Code!

Take the Work Interest Assessment on Focus 2 to see what Holland code it gives you. Does the Holland Code from FOCUS 2 match the code you self-selected from the previous page? Why do you think FOCUS 2 gave you this code?

Academic majors by Interests

Now that you have a basic understanding of the Holland Code (RIASEC Work Interest) model, consider the majors below, which are organized by the major's interest categories. For a full list of majors and minors, check out CCPD's Exploring Majors and Minors worksheet on pages 18-19. **NOTE:** Since majors and work environments operate on a 3-letter code, the below majors are listed in multiple categories. The dominant category for each major is listed in parenthesis. This list does not include minor or certification programs.

REALISTIC

Majors and minors which use tools, machines, or physical skill sets:

Anthropology (I)
Art (A)
Biology (I)
Communication Sciences & Disorders (S)
Computer Science (R)
Computer Information Systems (R)
Construction Management (R)
Electrical Engineering (R)
Electrical & Computer Engineering (R)
Emergency Medical Care (S)
Engineering (R)
Engineering Technology (R)
Environmental Science (I)
Environmental Health (I)
Film & TV Production (A)
Forensic Anthropology (I)
Graphic Design (A)
Geology (I)
Interior Design (A)
Mathematics (I)
Natural Resource Conservation & Management (R)
Nursing (S)
Nutrition and Dietetics (S)
Parks & Recreation Management (R)
Sport Management (E)

INVESTIGATIVE

Majors which involve theories, research, and intellectual/scientific curiosity:

Anthropology (I)
Biology (I)
Business Administration (E)
Chemistry (I)
Communication (A)
Communication Sciences & Disorders (S)
Computer Science (R)
Computer Information Systems (R)

Criminal Justice (S)
Economics (C)
English (A)
Environmental Health (I)
Forensic Anthropology (I)
Forensic Science (I)
Geography (I)
History (I)
International Studies (S)
Marketing (E)
Mathematics (I)
Philosophy (I)
Political Science (E)
Psychology (I)
Sociology (I)
World Languages (A)

ARTISTIC

Majors which uses creativity and self-expression:

Anthropology (I)
Art (A)
Communication (A)
Education (S)
English (A)
Film & TV Production (A)
Graphic Design (A)
International Studies (I)
Interior Design (A)
Marketing (E)
Music (A)
Philosophy (I)
Sociology (S)
Stage & Screen (A)
Theatre (A)
World Languages (A

SOCIAL

Majors which involve helping people or society

Communication Sciences & Disorders (S)
Criminal Justice (S)
Education (S)
Emergency Disaster Management (S)

Emergency Medical Care (S)
Integrated Health Sciences (S)
International Studies (S)
Nursing (S)
Nutrition & Dietetics (S)
Psychology (I)
Political Science (E)
Recreational Therapy (S)
Social Work (S)
Sociology (I)

ENTERPRISING

Majors which involve leading, motivating, and influencing others

Accounting (C)
Art (A)
Business Administration & Law (E)
Economics (C)
Entrepreneurship (E)
Film & TV Production (A)
Finance (C)
Hospitality & Tourism Management (E)
Management (E)
Marketing (E)
Political Science (E)
Social Work (S)
Sport Management (E)

CONVENTIONAL

Majors which involve managing data, information, and processes

Accounting (C)
Business Administration & Law (E)
Computer Science (R)
Computer Information Systems (R)
Economics (C)
Entrepreneurship (E)
Hospitality & Tourism Management (E)
Finance (C)
History (I)
Mathematics (I)
Political Science (E)

Know your *academic strengths*

You shouldn't base your decision to declare a major *solely* on academic strengths, but it is an important consideration. You should consider your level of motivation as well. Just because a subject may be difficult for you doesn't mean you shouldn't still consider it. The key is to gauge how motivated you are to try your hardest and to do your best.

Follow the steps below to explore classes within different majors:

1. Look at the 8-semester plans for each major you're considering by searching for the name of the major on WCU's website. Look at the types of classes you are required to take, as well as the classes you can take as an elective within the major.

2. You can further look up course descriptions at **catalog.wcu.edu** and type in the course abbreviation and number, or the name of the program or major.

3. Based off the courses you are required to complete, as well as the courses you may opt to take, are there any courses that make you nervous? What about courses that sound really exciting to you?

4. For the courses that you are concerned about, are you willing to go to academic tutoring to get the support and help you need to be successful? Are you motivated to study consistently in these classes?

5. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being that you're absolutely excited about this major and 1 being you are absolutely no longer interested, where would you rate your feelings on each major, based off the courses you'll be taking. Don't discount any major at this point, but take notes and use this information as part of your decision-making process.

How to Narrow your Options:

Eliminate by priority: Based on the considerations on the previous page above, which one do you feel is the most important to you? As you narrow down your options on majors, lead with this priority.

Take an Intro class: Most (but not all) majors have an introductory class for a reason -- so students can get a taste for what the major is like before investing a lot of time and energy into the rest of the program. If you loved an intro class, then you will probably enjoy the major; likewise, if you couldn't stand going to the intro class, you can probably delete the major from your list.

Take a variety of classes: Liberal studies and perspective course requirements give you the opportunity to study things you may not have had a chance to study otherwise. Many times students change majors based off a course they took to fulfill a liberal studies or perspective-level requirement.

Discuss it with someone you trust: Whether that's a career counselor, advisor, friend, or family member, discuss your options and the pros and cons for each. But remember, it's **your** decision!

Use your resources: Use your resources such as the CCPD Canvas Career Collection, the worksheets on the next several pages, make an appointment with a career counselor, or drop into the Career Studio! You have lots of resources to help you navigate and narrow your options of study.

Exploring WCU Majors and Minors

Review the comprehensive list of Western Carolina University's majors and minors below.

- Cross out majors/minors/colleges of no interest
- Circle majors/minors you definitely plan to pursue
- Rank the remaining majors/minors of interest 1-3: 1 slight interest, 2 moderate interest, 3 strong interest

College of Arts and Sciences

_____ Anthropology, B.A. *or* B.S.
_____ Anthropology (Forensic Anthropology), B.S.
_____ Anthropology, Minor
_____ Biology, B.S.
_____ Biology, Minor
_____ Certificate in Public History
_____ Chemistry (ACS-Certified, 4+1 Option), B.S.
_____ Chemistry (General), B.S.
_____ Chemistry (Premed/Biomed Science & Tech), B.S.
_____ Chemistry, Minor
_____ Cherokee Studies (Interdisciplinary), Minor
_____ Communication, B.S.
_____ Communication, Minor
_____ Computer Science, B.S.
_____ Computer Science, Minor
_____ Creative Writing, Minor
_____ Criminal Justice, B.S.
_____ Criminal Justice, Minor
_____ Emergency and Disaster Management, B.S.
_____ Emergency and Disaster Management, Minor
_____ English (English Studies Pedagogy), B.A.
_____ English (Literature), B.A.
_____ English (Motion Picture Studies), B.A.
_____ English (Professional Writing), B.A.
_____ English, Minor
_____ Environmental Science (Interdisciplinary), B.S.
_____ Film Studies, Minor
_____ Forensic Anthropology, Minor
_____ Forensic Science (Interdisciplinary), B.S.
_____ Geography, Minor
_____ Geology, B.S.
_____ Geology, Minor
_____ German, Minor
_____ History, B.A. *or* B.S.
_____ History (ABM option), B.A. *or* B.S.
_____ History, Minor
_____ International Studies (Interdisciplinary), B.A.
_____ International Studies (Interdisciplinary), Minor
_____ Japanese Studies, Minor
_____ Journalism, Minor
_____ Literature, Minor
_____ Mathematics, B.S.
_____ Mathematics, Minor

College of Arts and Sciences, continued

_____ Natural Resource Conservation & Mgmt, BS
_____ Natural Resources Management, Minor
_____ Philosophy (Concentration in Philosophy), B.A.
_____ Philosophy (Concentration in Religion), B.A.
_____ Philosophy, Minor
_____ Physics, Minor
_____ Political Science, B.A. *or* B.S.
_____ Political Science, Minor
_____ Professional Writing, Minor
_____ Religion, Minor
_____ Sociology, B.A. or B.S.
_____ Sociology, Minor
_____ Spanish, B.A.
_____ Spanish, Minor
_____ Teaching English/TESOL, Minor
_____ U.S. Latinx Studies, Minor

College of Business

_____ Accountancy, Minor
_____ Accounting, B.S.B.A.
_____ Business Administration and Law, B.S.B.A.
_____ Business Administration, Minor
_____ Business Law, Minor
_____ Certificate in Financial Planning
_____ Computer Information Systems, B.S.B.A.
_____ Computer Information Systems, Minor
_____ Conflict Resolution, Minor
_____ Economics, Minor
_____ Entrepreneurship, B.S.
_____ Entrepreneurship, Minor
_____ Finance, B.S.B.A.
_____ Finance, Minor
_____ Global Business, Minor
_____ Hospitality and Tourism, Minor
_____ Hospitality Tourism Management, B.S.
_____ Innovation, Leadership & Entrepreneur, B.S.B.A.
_____ Management, B.S.B.A.
_____ Management, Minor
_____ Marketing, B.S.B.A.
_____ Marketing, Minor
_____ Sport Management, B.S.B.A.
_____ Sport Management, Minor
_____ Visual Analytics for Decision Making, Minor

College of Education and Allied Professions

_____ Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Lic.
_____ Art, B.S.Ed.
_____ Birth-Kindergarten, B.S.
_____ Coaching, Minor
_____ Elementary Education, B.S.Ed.
_____ Elementary Education Second Degree Program
_____ English, B.S.Ed.
_____ Health and Physical Education, B.S.Ed.
_____ Inclusive Education, B.S.Ed.
_____ Leadership, Minor
_____ Mathematics, B.S.Ed.
_____ Middle Grades Education, B.S.Ed.
_____ Music Education, B.S.Ed.
_____ Parks and Recreation Management, B.S.
_____ Parks and Recreation Management, Minor
_____ Psychology, B.S.
_____ Psychology, Minor
_____ Science Education (Biology), B.S.Ed.
_____ Science Education (Chemistry), B.S.Ed.
_____ Science Education (Earth Sciences), B.S.Ed.
_____ Science Education (Physics), B.S.Ed.
_____ Social Sciences, B.S.Ed.
_____ Special Education, Minor
_____ Teacher Education Program

College of Fine and Performing Arts

_____ Art, B.A.
_____ Art, B.F.A with Art Education Concentration
_____ Art, B.F.A. with Graphic Design Concentration
_____ Art, B.F.A. with Studio Concentration
_____ Art, Minor
_____ Dance, Minor
_____ Film and Television Production, B.F.A.
_____ Interior Design, B.S.
_____ Music Technology, Certificate
_____ Music, B.A. *or* B.M.
_____ Music, Minor
_____ Stage & Screen, B.A.
_____ Theatre, B.F.A.
_____ Undergrad Certificate in Arts & Entrepreneurship

College of Health and Human Sciences

_____ Athletic Training, B. S.
_____ Certificate in Culturally Based Native Health
_____ Communication Sciences and Disorders, B.S.
_____ Communication Sciences and Disorders, Minor
_____ Emergency Medical Care, B.S.
_____ Environmental Health, B.S.
_____ Environmental Health, Minor
_____ Integrated Health Sciences (Health Management), B.S.
_____ Integrated Health Sciences (Health and Wellness), B.S.
_____ Integrated Health Sciences (Pre-Professional), B.S.
_____ Nursing, B.S.N. Degree/Basic Curriculum Option
_____ Nursing, B.S.N. Degree/RN to BSN
_____ Nursing, B.S.N. Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) Program
_____ Nutrition and Dietetics, B.S.
_____ Recreational Therapy, B.S.
_____ Social Work, B.S.W.

College of Engineering and Technology

_____ Construction Management, B.S.
_____ Construction Management, Minor
_____ Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology, B.S.
_____ Electrical Engineering, B.S.E.E.
_____ Electrical Power Engineer, Minor
_____ Engineering (Mechanical, Manufacturing and Electrical Power), B.S.
_____ Engineering Sales and Distribution Certificate
_____ Engineering Technology (Applied Systems Technology), B.S.
_____ Engineering Technology (Engineering and Technical Operations), B.S.
_____ Land Development, Minor
_____ Occupational Safety Certificate

In the space below: List your potential majors. For each, write your interest in the major, questions you have, and any hesitations. If you have thoughts of careers in connection to these majors, write them down as well.

My Top Choice Majors and Minors

Know your *values*

The first part of the career development cycle is knowing yourself – your values, interests, skill sets, strengths, traits, and ambitions. You can't make sound career decisions without knowing who you are and what's important to you.

Value Activity - For each of the values listed in the Values Box, sort them by what's most important to you in the table on the next page. NOTE: Your values will likely change over time; think about what you value today.

VALUES BOX			
HELP SOCIETY Contributing to improvements in the world.	**WORK ALONE** Working independently on projects, without significant contact with others.	**FREE SCHEDULE** Fulfilling responsibilities according to my own schedule, with no specific working hours required.	**STATUS** Regarded as a person of high intellectual prowess or as an acknowledged "expert" in my field.
HELP OTHERS - Helping people in a direct way, either individually or in groups.	**AFFILIATION** Recognition as a member of a particular organization or as someone connected to a prestigious person.	**FREE TIME** Adequate time for leisure activities and interest outside of my work.	**DECISION MAKING** The power to decide courses of action, policies, etc.
PUBLIC CONTACT Consistent and frequent contact with others.	**FRIENDSHIP** Developing close personal relationships with people as a result of my work.	**POWER** Controlling others' work activities; influencing others.	**PRESSURE** Working in situations with frequent deadlines or where the quality of my work is judged critically by others.
TEAMWORK Close working relationships with co-workers while focusing on common goals.	**AUTONOMY** Ability to determine the nature of my work without significant direction from others.	**INFLUENCE** Holding a position to change the attitudes or opinions of others.	**COMPETITION** Engaging in activities that pit my abilities against others.
PROFIT Job includes a strong likelihood of accumulating large amounts of money/ other material gain.	**AMBIGUITY** Having responsibilities that are not clearly spelled out.	**EXCITEMENT** Experiencing a high degree of, or frequent, excitement.	**AESTHETICS** Studying or appreciating the beauty of things, ideas, etc.
FAST PACE Working in circumstances where there is a high pace of activity and tasks must be performed rapidly.	**ORDER** Working in an environment that is organized and orderly.	**ADVENTURE** Having responsibilities that require frequent risk-taking.	**CREATIVITY (art)** Engaging in creative work through any of several art forms
VARIETY Having responsibilities that frequently change in content or setting.	**SPONTANEITY** Working under few constraints; the ability to work with abandon and passion.	**KNOWLEDGE** Pursuing knowledge and understanding; meeting intellectual challenges.	**CREATIVITY (other)** Creating new ideas, programs, organizational structures, etc not following a format previously developed by others.
PRECISION Working in situations where attention to detail is necessary.	**FEEDBACK** Receiving frequent feedback and reinforcement from others.	**RECOGNITION** Recognized publicly for the work quality.	**RESPONSIBILITY** Taking a high level of responsibility, in any form.
ACHIEVEMENT Experiencing the challenge of completing difficult tasks; feeling a sense of accomplishment.	**PHYSICAL CHALLENGE** Having a role which makes physical demands I would find rewarding.	**ADVANCEMENT** Having an excellent chance of moving into a higher or better-paying position.	**SETTING** Working in comfortable or pleasant surroundings.
LEADERSHIP Direct responsibility for others' work and influence over direction.	**STABILITY** Having a work routine and job duties that are largely predictable and not likely to change over a period of time.	**MORAL FULFILLMENT** Significantly contributing to my moral, ethical, spiritual, or personal standards.	**TRAVEL** Working in a job that requires frequent travel.

BEING SUPERVISED Working under the direction of others.	SECURITY Being assured of keeping my job and receiving a reasonable financial reward.	DEVELOPMENT Being in a situation that permits or requires constant expansion of skills and personal/professional development.	LOCATION Living in a city or geographical area that is conducive to my lifestyle and that allows me to do the things I enjoy most.
BALANCE Experiencing a balance among the family, work, and play aspects of my life.	COMMUNITY Living in a place where I can be involved in community affairs.		

ALWAYS VALUED	OFTEN VALUED	SOMETIMES VALUED	SELDOM VALUED	NEVER VALUED
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	
	_____	_____	_____	
	_____	_____	_____	
	_____	_____	_____	
		_____		
		_____		

REFLECTION:

1. In thinking about this activity, which values came easy for you to place? More difficult for you to place?
2. How did you decide which values were most important to you?
3. Recall a moment or two in your life where you lived out the most important values. What behaviors did you exhibit that support these values?
4. How would you react if these values weren't honored by others? Describe your feelings, thoughts, and actions.
5. In thinking about work environments, how does this help you formulate what to look for as you continue your search for your first or next career? Or, do your current career interests match the values you have listed? Write your thoughts below or discuss with a friend or family member.

Know your *skills*

Ask yourself which transferable skills below match yours and how they may be applied to the workplace. Use these terms in your written applications, job interviews and anytime you are discussing your skills with a potential employer. Be prepared to provide examples of how you have used these skills.

Do you / Are you…	Transferable skills
Able to learn a new task and/or work in a different area with different co-workers?	Adapt to situations
Break a problem down to see what is really going on?	Analytical
Put things together with your hands?	Assemble products
Use a calculator, cash register or computer to answer numerical questions?	Calculate numbers
Speak and/or write well and get your ideas across to other easily?	Communication
Always think about how others may feel about things, especially before you say or do things that may affect them?	Considerate
Believe in and feel good about yourself?	Confident
Use your imagination to come up with new ideas or to solve problems?	Creative
Make good judgments about what to do in a difficult situation, even when the supervisor is not present?	Decision making
Assign tasks to others to complete?	Delegate
Counted on to do what you said you would do (ie show up for work on time, do your job duties well)?	Dependable
Perform tasks in the fastest and simplest ways that they can be done?	Efficient
Have lots of energy to use at work?	Energetic
Tell others why you do certain things the way you do or why you think the way you do?	Explain
Carry out many different responsibilities with very little advanced notice?	Flexible
Set goals for yourself to achieve and plan ways to achieve them?	Goal setting
Deal effectively with complaints made by customers or other constructive criticism?	Handle complaints
Enjoy helping people solve their problems?	Helpful
Look at things and make sense of them, figure out what makes things work, why there is a problem, etc?	Interpretation
Do new things and carry out new responsibilities easily by watching other or by following instructions?	Learn quickly
Listen/pay attention to what others are saying, without daydreaming or forming judgment about them?	Listen
Help keep others' spirits up and encourage them to do their best?	Motivate others
Keep track of items and how to order them?	Order goods/supplies
Arrange people/plan events/put things in order so that they run smoothly?	Organised
Turn relevant equipment on and off as well as know how to use it safely and wisely?	Operate equipment
Think ahead about your day and keep problems/accidents from happening?	Planning
A nice person for others to talk to and be with?	Pleasant
Make sure that things are done accurately, correctly and exactly	Precise

Write thorough and accurate notes/numbers?	Record data
Think of new, creative, and different ways to do things when there are no obvious solutions available?	Resourceful
Feel very confident and positive about yourself and your abilities?	Self -assured
Friendly, patient and polite with customers and try your best to service their needs/wants?	Service customers
Watch others to make sure that everything is ok and/or that they are doing their jobs well?	Supervise
Follow instructions well, ask questions when you do not fully understand something?	Take instructions
Plan your time so that you don't forget to do things, you're almost always/always on time and you know how to prioritise and give yourself enough time to do the things?	Time management
Figure out what the problem is, why there is a problem or prevent a problem?	Trouble -shoot
Trusted to get the job done, to look after things or keep information that is very important to other people?	Trustworthy

Reflection Questions:

1. What themes emerge from the skills you have selected?

2. What do you think these skill sets say about you?

3. Do these skill sets match with a career path you are currently considering? Why or why not?

4. Are there skills you would like to develop? What activities would you do to help you develop these skills?

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
for the workplace

Skills, sometimes also called **competencies, talents, qualifications, and areas of expertise,** are gained through coursework, academic projects, research, internships, on- and off- campus work experience, volunteering, studying abroad, student organizations, athletics, theater, Greek life, hobbies, on-campus programs, and more.

Skills are one of the keys to your success as a student and a member of the workforce. As you take on academic projects or work experiences, it's important to know what you can bring to the experience and what will be new for you.

There are two main categories of skills. **Specialized skills** are skills specific to your major, your job,

or your future career field. These include skills like: laboratory equipment, archival techniques, coding languages, statistical software, speech assessments, writing styles such as MLA, APA, AP, and Chicago, anatomy, musical instruments, electrical power systems, moral traditions, design programs, and more. **Transferable skills** are the qualifications and abilities that you can take from one situation to another. These include skills like: customer service, working independently, time management, multi-tasking, communication, research, leadership, teaching, active listening, adaptability, relationship building, problem solving, facilitation, persuading, research, prioritizing, and more. Your transferable skills build connections between your previous experiences and the opportunities you are seeking.

Career-Readiness Competencies

The career readiness of college graduates is an important issue in higher education, in the labor market, and in the public arena. Below are career-readiness competencies most requested and expected by employers, regardless of industry:

Critical Thinking/ Problem-Solving
Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

Oral and Written Communication
Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

Teamwork and Collaboration
Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.

Leadership
Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

Professionalism/ Work Ethic
Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from their mistakes.

Global and Intercultural Fluency
Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates, openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.

In the activity below, list all of your on- and off-campus experiences and their key projects and responsibilities, then begin developing an inventory of your skills:

Experience	Projects and Responsibilities	Skills
Zaxby's Cashier	Greet customers, take orders using point of sale software, handle cash, clean restaurant	Customer service Initiative Accuracy while entering orders and making change Meeting cleanliness standards

Now what?: *Connecting the dots*

So far, you have learned the importance of considering your interests, values, skills, and academic/ career options. Use this academic major analysis worksheet to help you connect what you have learned about yourself to your academic options. You may use this worksheet for each academic major/ career path you are seriously considering.

Major of Interest: _____

1. Research the academic major's website (You may search for each major by using the search function at www. wcu.edu). Briefly describe the academic major and any areas of concentration related to this major, if applicable. What specifically interests you about this major?

2. Research the 8-semester plan located on each major's website. You can also visit catalog.wcu.edu to quickly locate required and elective classes for each major. Identify course requirements and jot down any additional requirements such as internships, capstone courses, labs, etc.

3. Read the short descriptions of each of the required or optional courses. Analyze how the content fits your interests.

Most interesting courses	Least interesting courses

4. Identify related majors or areas of study that are recommended for electives, minors, or concentrations. You can use CCPD's major maps located at careers.wcu.edu (click on Students) to help you.

5. Why would you expect to do well in this major

Special thanks to Ursinus College Career and Professional Development Center

6. How does this major connect with your interests, values, and skills?

Interests	Values	Skills

7. Identify potential careers someone with this major could pursue. Remember, careers can be directly or indirectly linked to academic majors. You can use CCPD's FOCUS 2 software, major maps, or other resources located at careers.wcu.edu.

8. Identify graduate/ professional opportunities available or recommended for this major. Is graduate school a requirement for any of the above career paths?

9. Based on your research and knowledge of your interests, values, and skills, list the advantages and disadvantages of this major for you.

Advantages	Disadvantages

10. List any final concluding thoughts about this major. On a scale of 1-10, how interested are you in this major?

RESUMES, CVs, & COVER LETTERS

Your application materials take time to develop. Be thoughtful and strategic in your approach. Suggestions in this section will help you get started.

Preparing *(and Tailoring)* Your Resume

Preparing and tailoring your resume to each job opportunity is vital if you want to stand out from the crowd. Customize your resume to fit the job description to increase your ROI -- or the return on the investment of the time it takes to apply for jobs (which can be a full-time job in and of itself!). Follow these three steps and in no time, tailoring your resume will become more natural.

PRO TIP: Start with a comprehensive resume that includes everything -- your education, accomplishments, work or volunteer experiences, skills, and any awards you have earned so that you don't forget all of the experiences you've had that you can possibly use. Pick and choose what you want to showcase from the master resume to your tailored one.

1 Read the Job Posting

Many candidates forget the job posting once they have begun the application process, but it is so important you read the job ad thoroughly. Use the job description as a guide as you construct your document.

2 Highlight Your Relevant Accomplishments, Skills, and Experiences

While reading through the job description, highlight any accomplishments (such as your college degree, for example), experiences or skills that you have that matches the job ad. Remember that experience and skills don't just come from jobs you've had. They also come from volunteer or other unpaid work, relevant hobbies, extracurricular activities, temporary jobs, and more. Also, don't underestimate the powers of transferable skills! Look for those skills in the job ad, too.

PSST..

Show future employers that you can pay attention to details by matching phrases and verbs used in their job description as they apply to you.

3 Match Your Information to the Job Posting

Now you need to customize your resume to include those relevant accomplishments, experiences, and skills. Most recruiters and hiring managers have a software system that scans your documents for keywords and phrases. For example, if a job description calls for someone with a solid work ethic and organization skills, you will want to use those key phrases specifically in your document. By customizing your resume, you are showing the hiring manager that you are serious about the job opportunity and that you are the best candidate for the job.

If the below job description was one you were interested in applying, what phrases and skill sets would you highlight on your resume? Highlight or circle the skill sets you would use on your resume if you were applying for this position.

Program Coordinator

This position will involve managing and supporting external communication, managing internal communication and documentation for disaster relief programs including personnel, budgets, and products/outcomes, event planning and coordination, and supporting recruitment efforts. The Coordinator is also expected to have frequent interactions with a variety of stakeholders and upper administrators. Primary responsibilities of the Program Coordinator include administrative management of the office and overall coordination of daily activities in support of the office's success.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree
- Excellent time management and organizational skills
- Excellent written, verbal, and visual communication skills
- Experience with event planning
- Demonstrated proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite; Wordpress (or other CMS), Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Flicker)
- Demonstrated ability to work both independently and as part of a team
- Experience with scientific communication or related communication focus
- Experience managing budgets, including purchasing and invoicing

• •

SWOT Analysis:

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis can help guide you in thinking about your skill sets, areas of weakness, opportunities for growth, as well as career obstacles. Practice by using the job position above and conduct a SWOT analysis below:

Strengths (list the skills/qualifications that you possess): _____

_____

_____

Weaknesses (list the skills/qualifications that you do NOT possess): _____

_____

_____

Opportunities (list the things you can engage in now to make you a more competitive applicant):

_____

_____

Threats (list the reasons, if any, you think a company might not hire you - e.g. social media posts, background information, etc): _____

_____

Action Verbs for Resumes

Using action verbs to describe your experiences is one way to bring thoughtfulness and creativity to your resume. Whenever possible, use verbs that represent functions of the job you are seeking. Remember to use present-tense verbs for current activities and past-tense verbs for completed activities. Also, try not to use the same verb twice: the thesaurus in your word-processing software should provide more than enough possibilities.

Management/Leadership Skills

administered
analyzed
approved
assigned
attained
authorized
chaired
considered
converted
coordinated
decided
delegated
developed
directed
emphasized
enhanced
established
generated
handled
hosted
improved
incorporated
increased
initiated
instituted
led
managed
merged
motivated
organized
overhauled
oversaw
planned
recommended
replaced
restored
reviewed
supervised

Communication/People Skills

advertised
articulated
authored
clarified
collaborated
communicated
condensed
consulted
contacted
corresponded
defined
described
discussed
drafted
edited
enlisted
explained
formulated
incorporated
interacted
interpreted
interviewed
joined
marketed
mediated
moderated
negotiated
observed
participated
persuaded
presented
promoted
recruited
responded
suggested
translated
wrote

Research Skills

analyzed
clarified
collected
compared
conducted
critiqued
detected
determined
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
experimented
explored
extracted
formulated
gathered
identified
inspected
interpreted
investigated
measured
organized
researched
searched
solved
summarized
surveyed
systematized
tested

Technical Skills

accelerated
adapted
advanced
applied
architected
assembled
automated
built
calculated
calibrated
computed
constructed
converted
deployed
designed
determined
developed
discovered
engineered
expedited
fabricated
fortified
installed
maintained
operated
overhauled
printed
programmed
repaired
replaced
restored
sequenced
solved
troubleshoot
upgraded
utilized

Teaching Skills

accepted
acknowledged
adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
fostered
guided
influenced
informed
instilled
instructed
lectured
mediated
motivated
posed
recognized
shaped
stimulated
taught
tested
trained
tutored

Organization Skills

approved
arranged
classified
coded
collected
compiled
corresponded
distributed
divided
generated
implemented
inspected
monitored
obtained
operated
ordered
organized
prepared
processed
provided
recorded
registered
reserved
responded
reviewed
routed
scheduled
screened
set up
submitted
supplied
standardized
systematized
updated
validated
verified

Creative Skills

altered
ameliorated
augmented
composed
conceptualized
crafted
customized
debugged
devised
displayed
drew
entertained
fashioned
innovated
introduced
invented
launched
modeled
modified
originated
painted
performed
photographed
piloted
pioneered
polished
procured
published
rebuilt
refined
reformed
rehabilitated
revitalized
shaped
spearheaded
streamlined
synthesized
transformed
undertook
visualized

Helping Skills

adjusted
advocated
aided
assisted
attended
cared
contributed
counseled
demonstrated
familiarized
helped
inspired
integrated
intervened
listened
mentored
perceived
prevented
provided
referred
rendered
represented
resolved
safegauarded
serviced
simplified
spoke
supplied
supported
volunteered

Sections to include on a resume

☐ **Contact Information:** As the heading of your resume, you should list your first and last name, phone number, and professional email address. If you do not have a professional email, you can list your Catamount email. Your physical address and a link to your LinkedIn profile, online portfolio, or website are optional additions to the end of your heading.

☐ **Education:** Starting with your most recent experience, include the college name, graduation or expected graduation date, and the name of your degree(s). Your GPA can be included if it is above a 3.0. First- and second-year students may use high school information on a resume, but we encourage third- and fourth-year students to omit this information. You might also list relevant courses and projects you have completed as it relates to what you are applying

☐ **Experience:** In reverse chronological order (starting with current or most recent experiences first), list all relevant experiences -- part-time, seasonal, full-time, internships, etc. For each experience, make sure to have the organization or company name, location, the position(s) you held, and your dates of employment. Use three to four bullets to outline the most important responsibilities, skills, and achievements involved in your position. Begin these bullets with action verbs that are all in the same tense: present for current jobs and past for previous positions (See Bullet Development on page 34).

☐ **Optional Sections:** Skills, volunteer and community engagement, campus involvement, leadership, honors and awards, study abroad experiences, and membership to professional organizations or development experiences are examples of optional sections to boost your resume.

You have the liberty to name your sections however you see fit, depending on what you want to showcase. The table below gives some examples and ideas of how you can name various sections of your resume.

Resume Sections	Examples	
Education	Education Academic Achievements Academic Degrees	Academic Background Certifications Significant Coursework
Experience	Experience Work Experience Related Experience	XYZ Experience (*e.g. Social Work Experience*) Key Qualifications
Skills	Skills Areas of Expertise Demonstrated Skills	Technical Skills Lab Skills
Other	Honors and Awards Leadership Service Research Activities and Interests	Campus Involvement Community Involvement Professional Associations Professional Development Professional Presentations

Now you try... Choose names of resume section headings and corresponding coursework, experiences, or skill sets you'd like to include within each section in the space provided.

Resume Section	Coursework, experiences, or skill sets to include within each section

Bullet Development

Now that you've brainstormed your transferable and technical skills, discussed how to connect yourself to the job ad, and explored various action verbs to use, consider your bullet development to describe your experiences and skill sets (Be sure to include details such as equipment or computer software used, how often you completed the task, who else you might have worked with, any outcomes you observed or can prove as a result of your hard work, etc.). Let's use the job ad on page 30 as an example of a position that you might apply for.

action verb + what you did + how/ why you did it = solid bullet point

Skill set: Written communication skills
Supporting experience: Freelance Writer, *The Western Carolinian*
Basic: Wrote articles for campus newspaper
Better: Worked with team to brainstorm and write three articles monthly for *The Western Carolinian,* WCU's campus newspaper.
Best: Collaborated *(action verb)* with a team of six other writers and editorial staff members to brainstorm and write three timely and newsworthy articles *(what you did)* using AP style *(how)* for *The Western Carolinian,* WCU's bi-weekly campus newspaper.

Skill set: Event planning
Supporting experience: Recruitment Chair of Greek organization
Basic: Responsible for recruitment for fraternity
Better: Created recruiting events on campus for large fraternity
Best: Led *(action verb)* a team of four others to host four recruitment events for a 50-member fraternity *(what you did)*, resulting in an increase in membership *(why)* by 15% within one semester *(outcome)*

Skill set: Time management in a fast-paced environment
Supporting Experience: Sandwich Artist, Subway
Basic: Managed time to make sandwiches for customers
Better: Managed time to complete customer orders to satisfaction
Best: Used *(action verb)* time productively to complete customer orders to satisfaction in a fast and dynamic environment *(what you did),* while adhering to all company policies and ServSafe protocols *(how)*

Now you try...

Skill set: _____

Supporting Experience: _____

Resume Bullet: _____

_____

_____

Formatting Your Resume

While there is no one "right" way to format a resume, there are several rules you should follow to present a clean, clear, and concise document which highlights your education, skills, and experiences:

1. Keep it short. For most, a one-page resume is optimal (Areas of study with ample hands-on experience as part of the curriculum, such as nursing or teaching, will likely have a two-page resume).

2. Make use of negative spaces. Try not to leave large blank spaces in your resume. Think through how you will use the space you have to effectively display your skill sets to the potential employer or academic institution. This is especially true if you have many skills, projects, and experiences to showcase and would like to keep your resume to one page.

2. Use professional fonts. Choose a font that allows you to stand out from the rest but is still professional such as Garamond, Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Georgia, Cambria, or Avenir.

3. Think about your font size. We recommend that your name be larger, up to 18- or 20-point font (and in bold); the headings of your resume up to 14-point font; and the text of your resume between 10- and 12-point font.

4. Use boldface, italics, and underlines thoughtfully. Make sure you aren't overusing them; they can easily become distracting.

5. Be consistent. However you decide to format the look of your resume, make sure you are consistent (font types and sizes, as well as where you put your locations, position titles, dates, etc. remain consistent throughout.).

6. Think about the margins, too. Your margins can be as small as 0.5" to allow for more room to showcase your skill sets.

7. Save your resume as a PDF. Unless the employer says otherwise, save your documents as PDFs so that your formatting stays true regardless of the type of computer or software the employer may be using to review your materials. (**NOTE:** You will also want to include your name when you save your documents so the employer can quickly locate yours for further review. For example: Catamount_Resume or PawsCatamount_Cover_Letter)

It's good to go when...

☐ You've checked to make sure there are **no** grammatical or spelling errors.

☐ All sections are in reverse chronological order (current experiences are placed first, followed by events that have happened in the past).

☐ Formatting is clear, concise, and consistent.

☐ You've tailored your resume to the job description as much as possible.

☐ You've had at least two people you know and trust review it.

☐ You have saved your document as a PDF and have named your file appropriately (e.g.: Last Name_Resume).

Resume Shortcuts in MS Word

Deleting Extra Spaces Between Lines:

By default, Microsoft Word includes added space in between lines, especially lines in between paragraphs. The problem with this, though, is that it takes up space when you may need all the extra space you can get. Here's how you can change your settings to maximize the most amount of space possible (NOTE: The following is done on a PC; however, the shortcuts should be similar or the same when using a Mac):

1. Click the small arrow icon in the **Paragraph** portion of the **Home** tab.
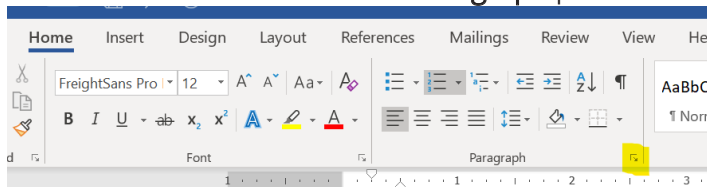
2. In the next window, set your Before and After settings to "0" pt, check the box labeled, "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style" and make sure that your line spacing is set to single. Click OK.
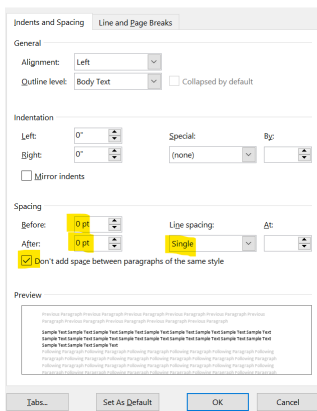
Adding Horizontal Lines

In several of our resume examples, you'll see use of horizontal lines to separate contact information or differing sections. The following are shortcuts to achieving these looks:

Place your cursor where you would like the horizontal line to appear and type the following keyboard short cuts:

For single line, type three hyphen keys --- and hit Enter

For a single bold line, type shift + three hyphen keys (or three underscore strokes) ___ and hit Enter

For a double line, type three equal signs === and hit Enter

For a single line, thick line, single line, type three hashtag signs ### and hit Enter

===

For a wavy line, type Shift + three tilde sings (above the Tab key) ``` and hit Enter

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For a dotted line, type Shift + three asterisk signs *** and hit Enter

• •

Using Tab Stops to center- or right-align text

Don't use the Space bar to line up your information. Either use tabs or set your Right Tab Stop by doing the following:

1. Turn on your Ruler (View → Ruler)
2. Click the tab stop icon located in the upper left corner of your ruler. Click on it twice so that it looks like a backwards L. It looks like this:
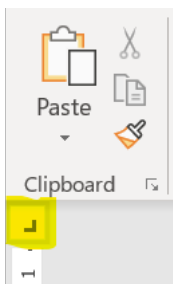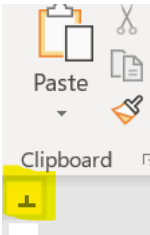

3. Then click and drag on your ruler where you want the text to align. When you press the Tab key, your text should automatically align to that point in your document. For example:

Western Carolina University   Cullowhee, NC

4. You can also use the center-justified tab stop if you wanted three tab stops on one line. Click the Tab Stop once. It should look like this:

5. Choose the point on your Ruler where you wish the Tab Stop to go. You can combine this with the Right Tab Stop above to create the following look:

Bachelor of Arts in English   GPA: 3.76   Expected May 2021

Take your resume from this...

PAWS C. CATAMOUNT
555 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723
(555) 555-5555 | pawsdude@gmail.com

Experience:

Subway	Garner, NC
Sandwich Artist	January 2017-June 2018

- I made sandwiches to order each shift
- Clean counters and tables
- Work cash register when needed

Good Financial Planning, Inc.	Garner, NC
Intern	Summer 2019

- I was responsible for initial client interaction and I was able to observe licensed financial planners and learned about various investment and retirement options

Writing and Learning Commons	Cullowhee, NC
Office Assistant	August 2019 – Present

- Answered phone calls and emails
- Schedule appointments for students

Campus Involvement

Phi Sigma Pi, National Honor Fraternity
- I served as Service Chair

Pride of the Mountains Marching Band
- I was the Trumpet Section Leader

Relevant Courses

FIN 350	FIN 395	ECON 231
ACCT 251	BUS 400	BUS 401
ACCT 252	MGT 250	MGT 251

Education

Western Carolina University	Cullowhee, NC

Double Major in Finance and
Accounting Minor: Management
GPA: 3.56

...to this!

Paws C. Catamount

555 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723
(555) 555-5555 | paws@catamount.wcu.edu

Education

Western Carolina University	Cullowhee, NC
B.S.B.A. in Finance	Expected May 2023
B.S.B.A. in Accounting	Expected May 2023

- Cumulative GPA: 3.56
- Minor: Management

Relevant Courses: Contemporary Managerial Finance, Investment Strategies, Retirement Planning, Estate and Trust Planning, Intermediate Accounting, Introduction to Income Taxation, Applied Management Skills

Financial Planning Experience

Good Financial Planning, Inc.	Garner, NC
Intern	May 2019 – August 2019

- Observed licensed fiduciary financial advisors in counseling clients on retirement planning including options for Roth IRA, 403(b), and 401(k)
- Served as first point-of-contact for all clients and answered basic questions regarding firm
- Assisted clients in assessing liabilities and calculating monetary needs

Customer Service Experience

WCU Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC)	Cullowhee, NC
Office Assistant	August 2019 – Present

- Communicate effectively with a variety of constituents including current and prospective students, parents, faculty members, and external stakeholders regarding tutoring services
- Ensure prompt and friendly service to all students when entering tutoring center
- Write weekly usage reports using Navigate, a university-wide system which tracks student and faculty usage of all tutoring appointments

Subway	Garner, NC
Sandwich Artist	January 2017 – June 2018

- Demonstrated time management skills by fulfilling customer orders in a fast and dynamic environment
- Followed all ServSafe cleanliness and safety protocols when handling food
- Handled and balanced monetary transactions totaling up to $5,000 at the end of each shift

Campus Involvement

Member, Phi Sigma Pi, National Honor Fraternity	August 2019 – Present

- Served as Service Chair and increased number of community engagement projects by 50% during Spring 2020 term
- Actively engaged community partners for new Chapter initiatives to support local elementary schools in providing adequate supplies to educators and students

Member, Pride of the Mountains Marching Band	August 2018 – Present

- Served as Trumpet Section Leader and co-instructed 56 trumpet players during band camp, practices, and during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade

PAWS C. CATAMOUNT

55 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723
Paws1@catamount.wcu.edu | 555-555-5555

EDUCATION:

Western Carolina University   Cullowhee, NC
B.S.B.A. in Marketing   Expected May 2025
- Minor: Management

Jackson County Early College   Sylva, NC
Diploma   June 2022

RELEVANT COURSES:

Marketing Principles I   Marketing Planning & Strategy
Sport Marketing   Applied Management Skills
Human Resource Management   Organizational Theory

COURSEWORK:

Social Media Marketing Project   Spring 2023
- Collaborated with 4 team members to develop hypothetical social media marketing plan for local brewery
- Used concepts learned to construct plan using Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram platforms
- Consulted with owners on business and social media goals
- Presented marketing plan to owners and faculty

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

WCU DegreePlus program   Fall 2022-Present
- Attended five on-campus events that taught professionalism skills including Working in a Multigenerational Office, Managing Workplace Conflict, and Communication Skills for the Workplace

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Social Media Platforms: Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Computer programs: Microsoft Office Suite 2016, Adobe Photoshop Creative Cloud, Adobe InDesign Creative Cloud, Adobe Spark

PAWS CATAMOUNT

Cullowhee, NC | paws@catamount.wcu.edu | 555-555-5555

EDUCATION:
Western Carolina University   Cullowhee, NC   May 2023
Bachelor of Science in Nursing   GPA: 3.88
Chancellor's List: All semesters

CERTIFICATIONS:
CPR Certified via American Heart Association   Current
Basic Life Support Certified via American Red Cross   Current

RELEVANT CLINICAL ROTATION EXPERIENCE:
Brenner Children's Hospital, PICU/ HEM/OMCO/ Peds, Winston-Salem, NC | 40 hours   Feb. 2023
- Assisted preceptor during IV insertions, vaccine, and medication administrations
- Provided comfort for patients in PICU with mental health challenges

Pardee Hospital, Labor and Delivery Unit, Hendersonville, NC | 25 hours   Oct. 2022
- Performed fetal monitoring to evaluate accelerations or decelerations of fetal heart rates
- Assisted anesthesiologist in the administration of epidurals
- Maintained patient comfort during labor and prepared patients for cesarean sections

Harris Regional Hospital, Mother and Baby Unit, Sylva, NC | 25 hours   Sept. 2022
- Assisted in providing complete care for postpartum mothers and newborn infants; supported up to 3 mothers and 3 babies per shift
- Taught breastfeeding holds and techniques for proper latch

OTHER CLINICAL EXPERIENCE:
Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, ICU/ Burn Unit/ Neuro ICU,   Nov. 2022
     Winston-Salem, NC | 38 hours
VA Medical Center, Oncology/ Med-Surg/ Surgical ICU, Asheville, NC | 21 Hours   Sept. & Oct. 2022

WORK HISTORY:
Server, Olive Garden, Monroe, NC   June 2021 – Aug. 2022
Nanny, Private Residence, Indian Trail, NC   June 2020 – Aug. 2022
Server, Brooklyn Pizza Parlor, Weddington, NC   March 2020 – June 2021

ON-CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT:
Member, Nursing Christian Fellowship, WCU Chapter   Aug. 2021 – Present
Member, LatinX Student Union   Aug. 2021 - Present
Member, WCU Honors College   Aug. 2020 – 2022
Member, College Democrats at WCU   Aug. 2020 – 2022

ADDITIONAL SKILLS:
Languages: English (fluent), Spanish (fluent)
Computer programs: Microsoft Office 2020 (Excel, PowerPoint, Word), athenaOne (electronic health record)

PAWS C. CATAMOUNT

555 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723 | 555-555-5555 | paws1@catamount.wcu.edu
linkedin.com/in/pawscatamount

EDUCATION

Western Carolina University – Cullowhee, NC
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science – Expected May 2021
> Course Highlights: Software Engineering, Data Structures and Algorithms, Computer Networking, Information Security, Operating Systems, Database Systems, Programming Languages

Southwestern Community College – Sylva, NC
Associate of Applied Science in Software and Web Development – May 2018
> Course Highlights: Operating System Concepts, Information System Business Concepts, JAVA and JAVA Advanced Programming, Database Programming I, Python Programming

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

MSIGHTS, Inc. – Charlotte, NC
Software Engineering Intern – Summer 2020
- Worked virtually with software and data operations team to maintain and build upon the MSIGHTS Platform and its various applications using Java, C++, and Python
- Develop, execute, and maintain code and tests in an agile environment
- Collaborate cross-departmentally to execute internal and external projects as requested

Drake Software, Inc. – Sylva, NC
Java Developer Intern – Summer 2017
- Assisted development team in maintaining architecture and code of GruntWorx application for busy tax software company
- Used knowledge of Linux to support company's Web services team and API interfaces in external applications using Java

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

DegreePlus, Completed Level 2 in Professionalism – Spring 2019 – Present
- Attended five on-campus professional development events to learn about professionalism
- Wrote reflection essay on integrating concepts learned in various professional contexts

Black Student Union, Member – Fall 2018 – Present
- Assisted and participated in on-campus events such as Tunnel of Oppression, a program to depict oppression and discrimination of marginalized groups on campus and in other communities
- Attended and actively participated in monthly meetings

SKILLS

Computer languages: Proficient in Python, Java, C++, html, C#
Computer software: Visual Studio Code (Proficient), Notepad++ (basic), UltraEdit (basic)
Computer Operating Systems: Proficient in Windows, Linux, macOS

Paws Catamount

55 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723 • Email: Paws1@catamount.wcu.edu • Phone: 555-555-5555

OBJECTIVE:

> In general, the CCPD does not recommend Objective Statements; however, if your major does not directly relate to the position for which you are applying, an objective statement can provide focus and intentionality.

Emerging social justice advocate specializing in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives seeking to apply abilities in nonprofit work to bridge inequities within low socioeconomic communities. Proven record in open-mindedness, effective communication, conflict resolution, negotiation, and leadership skills amongst peers.

EDUCATION:

Western Carolina University   Cullowhee, NC
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science   May 2021
- Minor: Philosophy
- DegreePlus Program, Cultural Responsiveness & Professionalism, Level 3 completion
    - Completed campus program designed to introduce and integrate in chosen skill sets
    - Presented integration of Cultural Responsiveness and Professionalism skills learned during DegreePlus Day

Relevant courses: Spanish I, II, and III; Public Policy; The Nonprofit Sector; Political Communication; Legal, Scientific, and Critical Reasoning; Self, Society and the Good Life; Philosophy of Mind; Global Justice, Liberty, and Human Rights

SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY EXPERIENCE:

Intern, Advocates for Excellence, Whittier, NC | 150 hours   May 2020 to August 2020
- Worked remotely to create first-ever blog for agency which teaches technical and transferable skill sets for individuals in low socioeconomic communities for workplace advancement
- Developed topics and articles for blog, as well as researched and wrote a series of articles for blog scheduled through December 2020
- Supported agency in social media platform posts including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter
- Assisted Executive Director in editing grant application for additional funding to support future equity initiatives

Volunteer, Clean Slate Coalition, Webster, NC | 75 hours   June 2019 – February 2020
- Worked in a team environment to maintain the upkeep of housing units for agency which supports women in emergency situations and women transitioning from incarceration
- Attended agency meetings with local government officials to learn and discuss disparities within marginalized communities in Western North Carolina

DIVERSE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Member, Political Science Club   January 2020 – Present
Member, American Association of Women at Western Carolina University   August 2019 – Present
Member, LatinX Appreciation Student Organization (LASO)   August 2018 – Present
Member, First Gen Club   August 2018 - Present

WORK HISTORY

Cashier, Wal-Mart Supercenter, Sylva, NC   August 2018 – Present
Spanish Tutor, WCU Writing and Learning Commons, Cullowhee, NC   August 2018 – Present
Sandwich Artist, Subway, Lincolnton, NC   June 2017 – August 2018

headshot
goes
here

PAWS CATAMOUNT

Cullowhee, NC

paws@catamount.wcu.edu

555-555-5555

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Fine Arts: Acting   12/2024
Western Carolina University   Cullowhee, NC

Hickory Career and Arts Magnet School   Hickory, NC
Diploma   6/2019
- Applied and accepted into competitive arts and theatre school

STAGE EXPERIENCE	ROLE	LOCATION	DATE
Mary Poppins	Jane	HART Theatre, Waynesville, NC	2/2022
Constellations	Marianne	Bardo Arts Center, Cullowhee, NC	11/2021
Beauty and the Beast	Featherduster	Hickory Theatre, Hickory, NC	4/2019
Peter Pan	Tinkerbell	Hickory Theatre, Hickory, NC	4/2018

ADDITIONAL THEATRE EXPERIENCE

Hickory Career and Arts Theatre   Hickory, NC
Makeup and Costume Coordinator for *Beauty and the Beast*   4/2019
- Airbrushed and created body suit for Beast costume
- Used airbrush and stencils to create visual makeup effects on up to 5 characters
- Assisted in hair department to create full effect
- Performance advanced to regional and state levels of North Carolina Theatre Conference

Stage Crew Member for *That's Not How I Remember It*   3/2018
- Worked in team of 20 students to provide support for set design
- Provided set transitions and prop placement during performances
- Assisted team with makeup and hair design for each performance
- Performance advanced to state, regional, and national of theatre conferences

Stage Crew Member for *Flowers for Algernon*   10/2018
- Served as backstage support crew during performances; problem-solved backstage issues as needed
- Worked in team environment to create sets and props for production
- Assisted in set transitions during each performance

SPECIAL SKILLS

Choral Development: Accent-trained (British accent) 2021-2022; Voice-trained 2019-2023; Honors Chorus Student 2019 – 2022
Acrobatic Experience (Bone Stacking): Trained with Mateo J. Daniels 2021-2022

Paws C. Catamount

55 Catamount Drive	Paws1@catamount.wcu.edu
Cullowhee, NC 28723	555-555-5555

EDUCATION

Western Carolina University	Cullowhee, NC
Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice	December 2023
Bachelor of Science in Political Science	December 2023

- GPA: 3.9/4.0
- First Generation College Student
- Research interests: Developmental Psychology, Child Psychology, Abnormal Psychology
  - IRB certified

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP)	Summer 2022
Topic: Effects of bullying in child development	

- Completed IRB Certification and developed mixed methods research study under direction of Dr. Tom Smith to determine effects of bullying on 20 middle school-aged adolescents
- Presented initial findings to SURP board and faculty sponsors
- Prepared and wrote grant proposal to continue study during academic year

WCU Psychology Department	Cullowhee, NC
Research Assistant	Spring 2022

- Assisted Dr. Tom Smith and 2 graduate students in qualitative data collection of 25 at-risk, first-year college students to determine ecological effects of college environment and academic success
- Conducted 2 focus groups of 8 students each to collect data
- Collaborated with graduate students to identify themes from focus group transcripts

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Catamount, P. (2023). The effects of bullying on 20 middle school-aged adolescents [Virtual poster presentation]. Presented at the 26th annual WCU Undergraduate Research Symposium, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC, March 2023.

Smith, T. & **Catamount, P.** (2022). The effects of bullying: An initial look at child development [Oral presentation]. Presented at the 7th annual SURP Symposium, Western Carolina University, August 2022.

WORK EXPERIENCE

WCU Writing and Learning Commons	Cullowhee, NC
Psychology and Sociology Tutor	Spring 2023 – Present

- Lead group tutoring sessions as needed to support selected psychology and sociology courses
- Write end notes in student record keeping software to update faculty members of student progress

Starbucks	Cullowhee, NC
Barista	Fall 2022 – Present

- Communicate effectively to deliver high quality products in a fast-paced environment
- Ensure quality customer service and problem-solve customer complaints as needed

Paws Catamount

55 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723 | paws1@catamount.wcu.edu | 555-555-5555

EDUCATION _____
B.S.B.A in Sport Management   Expected May 2023
Western Carolina University (WCU)   Cullowhee, NC

Relevant Courses:

Sport Marketing	Sport Media	Contracts and Sales
Sport Ethics	Financial Aspects of Sport	Professional Selling
Sport Event & Facility Management	Sport Management Strategies	Social Media Marketing

Study Abroad:
University of Portsmouth, England   June 2022 – August 2022
- Participated in an 8-week study abroad experience to gain valuable insights into the international sports marketing field; emphasis placed on European football sales and marketing

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE _____
Intern, WCU Women's Soccer, Cullowhee, NC   January 2022 – April 2022
- Collaborated with full-time Athletics staff to create social media marketing plan using Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter social media platforms
- Increased fan base interaction online by 20% as compared to previous Spring semester
- Assisted coaching staff in setting up equipment and water stations during practices

Class Project, Mountain Heritage Day 5K, Cullowhee, NC   September 2021
- Worked in a team of 4 classmates to create 5K course for annual Mountain Heritage Day 5K, an event to raise funds for prospective Sport Management students during annual festival which attracts up to 10,000 people to WCU's campus

SPORTS INVOLVEMENT _____
Player & Team Captain, WCU Intramural Sports (Soccer & Volleyball)   August 2021 – Present
- Led Intramural Women's Volleyball team to campus championship in 2022
- Displayed leadership and encouraged team members throughout practices and games

Player, WCU Women's Soccer   Fall 2021 – Spring 2023
- Played right fullback position for two seasons
- Learned and applied teamwork, collaboration, and leadership skills

WORK EXPERIENCE _____
Manager, Dollar General, Waynesville, NC   October 2021 – Present
- Hire and supervise 7 staff members, coordinating work schedules and training all personnel on company policies and procedures
- Complete money transfers via Western Union for customers as requested
- Balance cash registers at end of shifts, ensuring all monies and tils are calculated correctly

Camp Associate, Camp Daniel Boone, Canton, NC   Summers 2021
- Coordinated camp volunteers to feed and serve more than 1,000 campers and personnel
- Followed company protocols when cleaning and sanitizing kitchen areas

PAWS C. CATAMOUNT

55 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723
Paws1@catamount.wcu.edu   555-555-5555

EDUCATION

Expected May 2021	**Western Carolina University** Bachelor of Science in Education
	o *GPA: 4.0*
	o Major: Elementary Education
	o Concentration: Health and Wellness
	o Chancellor's List: All Semesters

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring 2020	Student Teacher, 5th and 6th Grade, Francine Delany New School, West Asheville

- Designed health and wellness lesson plans for 60 fifth and sixth grade students
- Incorporated multiple teaching strategies including small group teaching, partner and group work, as well as hands-on activities
- Ensured safety of students during class activities
- Attended weekly teacher meetings and served on Spirit Week committee

Fall 2019

Field Observation, Kindergarten, Riverbend Elementary, Clyde, NC, 18 hours
- Guided students with building social normative skills through various role playing and activities
- Encouraged students to manage behavior through token store and other incentives for good behavior

Field Observation, Kindergarten, Fairview Elementary, Sylva, NC, 15 hours
- Assist up to 5 students ages 5 and 6 on handwriting and basic reading skills
- Observed Kindergarten teacher on classroom management, teaching styles, and behavioral management

Fall 2018

WORK EXPERIENCE

September 2019- Present	*Hostess,* Brio Tuscan Grille, Cherokee, NC

- Communicate effectively with all patrons on restaurant menus and other matters
- Provide quality customer service in ensuring prompt service
- Prepare to-go orders as needed

October 2017-May 2018

Front-of-House Assistant, Shane's Rib Shack, Spartanburg, SC
- Answer customer questions regarding menu items
- Ensure cleanliness of facilities by adhering to all ServSafe protocols

November 2015-August 2017

Attendant, Rack Room Shoes, Rock Hill, SC
- Organized shelves, racks, and shoe boxes for easy access and inventory purposes
- Managed inventory using QuickBooks

ON-CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Member, Eco Campus Awareness Team for Sustainability (Eco CATS) , August 2018 – Present
- *Leader*, January 2020 – Present

Participant, Intermural Sports (Volleyball), August 2018 – Present

Creating a federal resume

You should create a federal resume when applying to any federal job through usajobs.gov. Federal resumes differ from private sector resumes in several ways. For one, federal resumes are typically longer, usually between 2 to 5 pages long and pay particular attention to the job announcement. Make sure you meet minimum qualifications for the job for which you are applying. Use the following as a guide to creating and formatting your federal resume (for more information, visit https://www.usa.gov/government-jobs or gogovernment.org):

1. Include citizenship status, and job information for which you are applying. Include the name of the job for which you are applying, followed by the position number; as well as veteran's preference, reinstatement eligibility, or highest Federal civilian grade held.

2. Include address and phone numbers of previous employers or volunteer sites. In a private sector resume, an employer or organization's city and state will suffice; but a federal resume should include the employer or organization's physical address, as well as phone number. You should also indicate if your former supervisor may be contacted.

3. Include dates, hours, level of experience and examples for each work experience. The main difference here is you will need to include how many hours per week you worked in that job or volunteer experience and at what level. Make sure you include relevant experiences and accomplishments that prove you can perform the tasks at the level required for the job as stated in the job announcement. Your experience needs to address every required qualification. For example:

> **Program Analyst GS-343-11**
> January 2019 - Present
> 40 Hours/Week
> $63,000/Year
> - Experience/Accomplishment
> - Experience/Accomplishment

4. Use numbers and outcomes-based bullet points to highlight your accomplishments. You can find this information in things like your performance reviews, previous job descriptions, awards and letters of recommendation. Include examples of how you saved money, earned money, or managed money; or include examples of how you saved or managed time. For example:
- Improved efficiency of document processing by 25% over the previous year.
- Wrote 25 news releases in a three-week period under daily deadlines.
- Managed a student organization budget of more than $7,000.
- Wrote prospect letter that has brought in more than $25,000 in donations to date.

5. Consider other experiences to list. Just like with a typical resume, you should also consider listing any job-related training courses (be sure to put the title and year you completed the training), unexpired certifications and current licenses; skills such as additional languages, computer programs, industry-related tools and equipment; publications and professional presentations; honors and awards; student clubs and organizations; or memberships to professional organizations. **NOTE:** Federal resumes also encourage you to duplicate bullet points if you did the exact same task in multiple positions.

Paws C. Catamount

55 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723
555-555-5555
Paws1@catamount.wcu.edu

Citizenship: United States (or indicate if you are on a work visa)
Veteran's Preference: N/A (or 'yes' if you are a veteran. Include military branch)
Federal Civilian Status: N/A (or 'yes' if you currently hold a Federal position outside of military. Include current position and department)
Highest Grade Held: N/A (Include previous highest grade of Federal position held)
Applying for: Data Scientist, Central Intelligence Agency – DEST-10514986-20-CB

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS:

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science   **May 2020**
Western Carolina University   Cullowhee, NC
GPA: 3.45
Relevant Courses: Data Structures and Algorithms, Database Systems, Computer Networking, Software Engineering, Computer Languages, Information Security

Associate of Arts in Computer Systems Analysis   **May 2018**
Western Piedmont Community College   Morganton, NC
GPA: 3.75
Relevant Courses: Web, Program & Database Foundation, Systems Analysis and Design, Operating Systems Concepts, Database Concepts, Windows Administrator, Security Concepts
Certification: Microsoft Office Certified

TECHNICAL SKILLS:

Computer languages: Java, Python, C++, Ruby, html, R, SQL
Computer programming: Visual Studio Code (Proficient), Notepad++ (basic), UltraEdit (basic)
Computer software: Tableau, Domo, Microsoft Office 2016
Operating Systems: Windows, Linux, macOS

ACADEMIC PROJECTS:

Content Aware Search System   **Feb. 2019**
- Investigated how to build an efficient, high-quality content-based similarity search engine for feature-rich (non-text) data including audio recordings, digital photos, 3D shapes, and genomic micro-array data
- Researched topics included sketch construction, indexing for similarity search, distance functions for feature-rich data types, integration with attribute-based search tools, content-addressable and searchable storage system, and Memex systems

Upgraded University Bookstore Management System   **Oct. 2018**
- Used C++ to create user-friendly management system
- Improved efficiency of management system to allow bookstore managers to add, show, and modify inventory records as well as check availability of products to customer satisfaction

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

Junior Economic Analyst   **Aug. 2018 - Present**
Western Carolina University School of Economics, Management & Project Mgt   15 hours/ week
104 Forsyth Building, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC 28723   828-227-7412
Supervisor: Dr. Angela Dills (may contact) $10/hr
- Utilize Tableau to organize and display ongoing local, regional, and statewide economic data on NC Data Dashboard
- Assist in report creation on impacts of labor markets, product markets, real estate, and workforce demographics within North Carolina

Data Scientist Intern   **May 2019 – Aug. 2019**
Red Ventures, Inc.   40 hours/ week
1101 Red Ventures Drive, Fort Mill, SC 29707   704-971-2300
Supervisor: John Jones (may contact)   Unpaid
- Collaborated in a team of 10 to create and maintain company databases
- Assisted in development of pipelines and methods for data analysis
- Extracted data and information from various internal and public access databases and documents
- Assisted with data curation, statistical evaluation, and preparation for and conducting computational analyses using predefined workflows
- Developed, wrote, and reviewed scientific and technical documents

OTHER EXPERIENCE:

Cashier   **June 2017 – Aug. 2018**
Ingles Supermarkets, Inc.   20 hours/week
120 Carbon City Road, Morganton, NC 28655   828-437-9848
Supervisor: Jill Smith (may contact) $8.50/hr
- Ensure quality customer service with prompt service in dynamic environment
- Handle monetary transactions totaling up to $15,000 per shift
- Balance register and complete report at end of each shift

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:

Equinox Ranch   **Aug. 2018-Present**
234 Equinox Ranch Road, Cullowhee, NC 28723   8 hours/ month
Supervisor: Jill Doe (may contact)
- Assist project manager in repair and maintenance for retreat center aiming to provide healing support for military veterans
- Ensure cleanliness of facilities during each volunteer shift

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT:

Member, Computer Science Club   Aug. 2018-Present
Member, Phi Mu Alpha Music Fraternity   Aug. 2018-Present
Member, Pride of the Mountains Marching Band   Aug. 2018-Present

Resume Vs. Curriculum Vitae (CVs)

What is a CV? A CV (Curriculum Vitae) is an in-depth document that can be laid out over two or more pages and contains a high level of detail about your achievements. The CV covers your education, as well as any other accomplishments like publications, awards, honors, work experience, etc.

	RESUME	CV
PURPOSE	Outlines your education, experiences, skill sets as they relate to a specific position	Comprehensive look into your educational and professional experiences including publications, professional presentations and activities, honors and awards, etc.
WHEN TO USE	When applying to full-time or part-time employment, or internship opportunities in the business, non-profit, technical, or other non-academic industries	When applying for faculty or research positions; clinical and scientific positions, graduate school admissions, or when specifically requested
LENGTH	Typically 1 to 2 pages	2+ pages, depending on education and experience

A typical CV will include the following information (NOTE: A CV can look very different depending on your unique experience, publications, etc. Use the sections that make the most sense for you.).

Name and Contact Information: contact information for your current institution or place of employment may work best, unless you do not want your colleagues to know that you are job hunting.

Areas of Interest: a listing of your varied academic interests.

Education: a list of your degrees earned or in progress, institutions, and years of graduation. You may also include the title(s) of your dissertation or thesis here.

Grants, Honors, and Awards: a list of grants received, honors bestowed upon you for your work, and awards you may have received for teaching or service.

Publications and Presentations: a list of your published articles and books, as well as presentations given at conferences. If there are many of both, you might consider having one section for publications and another for presentations.

Employment and Experience: this section may include separate lists of teaching experiences, laboratory experiences, field experiences, volunteer work, leadership, or other relevant experiences.

Scholarly or Professional Memberships: a listing of the professional organizations of which you are a member. If you have held an office or position in a particular organization, you can either say so here or leave this information for the experience section.

Paws C. Catamount

55 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723
Email: Paws1@catamount.wcu.edu Phone: 555-555-5555

EDUCATION:

Western Carolina University — Cullowhee, NC
Master of Arts in History — May 2019

Clemson University — Clemson, SC
Bachelor of Science in Sociology — May 2010

ACADEMIC/TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Western Carolina University Department of History — Cullowhee, NC
Adjunct Faculty — August 2018 – May 2019

- Taught 2 sections of HIST 141: North Carolina History, with 25 students in each section.
- Utilized Blackboard for course organization and online classroom management.
- Adhered to departmental pedagogy and student learning outcomes in course design.

Western Carolina University Writing and Learning Commons — Cullowhee, NC
History and Writing Tutor — August 2017 – May 2019

- Tutored one-on-one in writing skills and identifying unique patterns of error within each student to strengthen academic communication skills.
- Facilitate group tutoring sessions for upper-level History courses.

DW Daniel High School — Clemson, SC
Civics and History High School Teacher — June 2010 – June 2017

- Taught 3 sections of junior-level U.S. History and 1 section of senior-level U.S. Civics.
- Incorporated instructional technology to enhance pedagogical technique.
- Served on various subcommittees including Campus Health, Safety, and Security; Homecoming; and Co-Curricular Steering Committee.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Western Carolina University Mountain Heritage Center — Cullowhee, NC
Graduate Research Assistant — August 2017 – May 2019

- Conducted primary source research at numerous archives surrounding Jackson County history between 1800 and 1865.
- Examined journal entries of local residents to assess the events which led to Jackson County's involvement in the Civil War.
- Organized and assisted in creating visual displays for Mountain Heritage Center.

Clemson University Department of Sociology — Clemson, SC
Undergraduate Research Assistant — August 2009 – May 2010

- Assisted graduate assistants in collecting data regarding the origin of individuals' political attitudes and behaviors and the impact on social change.
- Collaborated with graduate assistants and faculty members to recruit participants for in-person social psychology studies.
- Met weekly with team to assess project deadlines and participant scheduling.

PUBLICATIONS

Catamount, Paws. "Civil War on the Home Front: An Analytical Look into Local Events Which Led to Participation from Jackson County Residents." *Essays in History 36* (Spring 2019): 45-51.

PRESENTATIONS

Catamount, Paws. "Civil War on the Home Front: An Analytical Look into Local Events Which Led to Participation From Jackson County Residents." Presented at the annual Civil War Summer Institute, Gettysburg, VA, June 2019

Catamount, Paws. "Civil Unrest in Jackson County." Presented at the annual Graduate Research Symposium, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC, April 2018.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Western Carolina University Graduate Student Association — Cullowhee, NC
Treasurer — August 2018 – May 2019

- Tracked and managed annual budget of $15,000
- Collaborated with committee members to distribute funds to 25 graduate students presenting and attending at annual conferences and other professional development opportunities

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Organization of American Historians — August 2017 – Present
National Council for History Education — August 2017 – Present

WORK HISTORY

Adjunct Faculty Member, WCU History Department, Cullowhee, NC — August 2018 – May 2019
History & Writing Tutor, Writing and Learning Commons, Cullowhee, NC — August 2017 – May 2019
Graduate Research Assistant, Mountain Heritage Center, Cullowhee, NC — August 2017 – May 2019
History and Civics Teacher, DW Daniel High School, Clemson, SC — June 2010 – June 2017
Undergraduate Research Assistant, Clemson University, Clemson, SC — August 2009 – May 2010
Intern, Equal Rights Administration, Columbia, SC — May 2009 – July 2009

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Computer programs: Microsoft Office 2016, ArcGIS, Social Explorer, Timeline, Adobe Photoshop (Creative Cloud), OUCampus (Website developer)
Classroom modules: Blackboard, Moodle

Preparing to Write Your Cover Letter

Cover letters are important documents that can help your resume stand out among other candidates, but it can be difficult knowing how to prepare for and begin writing one. They are not easy, nor should they be hastily written. Here are some tips to consider when beginning your cover letter.

STEP 1

Research the company and position. Write down the key requirements listed in the job description and research the company's website, social media feeds, and employee LinkedIn profiles to identify the culture within the company and any challenges they might be facing. This research can help you decide how your experiences and skills fit into the organization and give insight into how you may be able to explain how your role within the company could address current challenges.

STEP 2

Create a list comparing yourself to the position. Based on the details of the job listing or the company, try creating tables, columns, or diagrams comparing your experiences, skills, and occupational goals and values with the company's position. By recognizing how you match up to the job, you will be able to more easily convey your enthusiasm and appropriateness for the position in your cover letter. Being able to clearly identify why you chose to apply and to relay your excitement will help make your cover letter stand out with authenticity and personality.

STEP 3

Identify what strengths, experiences, and/or transferable skills you would like to promote. As a cover letter is at most a one-page document highlighting your ability and potential for a position, you will want to include a short description of an experience that speaks to your qualifications and gives the reader a distinct idea about who you are as an employee and how your skills and work experience can add value to their company. If you have limited professional experience, try thinking about some strengths and skills from previous internship, volunteer, or work experiences that could be emphasized and transferred.

STEP 4

Write a draft. Using your research on the company and job listing, plus the list of skill sets you have identified, write a draft using a standard business letter block format (see examples on the next few pages).

STEP 5

Have your cover letter reviewed. Before submitting your application, you should review your cover letter and resume for any grammatical or mechanical errors. For formatting, content, or organizational concerns; you can schedule an appointment with a career counselor through Navigate or by emailing careerservices@wcu.edu, or you can visit a peer career mentor at the Center for Career and Professional Development during Career Studio drop-in hours, Monday-Friday from Noon to 4 p.m. at the CCPD.

Use this sheet to help you get organized before writing a cover letter. For practice, conduct a quick online search for a position in your field or one that you might be interested in.

Employer/ Company: _____

Employer/ Company Vision or Mission: _____

_____

_____

Required or Preferred Qualifications and Skill Sets: _____

_____

_____

_____

Your Qualifications/ Skill Sets	Experiences (jobs, internships, student organizations, volunteer work, class projects, etc.):
Ex: Written Communication using MS Word	Ex: Student Office Assistant in tutoring **center**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Based on your research on the company and job description, why are you interested in applying for this position?: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can you bring to the position, employer, or surrounding community?: _____

_____

_____

GENERAL FORMATTING

FORMAT:
Use the same font and font sizes as your resume to keep branding consistent. Use a block style of letter; no indentations but separate each paragraph with a hard Enter.

ADDRESSING THE LETTER:
Try to do some research to whom you should address the letter. If you cannot find a specific person to address the letter, stick with Hiring Manager, Human Resources Representative, or Search Committee. Do not to write, To Whom It May Concern.

WRITING STYLE:
Make sure your writing is indicative of your personality and branding. It should also be free of errors, so make sure you have several people copy edit your materials before submitting.

ENDING THE LETTER:
Use a formal closing before signing your name (ex. Sincerely,). If you are mailing your cover letter leave 3-4 lines between the closing and your typed name for your hand-written signature. If you are e-mailing your cover letter you may simply type your name on the line below your closing or you can add a signature as you would on a mailed letter.

PAWS C. CATAMOUNT
555 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723 | paws1@catamount.wcu.edu | 555-555-5555

Today's Date

Hiring Manager's Name
Their Title
Company Name
Company Street Address
City, State Zip

Re: Name of Position, Position Number (if applicable)

Dear Ms./ Mr./ Dr. Last Name

Opening Paragraph: Begin by stating the purpose of the letter; state the position you are applying for, identify the employer or the department, and include where you learned of the position. If you have previously met this employer, use the first few sentences to remind them of your interaction. You should also state your enthusiasm for the position or organization. Being able to clearly identify why you chose to apply and to relay your excitement will help make your cover letter stand out with authenticity and personality.

Middle Paragraphs: Use the next few paragraphs to connect yourself to not only the specific position but to the company or organization as a whole. It is important to highlight specific experiences that relate to the needs of the position but be careful not to restate your whole resume. Show the employer that you are educated about the position. The body of your cover letter should illustrate why you want to work for the organization and how you are qualified for the position.

If you do not have a lot of experience, highlight class projects that you may have completed, and the transferable skill sets you gained from those projects as they relate to the position. Your cover letter should only be one page, so make sure you articulate your skill sets and examples of application concisely.

Conclusion: Close your cover letter by summarizing your qualifications for the specific position. Reaffirm your interest in the company/organization and end this paragraph by requesting a formal interview. Be sure to include your email and phone number in your closing paragraph if it is not included in your heading. Thank them for taking the time to review your application materials as well.

Sincerely,

Paws C. Catamount

WARNING:

It is extremely important that you double-check your cover letter to ensure you are sending the letter to the correct employer. For example, if you are applying for a job or program at Western Carolina University, avoid sending the letter you wrote for Clemson University. One way to ensure you avoid this major error is by appropriately naming your files. Instead of naming your file, "Cover Letter," try naming it, "Last Name Cover Letter Name of Employer/School" (Catamount Cover Letter Western Carolina University). In addition, consider sending a PDF document, unless otherwise stated in the application instructions.

Paws Catamount

55 Catamount Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723 I 555-555-5555 | paws1@catamount.wcu.edu

February 7, 2020

North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition
2154 Wrightsville Avenue
Wilmington, NC 28403

Dear Hiring Committee,

As a graduating senior earning a Bachelor of Social Work May 2020, I am excited to connect my practical knowledge with my passions for helping individuals overcome substance use disorders with Haywood County's Part-Time Post Overdose Resource Coordinator position. I was forwarded the opportunity from Jane Smith of Down Home North Carolina, my internship facilitator. I am thrilled to have come across this opportunity and feel that my collective experience in different agencies and settings have prepared me for an opportunity like this.

My experience in various agencies over the last two years has prepared me for this opportunity. I have worked with Appalachian Community Services' (ACS) Adult Recovery Unit and Behavioral Health Urgent Care. I have met with hundreds of individuals who were at different stages in their addictions and recovery journey. Through that experience I have learned to be flexible, patient, and open-minded about the many challenges individuals going through recovery face. I have conducted educational groups for clients at ACS that included topics like the stages of change, mindfulness, and recognizing healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Similarly, interning with Down Home North Carolina and volunteering with their working group, Neighbors for Overdose Prevention and Education, has been a fantastic opportunity to meet with various harm reduction and community stakeholders. Our current campaign includes bringing Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion to Jackson County. I have also spent a considerable amount of time over the course of my internship doing outreach with members, using methods to keep people engaged with the organization. Much of my intern responsibilities have been completed autonomously and included administrative duties such as data collection and research for projects.

My entry-level experience and continued passion for this field have prepared me for this position. Once again, I am excited to apply for this position in supporting Haywood County's commitment to helping those who have recently experienced overdoses. I appreciate the time you have taken to consider me for this position and hope to speak with you soon to schedule an interview.

Best Regards,

Paws Catamount

Paws C Catamount

Cullowhee, NC | paws@catamount.wcu.edu | 555-555-5555

September 14, 2022

Dr. Peter Smith, Nature Center Director
75 Gashes Creek Road
Asheville, NC 28805

Re: Undergraduate Nature Center Internship

Dear Dr. Smith:

Over the last two years, I have committed myself to advocating for the preservation and conservation of wildlife and natural resources within Western North Carolina through my education and volunteering with several organizations. As someone who has frequented the Asheville Nature Center and is familiar with its quality programming, I am excited to apply for the open Undergraduate Nature Center Internship position.

Since April 2021, I have volunteered with the Nature Center at Balsam Mountain Trust, a regional leader in conservation education and accessible conservation-based programming in the Greater Western North Carolina area. Through my volunteer work, I have learned about native plants, animals, and other artifacts to the WNC area and the importance of caring for local wild and plant life. Additionally, I have developed stellar communication skills through answering patron questions regarding the Nature Center and the live animals in our care.

Moreover, I am actively involved in two on-campus student-run organizations which promote energy conservation and quality recycling practices. As a member of the WCU ECO Cats, I promote recycling through ensuring all tailgating parties have access to appropriate recycling bins before each football game. Through the WCU Sustainable Energy Initiative, I collaborate with 10 other students to review and fund sustainable project proposals to advance WCU's commitment of energy conservation. As a member of this student-run committee, I helped bring two additional EV charging picnic tables to campus.

I would like to reiterate my excitement for this internship opportunity as it would enable me to continue exploring my passions for conservation education and preservation of wildlife and other natural resources within the Western North Carolina region. I am available at your earliest convenience to speak more about this mutually beneficial opportunity. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Paws Catamount

Sample E-Mail Correspondence

When attaching application materials:

Dear Ms. Wentworth,

I am writing to submit my application and resume for the Horticultural Therapist position I found listed in the Dogwood Hospital newsletter this week. I have a master's degree in psychology from Clemson University, and a bachelor's degree in horticulture and botany from Western Carolina University.

As a psychology graduate student, I have had a great deal of training in working with populations with trauma and special needs. Last summer I was an intern at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston in the Community Psychiatry department. I worked with a wide variety of constituents including veterans transitioning to civilian life; people who suffer from mental illness, poverty, homelessness, and cancer; and a variety of other challenges.

Attached is my application and resume. With my experience and educational background, I am confident I can contribute to the Dogwood Hospital team. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Paws Catamount

When following up after an interview:

Dear Mr. Brown,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and your co-workers today to interview for the Ethical Computer Hacker position with your company. I really enjoyed getting to know more about the valuable work you and your team do for businesses around the world and the entry-level position you have available.

As you requested during my interview, I am attaching a list of my references. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Paws Catamount

When declining a job offer:

Dear Mr. Sorryton,

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with your company. After thinking over your offer and my career goals, I have decided to decline your offer at this time. I enjoyed meeting you and your team and it was a difficult decision for me to make, but I believe it is the right choice for me at this point in my career. Thank you for your time and consideration. I wish you the best in the hiring process.

Paws Catamount

When replying to a rejection:

Dear Ms. Appleton,

I want to thank you again for your time in reviewing my application and interviewing me for the Program Coordinator position. I am disheartened to hear I was not chosen for this position, but would like to discuss how I could have interviewed better or how I could be a more competitive candidate in the future. If you are open to having this conversation with me, I would greatly appreciate it. I wish you the best in the hiring process.

Paws Catamount

JOB SEARCHING &
NETWORKING

Searching for your first full-time job can be quite stressful (and a full-time job in itself!). Use these strategies to make your search more effective:

REFLECT

Take a moment to define what you are looking for in a career. Specify your ideal role, goals, community, qualifications, and interests to narrow your field and gain a better understanding of how job ads are relevant for you. **Looking beyond formal titles and tasks,** think about your interests, what you enjoy doing, and how they may relate to your ideal occupation.

MAKE A LIST

Compile a list and schedule of job applications and businesses that you have applied to or are interested in contacting. Having the company name, contact information, website address, and application deadline will help you **maintain organization, avoid miscommunication, and reduce stress.** By writing down the application deadlines and websites, you can more easily create a relevant schedule for prioritizing and completing applications.

NETWORK

Through experiences with past employers, supervisors, peers, acquaintances, and leaders in your field of interest; you can build a community of people who can speak to your abilities and expertise. While job searching, connect and reach out with inquiries about potential jobs. **Many businesses begin their applicant pool internally,** and by building a network and personal brand through professional development events and websites such as LinkedIn, you can increase your visibility and job searching success.

USE YOUR RESOURCES

Resume reviews, interview practice, career counselors, and development opportunities are excellent services offered by the Center for Career and Professional Development as ways to **specify your goals, grow your network, and gain professional insight and experience.** Our online resources such a Big Interview can further enhance your career field knowledge and preparation for the next step in the job-search process: Interviewing.

Job Search *Strategies*

Job searching is often considered a full-time job in and of itself. It can be emotionally, mentally, and physically exhausting applying to your first full-time position. Statistically, it takes most alums between **4 and 6 months** of applying to nearly **100 jobs** before landing on a position within their chosen field. But have no fear! We in the CCPD are here for you. Follow these strategies, tips, and suggestions to maximize your job search plan. **And remember:** You can always consult with a career counselor free of charge even after you graduate!

Did you know...

Up to 80% of vacant jobs are **never** posted online? You are **five times** more likely to be hired if you are **referred** by someone? That's why it's important to use a variety of job search strategies rather than rely on generic job search engines alone.

Do this first...

Before you begin searching for full-time positions, you first need to identify and define where you want to live and the type of position for which you are looking. For some, this can be quite stressful. Perhaps you find this process overwhelming and you don't know where to begin. Maybe you aren't sure what types of positions you are qualified for with your degree. Use this planning activity as a way to get started.

Objective:
Describe in a few sentences or phrases your immediate career goals. Try to stay away from "find a job." Instead, think about what kind of job or values you hold that you would want your employer to share or your skill sets, etc. If you need help identifying your values, check out the worksheet on page 10; for skill sets, check out page 12.
Example: *I want to find a position with an employer who values creative problem-solving to help societal challenges on a micro level.*

_____

_____

Position Title(s):
Research and list position titles in which you would be excited to work. If you need help, visit **www.onetonline. org** and type in a generic field within your major (or not directly related to your major; Remember, majors don't have to equal careers!) Explore ONet and pay attention to the **Related Titles section** within each hyperlink. For bachelor degree positions, consider entry-level titles such as Coordinator or Technician. Try to choose 3 to 5 position titles for this activity. ***Example:*** *Community Service Coordinator; Child Development Technician*

_____

_____

Location Preferences
List any cities, regions, states, or countries you would be willing to live. If you are willing to live anywhere, for this activity, choose an area where you have always wanted to visit You can also include the maximum number of miles you are willing to commute. ***Example:*** *Western North Carolina;* or *25 mile radius from Sacramento, CA.*

_____

_____

Now that you have a basic understanding of the types of positions you want to target, think about how you want to network and search for your desired positions. Most people log on to large job search engines like Indeed.com. And while these are certainly great places to start, the majority of employers -- especially smaller employers -- avoid posting vacant positions on these boards because they generate too many resumes for review. In fact, one Indeed.com job ad can generate **200 resumes in one day!** We recommend using a variety of strategies listed below; and be sure to check out our sample 80/20 plan on the next page!

1

Targeted application materials
We recommend you take a targeted approach in your job search. As stated in the Resume section on page 29, you should be analyzing each job description and tweaking each resume and cover letter to reflect the main qualifications you want to highlight. We **do not** recommend applying to "anything and everything," but we do encourage you to broaden your job search and consider a wider range of positions which connect you to your chosen field or desired skill sets.

2

Targeted/ Smaller job boards
Search for targeted and smaller job boards geared towards your chosen field and/or major. For example, if you wanted to go into social work, a Google search for **"top social work job boards"** yields www.socialworkjobbank.com; www.socialservice.com; and www.ihiresocialservices.com. Be aware that some job boards require a paid membership to search and apply for jobs. Our recommendation is to steer clear of these job sites and utilize the free job boards instead, unless you are wanting to pay for a membership to a professional association. Also remember to check out **jobcat.wcu.edu;** while JobCat is a much smaller job board, employers who post positions to JobCat are familiar with WCU programs and are recruiting WCU alumni.

3

Business Database and Websites
Remember, most employers avoid posting their vacant positions on large job boards. Often, you have to search on their individual Careers pages, but to do that, you need a database for which to search. Visit **www.buzzfile.com** and choose the **EDU version,** which is free. Create an account using your **Catamount email address** to verify you are a student or recent alum. Then click **Employers by Major,** select your field (be sure to review the whole list as you might be interested in more than one area), then **select your state.** Buzzfile will generate a list of all employers within your selected field and state. You can filter by zip code or city as well. Choose an employer you're interested in and review the information listed. Usually, it will list a website for the company or employer. From there, search the employer's website for their **Careers or Jobs listings.** This is often found at the bottom of their site, at the top in their tool bar, or hidden in their About Us section.

4

Networking
Use your **existing networking resources** such as your professors, classmates, supervisors to your benefit. Who they know might lead to your first full-time position. To get started on your existing networking list, complete the activity on the next page.

Other resources such as LinkedIn, professional associations, professional conferences, and other networking events can also help you build your list of contacts. As you meet people either virtually or in person, make sure you follow up with them. Check in periodically to update them on your job search and other life updates and ask about how they are doing. Creating these **personal and professional relationships** can help you down the road; or, you might be able to help someone else one day. *Tips and suggestions on how to build an effective LinkedIn profile and how to use LinkedIn specifically for job searching can be found on page 59.*

NETWORKING MAP ACTIVITY

For each category below, think of some people you know or have met who can possibly connect you with your next steps. If you don't know anyone for a particular category, leave it blank. Use your resources such as LinkedIn and Google searches to help search for those missing pieces.

FACULTY MEMBERS

RELATIVES

SUPERVISORS & CO-WORKERS

CLASS-MATES

JOB FAIRS

NETWORKING SOURCES

OTHER EVENTS

WCU ALUMNI

FRIENDS OF FAMILY

PERSONAL FRIENDS

MEMBERS OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

MEMBERS OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Sample networking correspondence

We understand it can be overwhelming and intimidating to reach out to other professionals with whom you may not have a close relationship. Use these sample pieces of correspondence to help you in reaching out to possible networking contacts.

Cold Calls
Cold calls are phone calls or email messages to people you have not contacted before. Cold call messages should include a brief introduction into who you are, the purpose of reaching out, why you are contacting them specifically, some type of call to action or next step, and a closing statement.

If emailing, be sure to include a relevant subject line such as WCU Student Seeking Job Shadow; **or** Current Student Looking to Learn More about (Field); **or** Aspiring (Position) – Would Love to Connect; **or** (Field) Student Seeking Career Advice

> Dear (Name),
> My name is (name) and I am a (year) at Western Carolina University studying (specific area). I'm looking to connect with (career field) professionals to learn more about this career field, and hopefully participate in virtual shadowing opportunities. I would appreciate/ the opportunity to (something specific about their job or company). Would you have 30 minutes to answer a few questions about your career trajectory and current position, and explore the option of shadowing (number of hours or meetings, if specified)? Your insights and guidance would be much appreciated.
>
> I'll follow up with a phone call (timeline) to schedule a time to talk. Alternatively, please send me a few dates and times that would work for you and I'll confirm a time for us to speak.
>
> Thank you for your time,
> (Name)

Follow Up Phone Call/ Email
A follow up message reminds the recipient of your original message and purpose for contacting. If you spoke with someone on the phone or in person, make sure you also follow up with them via email. You can also follow up with someone within two weeks if you haven't heard back from them. People are often busy and may forget about your original message.

> Good morning/afternoon, (name),
> This is (your name) from Western Carolina University. I emailed you (day) inquiring about a networking conversation and possible shadowing experience to help with my career exploration. As mentioned in my email, I'm following up in hopes of scheduling a time for us to talk.
>
> Thank you for your time!
> (Name)
>
> Hi [Name],
> It was so nice to meet with you today! Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions and talk about what it's like at [Company]—it seems like an amazing place to work. I especially loved hearing about [something you enjoyed talking about]. I look forward to staying in touch as I continue [my job search/figuring out my next step]. I plan on using your advice to [piece of advice that stuck with you]. And if [Company] has any openings in their [department] down the road, I hope you'll let me know so I can apply.
> All the best,
> [Name]

The 80/20 plan: *Active vs. Passive strategies*

Based on our experiences working with students and alumni, most say they rely on online job boards. While this is certainly a popular strategy (especially post-COVID-19), the problem is, most other people are also mostly relying on online job boards. When you search for positions on large job boards like Indeed.com or ZipRecruiter.com, you're also competing with more people who are searching for and seeing the same positions. We recommend you spend 80% of your time using **active** strategies and 20% of your time using **passive** strategies.

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
• Attending networking events • Connecting with professional organizations • Pro-actively contacting organizations • Customizing resumes and cover letters for each employer and position • Creating a personalized job search and career path strategy	• Searching general or industry-specific job search sites • Sending generic resumes and cover letters • Applying to "anything and everything" • Creating a LinkedIn profile and leaving it • Creating an online portfolio website

Sample 80/20 Plan at 10 hours per week

ACTIVE (approx. 8 hours per week)	PASSIVE (approx. 2 hours per week)
• Identify and contact 3 – 5 new contacts per week • Plan and conduct 3 networking meetings (informational interviews, for example) • Log in daily to LinkedIn and complete 2 – 3 actions (ex: posting or responding to relevant topics, reaching out to employers or WCU alum in your field, following potential employers and their pages, etc.) • Attend 1-2 networking events per month (webinars, online conferences, etc.) • Analyze each job position and make necessary changes before applying	• Spend 10 minutes/ day reviewing job alerts and job boards • Apply to 1-2 jobs per day via job boards • Update spreadsheet of applications submitted

Career Search Planning Sheet

Oftentimes graduating students use a variety of methods when searching for fulltime positions. Use the following worksheet to help set goals when searching for positions:

Goal: I will search for _____ number of jobs per week using online job boards

Position Title	Search Engine Used	Employer Name	Application Deadline	Salary Listed	Qualifications

Goal: I will contact _____ employers bi-weekly directly using email, phone, or social media such as LinkedIn regarding open positions or for informational interview purposes.

Person's Name	Person's Title	Employer Name	Notes from Conversation

Goal: I will attend _____ networking events per semester (ex: conferences, career fairs, Chamber of Commerce social gatherings, etc)

Name of Event	Location (or Online)	Professional Organization	Notes from Event (people of interest you spoke with, impressions, employers of interest, etc)

CRAFTING YOUR 30-SECOND
COMMERCIAL

The key to a successful interview or networking opportunity is setting a positive first impression. By preparing a 30-second commercial, you will have a concise overview of your experience, strengths, skills, achievements, and goals. This will be useful in a variety of settings including networking events, career fairs, and job interviews whenever responding to "Tell me about yourself."

Your 30-second commercial should:
- Identify who you are and what your goals are
- Highlight a few strengths and accomplishments
- Show how you can bring added value to an organization
- Be concise (hence, 30 seconds)

When should I use my 30-second commercial?

During your interview: Your commercial can help you answer questions like "Tell me about yourself," "What are your greatest strengths?" and "What can you bring to this position?"

In a Cover Letter: Your commercial can highlight your background and key abilities.

At professional/ social/ organizational meetings: You can use your commercial to introduce yourself and to network with others.

Guidelines for creating your 30-second commercial
- Use concise and clear language
- Sell professional abilities and experiences
- Emphasize your strengths and link them to the needs of the employer
- Use descriptive statements or specific examples of your acquired skills and abilities
- State the kind of position you're seeking
- Speak clearly and with confidence
- Link your knowledge, skills and experience to the position and/or the employer

Building your 30 Second Commercial

First sentence: Include your name, school, degree and major. If you are currently a student, you can mention when you anticipate graduating.

Middle sentences: State your relevant experience. For example, mention your employer, your role, the skills you used and developed as well as the accomplishments and results you are proud of. Mention your future career goals.

Last sentences: Briefly relay how your background might benefit the listener. Ask for his/her suggestions on who else you might speak with for advice regarding your strengths.

After you have engaged the contact in conversation, don't forget to ask for a referral by saying something like *"Do you have any advice for me or can you suggest any other people I should contact?"*

Greeting: Hello, my name is _____.
Experience: I am a _____ studying _____ at Western Carolina University.
Interest/Passion: I am mainly interested in _____.
Strengths: My strengths include _____, _____, and _____.
Brief Example: Last summer, I worked at _____ and was able to _____.
Goal: I am looking to gain further experience in _____.

Making the most out of a career fair

NOTE: Keep up-to-date on future career fairs and other networking events by visiting the Engage website at engage.wcu.edu. To access information about participating companies, organizations, and schools at each event, visit JobCat (http://jobcat.wcu. edu/).

before the fair

Research employers, schools, and organizations attending each event by visiting jobcat.wcu.edu and clicking on Events.

Create a list of companies you are interested in visiting, and prepare some questions to ask the recruiters.

Update or create a resume listing your achievements and experiences. For a review of your document, schedule an appointment with the CCPD or come in during drop-in hours.

during the fair

When you first enter, grab a map or brochure to find the locations of the companies that most interest you.

Make sure to engage the recruiters; smile and ask questions to begin conversations. Use your resume to help craft your 30-second commercial.

Be mindful of the recruiter's time and try to ask the most relevant questions. Grab any business cards or information that is offered at the employers' tables so that you can review the materials later.

after the fair

Organize any informative materials and notes you obtained at the fair.

If you were given any contact information, make sure to follow up with an email, note, or call thanking the company and recruiter for the conversation and to remind them of your interest in the field.

For any employers of high interest, search their website for current job listings and apply for any open position of interest.

what to wear

While a career fair is not as formal as a job interview, you will want to impress potential recruiters and show that you are invested and serious about connecting and marketing your professional skills and abilities. Try to dress business professional, darker suits, if possible, but wearing business casual attire is a more comfortable way of showing your professionalism. Dress pants, dark blazers, a nice sweater, button-up shirt, or blouse, khakis, and dress shoes or loafers are all ideal choices to dress for a successful career fair experience. Remember to smile as well! For more information regarding business professional and business casual wear, refer to the Interview Article within this handbook.

what to bring

Bring a folder or padfolio that contains printed copies of your resume, your list of employers to visit, your questions, and paper and a pen so that you may take any notes and store any informational materials recruiters may hand you. Instead of bringing a traditional backpack with you, try using a messenger bag or purse to store your materials.

how to thank

The following is one example of a Thank You note:

Good Afternoon (Recruiter/Company Name),
I just wanted to thank you for talking to me at Western Carolina University's career fair. It was such a pleasure getting to discuss opportunities, programs, and the industry. I look forward to researching and hearing more about (internship, occupation, industry), but please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Have a great rest of your week,

(Your Full First and Last Name)

The "Who, What, Why, and How" of *Informational Interviews*

WHAT/WHY

An informational interview is a type of conversation used to **learn more about jobs, organizations, or careers.** It is a great way for you to broaden your network and learn from people who may be in jobs that you would like to know more about. You can ask questions about how they got to where they are now. Use these conversations to **get a glimpse** into what it could be like to work for a certain company or work in a certain career.

WHO

These interviews can be conducted with someone you already know or who is already a connection. For example, a **previous co-worker, friends of the family, or an alumni** from your college. You can also reach out through an email or LinkedIn message to someone from whom you would like to learn. If you do not already know the individual, **those in entry-level positions** are often more willing, and have more availability, to have a conversation. Make sure to personalize your email or LinkedIn message and state why you would like to do an informational interview.

(*Ex: I came across your profile and I really want to know more about social media marketing. It seems like you have great insight with the campaigns you've worked on.*)

HOW

An informational interview can be **in-person, over the phone, or over a video call.** It is important to arrive on time and dress professionally. Make sure to research a bit about that person and their organization (use Google, the company webpage, and LinkedIn). Come with questions prepared. Make sure the focus is on learning about the other person, but do be prepared with your 30-second commercial in case they ask a bit about you! If you're wanting to use the informational interview to get an "in" with a company, be careful -- you do not want the person to feel like this is the only reason you have contacted them.

Don't forget to send a nice thank you email after you talk and thank them for what you learned that day (include one or two things you specifically appreciated).

Questions to ask...

Here are a few good questions to ask:

- What does a typical day look like in your role?
- What do you enjoy about working for your company?
- What are some of the challenges you see in your position?
- What do you think is the future of this field?
- What did you wish you knew about this field when you were in college?
- How did you gain the experience needed for your role?
- What are important skills for someone to have if they want to work in a similar role?

Analyzing Job Ads

Looking for jobs can be stressful. How does one know if a job is right for them? There's no one-size-fits-all approach, but use the following job ad analysis worksheet to help you collect your thoughts on potential employers and opportunities.

Pick a job search engine such as JobCat, Indeed, Glassdoor, a field-specific job board, or visit an employer's Careers webpage directly. Search for two positions to which you might be interested in applying. If you aren't sure what keywords to use, consider entry-level titles such as Coordinator, Technician, Specialist, or Analyst.

Job Title #1:   *Location:*

1. What are the qualifications (including transferable skills) listed on the job ad that you have experience in (through part-time or volunteer work, course projects, job shadowing, internships, etc.).

2. What qualifications are you lacking?

3. Visit the employer's About Us page. What values do they hold that you appreciate? Do they fit your description of the type of employer you'd want to work for? Was it difficult to find this information, and if so, how do you feel about that?

4. What is the salary (if listed)? Does it meet your needs? (Check out the Calculating Salary Needs worksheet on page 88).

5. What other benefits does this employer offer? (You may need to research on their Careers page)

6. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being Extremely Interested, how would you rate this job description? Employer?

Job Title #2:   *Location:*

1. What are the qualifications (including transferable skills) listed on the job ad that you have experience in (through part-time or volunteer work, course projects, job shadowing, internships, etc.).

2. What qualifications are you lacking?

3. Visit the employer's About Us page. What values do they hold that you appreciate? Do they fit your description of the type of employer you'd want to work for? Was it difficult to find this information, and if so, how do you feel about that?

4. What is the salary (if listed)? Does it meet your needs? (Check out the Calculating Salary Needs worksheet on page 88).

5. What other benefits does this employer offer? (You may need to research on their Careers page)

6. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being Extremely Interested, how would you rate this job description? Employer?

Job Search Checklist

Center for Career and Professional Development | careers.wcu.edu | 828.227.7133

Feeling overwhelmed? The CCPD is here to help you with any of the below suggestions! Drop by the Career Studio between noon and 4 p.m. Monday-Friday or make an appointment with a counselor via your MyWCU!

Prepare

- ☐ Complete CCPD's 80/20 job search plan worksheet
- ☐ Review CCPD's Resume & Cover Letter Canvas modules
- ☐ Skim CCPD's Career Guide for any additional tips
- ☐ Create comprehensive resume with all projects, jobs, volunteer work, clubs, etc. listed with bullet points to describe experiences (handy when you go to tailor your resume for specific jobs)
- ☐ Create or update LinkedIn profile
- ☐ Create relevant blog/ LinkedIn posts to optimize online presence
- ☐ Clean up online presence
- ☐ Contact references

Search and Apply

- ☐ Sign up for job alerts on JobCat, Indeed, or targeted job boards
- ☐ Network with professionals in your field (in person, networking events, LinkedIn, etc.)
- ☐ Conduct informational interviews
- ☐ Contact recruiters for employers you admire
- ☐ Turn your LinkedIn status to "open to opportunities" so that recruiters can search for you
- ☐ Create customized and tailored resumes and cover letters (using comprehensive resume)
- ☐ Submit and track appliations using CCPD's Job Searching Track Sheet in Excel
- ☐ Review CCPD's Job Searching Canvas module

Interview

- ☐ Learn about interview techniques and strategies using Big Interview (wcu.biginterview.com and register your account with your Catamount email address)
- ☐ Practice interviews using Big Interview or with a friend (wcu.biginterview.com)
- ☐ Plan an interview outfit (see Career Guide for suggestions)
- ☐ Research position and employer before going into interview (research history, values, mission statement, product info, etc)
- ☐ Send thank you notes/ messages via LinkedIn and follow up within 2 weeks
- ☐ Negotiate offer (Salary Negotiation curriculum is found in Big Interview as well)

On Board

- ☐ Update LinkedIn with new job!
- ☐ Create onboarding plan (Check out Big Interview's First 90 Days curriculum!)
- ☐ Understand all benefits and company policies
- ☐ Introduce yourself to your new colleagues
- ☐ Set goals for yourself to accomplish as a new professional
- ☐ Create a training plan
- ☐ Keep updating LinkedIn with relevant posts and material within your field
- ☐ Set reminders every 4-6 months to update your resume/ CV with your accomplishments
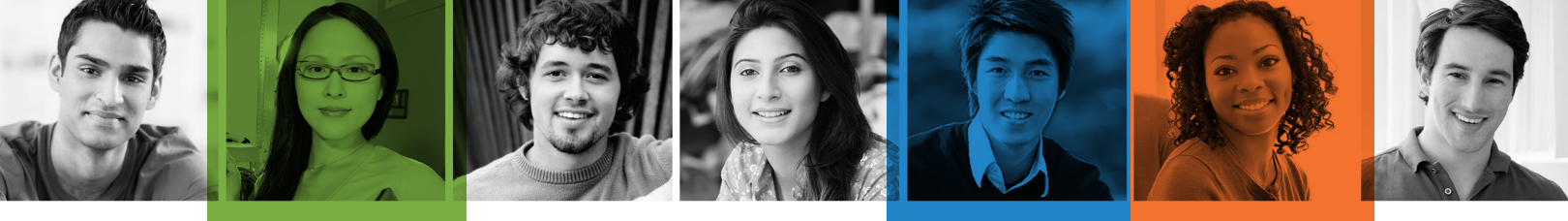
LinkedIn Profile Checklist

☐ **PHOTO:** It doesn't have to be fancy - just use your cellphone camera in front of a plain background. Wear a nice shirt and don't forget to smile!

☐ **HEADLINE:** Tell people what you're excited about now and the cool things you want to do in the future.

☐ **SUMMARY:** Describe what motivates you, what you're skilled at, and what's next.

☐ **EXPERIENCE:** List the jobs you held, even if they were part-time, along with what you accomplished at each. Even include photos and videos from your work.

☐ **ORGANIZATIONS:** Have you joined any clubs at school or outside? Be sure to describe what you did with each organization.

Search for people, jobs, companies, and more...   Advanced

David Xiao
Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Analyst
San Francisco Bay Area | Financial Services

Previous   Berkeley Ventures
Education   University of California, Berkeley

Improve your profile   Edit Profile   153 connections

www.linkedin.com/in/davidxiao/   Contact Info

Background

Summary

I'm a senior at Berkeley, starting to look for roles in the financial industry. As an economics major, I'm fascinated by the invisible forces that shape our world. Why does one company succeed and another fail? Is it possible to predict which idea will be the next big thing?

As such, I've taken lots of microeconomics coursework and have interned with a local venture capital firm. And now I'd like to put that experience to good use, analyzing tomorrow's up-and-coming companies.

Experience

Venture Capital Internship   BERKELEY VENTURES
Berkeley Ventures
May 2013 – September 2013 (5 months) | Berkeley, CA

Conducted research on 20 startup companies and presented my findings to the fund's board, leading to a new $1.5 million investment.

INTRODUCTION TO VENTURE CAPITAL
David Xiao

A presentation I gave to my classmates, based on what I learned at Berkeley Ventures

Organizations

Berkeley A Capella
Lead Singer
March 2012 – Present

Schedule and perform at events for one of Berkeley's oldest a cappella groups, including last year's Cal-Stanford game.

EDUCATION: Starting with college, list all the educational experiences you've had - including summer programs.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE & CAUSES: Even if you weren't paid for a job, be sure to list it. Admissions officers and employers often see volunteer experience as just as valuable as paid work.

SKILLS & EXPERTISE: Add at least 5 key skills - and then your connections can endorse you for the things you're best at.

HONORS & AWARDS: If you earned a prize in or out of school, don't be shy. Let the world know about it!

COURSES: List the classes that show off the skills and interests you're most excited about.

PROJECTS: Whether you led a team assignment in school or built an app on your own, talk about what you did and how you did it.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Ask managers, professors, or classmates who've worked with you closely to write a recommendation. This gives extra credibility to your strengths and skills.

Education

University of California, Berkeley
Economics, B.A.
2010 – 2014 (expected)

Volunteer Experience & Causes

Big Buddy
Skyline High School
September 2012 – May 2013 (9 months) | Education

Mentored an Oakland high school student through the college application process, helping him get into his dream school.

Skills & Expertise

Most endorsed for...

12	Economics
11	Start-ups
10	Due Diligence
10	Venture Capital
10	Management
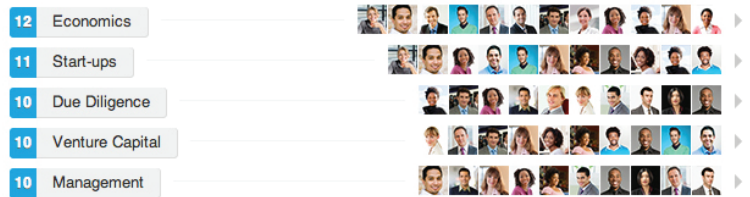
Honors & Awards

The Achievement Award Program
UC Berkeley

Four-year scholarship awarded to community-minded students with a proven track record of academic success.

Courses

University of California, Berkeley

- Microeconomic Theory (Econ 101A)
- International Monetary Economics (182)
- Public Economics (230A)

Projects

Venture Capital Financing in India
May 2013

For our international Monetary Economics course, Paul and I decided to study the emerging venture capital industry in India. By looking at data from the World Bank, we were able to understand the challenges and opportunities facing this nascent sector. And we developed a series of recommendations for overcoming these challenges, which we delivered to our professor in a final term paper.

5 team members

David Xiao
Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Anal...

Paul Smith
Student at UC Berkeley

Recommendations   Received (2) ▾

Venture Capital Internship
Berkeley Ventures

Tim Lee
Partner

" David spent the summer with us at Berkeley Ventures and made an immediate impact. He showed us a brand new technique for firm analysis that he had just learned in school and came through with recommendations that opened our eyes to a unique set of opportunities.

We don't normally hire undergrads as interns but after working with David, we will again!

November 13, 2013, Tim managed

Want more LinkedIn tips for students? Check out **students.linkedin.com**

Linked in

LINKEDIN HEADLINE AND SUMMARY WORKSHEET

Did you know? Recruiters using LinkedIn use keywords and phrases found in your headline and summary sections of your profile to find potential employees -- that's why it's so important to be thoughtful and intentional about these two sections in particular if you're wanting to use LinkedIn as an avenue for finding future careers. Update your headline and summary often to keep them fresh. Complete the worksheet below to help you craft these sections:

Sample Headlines:

Aspiring Java Software Developer | Seeking Entry-Level Programming Position | Experience with JavaScript and Python

English Major Seeking Editorial or Technical Writing Internship

Now you try...

_____

_____

Writing Your Summary

If you haven't already, complete the values, skills, and interests worksheets towards the beginning of this career guide to help you identify key words and phrases you want to use in your Summary section. Use the following as a resource in helping you craft this section:

1. Think about your goal, value, or mission statement that describes who you are, not just a job title or your major. (Example: I value creativity, collaboration, and open communication in the workplace).

_____

_____

2. Write a statement about what you have accomplished in your academic or personal life (Example: Over the last three years as Recruitment Chair of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity, I have used my creativity and collaboration skills to increase membership by more than 25 percent.)

_____

_____

3. State what you are looking for at this moment. What are your current goals? (Example: I am searching for opportunities to work with employers who also value creativity, collaboration, and open communication within business management)

_____

_____

4. Now put what you have together in a format that makes logical sense. You will likely need to write additional sentences to connect the points together.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Using LinkedIn for Job Searching

In 2019, LinkedIn had more than 645 million users, more than 30 million companies, and more than 20 million active job postings. It truly is a powerful networking tool for the 21st century, but it isn't enough to simply have a LinkedIn profile; you must actively use LinkedIn to reap its benefits. Check out how you can effectively use LinkedIn in your job search:

1 **Expand Your Network.** You can search LinkedIn for other WCU alumni; specific people including your former classmates, professors, former supervisors, just about anyone!

Search WCU's alumni network:
1. In the Search bar at the top, type in Western Carolina University.
2. Click on the Western Carolina University Alumni group page.
3. Click "See All" located on the right-hand side of the screen.
4. Search by name, position title, or industry to filter WCU alumni.

Search and follow industry-related group pages:
1. In the search bar, type in your career field and click on "in Groups."
2. Find several groups which sound interesting to you.
3. Click "Follow" to stay up-to-date on posts from selected groups.

Search and follow specific employers:
1. If you know you want to work for a specific company, search for them in the search bar.
2. Click "Follow" and browse their employer page.
3. Check out profiles of those currently employed as well as any open jobs they have listed.

2 **Maintain and Develop Your Connections.** Once you have expanded your network, maintain and develop your connections by:

Posting relevant information. Share or create posts with timely information related to your career field. Just like any other social media platform, your connections will be able to comment and share your posts with their connections.

Paying attention to your notifications. LinkedIn will notify you if anyone is celebrating a work anniversary or if someone has been promoted or has changed companies. Stay connected by sending them messages when you receive such notifications.

Endorsing others or asking for endorsements. You can request recommendations from former professors, supervisors, co-workers, etc. to endorse the skill sets you have listed, which builds your credibility.

3 **Search for Jobs and Other Opportunities.** LinkedIn makes it easy to search for and apply using your LinkedIn profile as part of your job application (another reason your LinkedIn profile is important!)

Use the filters. Using filters such as School, Location, Date Posted, Experience Level, etc. can help you identify appropriate opportunities.

Turn on Career Interests. Located on your dashboard, turn this function on to let recruiters know you are open to new opportunities.

Top 10 Tips for Creatin

Figure Out Who You Are and How You Want to Present Yourself
Assess your strengths and weaknesses, where you want to go in the future, and the steps you need to take to reach your professional goals. What are your motivations and interests? What characteristics do you wish to emphasize and continue practicing in your career? Who do you want to connect with through your experiences and skills? These are some questions that you will want to answer to optimize your personal brand.

1

Research Your Desired Industry
What market do you wish to join? Researching industry expectations, involvement, and skills requirements can help you decide what strengths, expertise, and experiences you want to advertise through your personal brand. If your goal is to become a web design and content developer, you might create a webpage or blog that showcases and discusses your design and blogging ability.

2

Have a Focused, Engaging Message
What do you stand for? What values do you embrace and how do you want to express these values, goals, and motivations? By creating a concise, engaging message that highlights what you find important and wish to contribute to the industry; you can advertise your brand more efficiently and better ensure that you gain your desired audience.

3

Maintain Consistency Throughout
As your brand speaks to who you are and where you wish to be, you will want to keep your goals and message clear and consistent. Once you begin using your online presence to promote your unique skills and experiences, make sure to try not to change your message often. Having many differing messages and profiles can cause potential employers and connections to perceive you as unreliable or inexperienced.

4

Live Your Brand
Promoting and publishing information that you are truly interested in makes it much easier to stay active with your brand and online presence. If you are interested in becoming a marketing manager in the sports industry, for example, stay informed on athlete and industry news, practice writing content discussing changes and advertising strategies, and remain involved in the industry.

5

6

Project a Positive Attitude and Community

With the possibility of employers and co-workers viewing your online activity, refrain from posting or advertising negative or offensive content about your current occupation, employers, co-workers, or habits. Hiring committees may use your online attitude and posts to determine your character and negative content could prevent you from reaching intended goals, positions, and audiences.

7

Stay Up to Date

Whatever sites and sources you use to publish your personal brand, make sure to remain active and current. Changes in employment status, location, goals, and life statuses are all examples of information that may change your occupational trajectory and life goals, so you will want to update this information to keep your brand current and authentic. Post relevant and interesting content to show investment in your market and sustain connections within your growing network.

8

Grow Your Online Presence

Creating and maintaining a LinkedIn profile, personal website or blog, online portfolio, and Twitter account are some ways that you can establish and grow your online presence and network. Using professional online connections can increase the publicity of your personal brand and show a wider audience your qualifications, interests, and goals.

9

Reinvent as You Experience

It is increasingly common for people's occupational goals, interests, and personal messages to change throughout their lifetimes. As you work and gain experience, you may change the message and presence you wish to advertise. By updating your profiles, blogs, and connections; you can reinvent and add to the messages and activity you publicize to future employers and companies. Do not be afraid to slowly change your brand — just make sure to stay honest and consistent with who you are as a professional.

10

Let Your Personality Show

Finally, don't be afraid to show your personality through your personal branding. At the end of the day, employers want to get to know *you*.

INTERVIEWING &
JOB OFFERS

So you have an interview scheduled (congrats!) -- Now you should focus your efforts on preparing for that interview and any potential job offers. Use these strategies to effectively market yourself and be informed on fair job offers.

What to wear *to an interview*

The interview itself is not the only thing that can be nerve-wracking and stressful. In this article, we will briefly go over the do's and don'ts of interview attire, and what clothing items are best for certain types of interviews. **NOTE:** Be sure to research the employer ahead of time to understand attire expectations. When in doubt, ask the interviewer or human resource professional ahead of time.

Button-Up Shirts

When relaxed and your arms down at your side, the shirt sleeve should come down to the base of your wrist where your arm meets your hand. The collar should not be too loose or too tight, but should lightly hug the shape of your neck, allowing you to move your head freely and comfortably. Finally, choose tops that are either a solid color or have a subtle pattern. Avoid tops which are too bold or too bright.

Blouses/Looser Fitting Tops

A blouse or other loose-fitting shirt should fit loose enough to where it does not form to your body, but should not be baggy. The length should come down to the middle part of your hip to allow for movement. The collar should be scooped or rounded. It is best to avoid V-neck style blouses and other loose-fitting tops. If you choose to wear short-sleeved or no-sleeved blouses, we also recommend wearing a blazer or suit jacket. Finally, choose tops that are either a solid color or have a subtle pattern. Avoid tops which are too bold or too bright.

Suit Jacket/ Blazer

If you choose to wear a blazer or suit jacket, be sure the length is approximately three inches below your hip line. Also, the length of the sleeves should come down to the wrist while still allowing for the undershirt to be seen. When buttoning your blazer or suit jacket, it should be buttoned when standing and unbuttoned when sitting. Your suit jacket or blazer should also only have two or three buttons, only buttoning the top button when necessary.

Dress Pants

You should never wear denim jeans to an interview. Khaki pants are also considered too casual for a professional interview. We recommend **gray, black, or navy blue** dress pants. **NOTE:** They should fit snug around your waist with enough room to wear a belt and/or tuck in a shirt if the outfit calls for it. A good way to determine if your pant waist fits correctly is to use the two-finger rule. Take your index and middle finger and attempt to put them down the side of the pants at the waist. If your fingers move too freely, you may need a belt or better fitting pants. If you struggle to wiggle your fingers in your waistline, your pants may be too tight. Your index and middle finger should be able to move freely with a light snug from your waistline.

Dress or Skirt

If you choose to wear a dress or a skirt style clothing item, be sure that it is has a length that reaches at least the middle of your knee cap. This length will allow for movement when you are sitting down. A dress of skirt should be free flowing, not be body-forming or tight.

Shoes

No matter if you wear heels or dress shoes, your shoes should follow some of these simple guidelines. For heel-styled shoes, the heel should be no taller than approximately three inches. The heels should also be a neutral color and should not have any overzealous designs on them. Dress shoes should also not have any overly wild design printed or stitched on them and should be polished.

Ties and Bow ties

Whether you choose to wear a traditional tie or a bow tie, make sure you spend time practicing tying your tie a few days before your interview. It is acceptable to tie your knot the night before and loosen it enough that you can slip it on and off your neck with ease. The width of your traditional tie should be no wider than the length of your pinky finger, or approximately three (3) inches.

Jewelry and Watches

When choosing to wear jewelry for an interview, it is best to keep it simple. For rings, a small band or wedding ring is the best option. Large and bulky rings can be distracting to both you and the interviewer. For necklaces, a simple single-color necklace is recommended. Try to avoid large, multi-colored, heavy necklaces. A professional watch or single bracelet is appropriate. Too many bracelets can also be a potential distraction (ex. Noisy, too flashy, etc.). When choosing earrings, studs, dangle earrings, or small hoops are the best option.

Perfume and Cologne

A pleasant scent may seem like a good choice for an interview. However, it is best to avoid any type of additional fragrances to an interview as the interviewer(s) may not find it pleasing. If you choose to wear an additional fragrance, be sure that it is light to the nose and use no more than one.

Makeup and Fingernails

Like your smile, your hands are one of the first things people notice when you first meet. Always make sure your fingernails are short and neat. If you decide to use nail polish, stick with a neutral color. For makeup, choose natural tones and colors. You should also skip the false eyelashes and go for a non-clumping mascara. Natural appearing lip gloss is always a good choice.

Tattoos and Piercings

Although tattoos and piercings are becoming more accepted in the workplace, we advise that you cover your tattoos for the interview, if at all possible. Piercings that are not on your ears should also be removed until your interview is over.

A note about the use of color:

As tempting as it may be to wear your brightest color or multi-colored outfit, stick to neutral colors. The color of your clothes should not distract from the interview itself. Consider black, brown, white, gray, and dark navy blue. Furthermore, whatever you decide to wear, it is best to avoid loud patterns or designs. Solid colors are best, but you can also consider simple patterns such as narrow stripes, polka dots, or floral prints.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

How you prepare for an interview will largely depend on the type of interview itself. Most employers will give you information on the type of interview to expect, but if they don't, be sure to ask ahead of time so that you can be as prepared as possible. Check out some of the more common type of interviews and suggestions for how to prepare.

Screening Interview

A screening interview, also called an introductory interview, helps employers evaluate your qualifications and interest in the position. These interviews are usually short, typically between 15 and 30 minutes, and are normally conducted via phone or video call. You should be prepared to ask questions related to your application materials and interest in the position. You should also be ready to ask questions about the position and company.

One-on-One

In a one-on-one interview, a company invites you to meet with a single representative from the company. One-on-one interviews are common in entry-level positions; you might interview for multiple one-on-one's, or you may just get a single interview. Be prepared for classic interview questions such as "Tell me about yourself," "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" and "How have you handled conflict in the workplace?"

Panel

Panel-style interviews typically include 3 to 7 company representatives and are conducted so multiple people from various departments with whom you could be working can meet you and ask you questions. These other departments might be areas like marketing, customer service, human resources, etc. Panel interviews are usually designed to introduce you to multiple areas within the company and learn how they all work together. Be prepared to answer in-depth questions about your experience and interest working with the employer.

Second/Third Interviews

These interviews are typically for intermediate-level positions, although some entry-level positions could require multi-level interviews as well. If you snag a second or third interview, then you have passed the first round of questions (Congrats!) and the employer is wanting to know more about you. Be prepared for very specific questions related to the position, especially in answering situational and scenario-based questions. Interviewers might also ask what you may be looking for salary wise, so make sure you do your homework on a fair salary just in case.

Video Interview

Video interviews have become the norm since the COVID-19 pandemic and should be treated the same as an in-person interview (including what to wear) with certain exceptions (see the box below for additional tips). Be prepared to answer introductory interview questions. Additionally, it is often difficult to connect with others through video, but smiling and being attentive are some ways you can show you are interested in speaking with them.

Lunch/Dinner Interview

A lunch/dinner interview should be treated as a normal interview in the way you decide to dress and the way you answer interview questions. Usually the meal is paid for by the interviewer, so it is important to be cognizant of what you are ordering (i.e. not ordering expensive items but also not ordering a small appetizer). It is also important to order something that is less likely to make a mess (ordering spaghetti, for example, is something you may want to avoid). **NOTE:** We discourage candidates from ordering alcohol during a lunch or dinner interview, even if others are drinking. If you feel it is appropriate to drink given the context of the situation, then limit yourself to one beverage.

AI Interview

If you are ever asked to record your answers and upload the video file to a system, you can bet they're using AI (artificial intelligence) technology. In the same way an automatic tracking system (ATS) reviews your resume for key words or phrases, AI interview software will do the same. Big Interview, an online CCPD resource, has a specific module for how to handle AI interviews.

How to Look Good on *Zoom*

You don't need expensive professional equipment to make yourself look good on video teleconferencing platforms. Follow these three simple tips to make yourself look your best on platforms like Zoom:

1 Elevate your device.
Elevate your web camera so that it is slightly above eye level, a flattering look on everyone. Additionally, move your Zoom window as close to the top of your device where your camera is located as much as possible. This makes it appear as though you are looking at the person in the eye on the other end without having to look into a camera.

2 Think about your light source.
Whenever possible, position your seat so that you are facing a window. Natural daylight is a flattering light source and will lighten your face well. Never sit with your back to a window, as it will create a silhouette and the viewer won't be able to see your face. If window light is not possible, place a lamp directly in front of you so that the light brightens your face a bit.

3 Pay attention to your surroundings.
Remove any distracting or inappropriate elements from your wall or background ahead of time. You can't go wrong with a plain background, but a nice bookshelf or a cozy corner in your home can highlight your personality and tastes. You'll also want to use a quiet space, if at all possible. Students and alumni may reserve an interview room at the CCPD by calling 828-227-7133.

Common Interview Questions

Here are a few questions you can use to prepare for an interview and suggestions for formulating your responses. It is important to think about bullet points when answering an interview question rather than memorizing your responses. This way, your answer does not sound too canned.

Tell me about yourself.
This question is a great time to use your 30-second commercial (see page 66) to describe yourself. You can also share a little bit about your personal interests at this time and what motivates you. Sometimes a few personal facts can make the interview more memorable. Practice this one several times out loud with friends or family.

For example, "I am a senior graduating with a degree in communications and I first learned I enjoyed working in social media marketing when I was helping to market events for student government on campus. I taught myself how to use Adobe to format my social media posts and create engaging content. I have helped a few family friends market their businesses by teaching them how and when to post on social media. I also enjoy biking and getting outside, which helps me stay focused on my schoolwork."

Now you try...

Remember, when preparing for interview questions, you want to think about bulleted items to talk about so that your answers don't sound too rehearsed. Think about bullet points you would want to share with an interviewer:

_____

_____

_____

PSST...

When you answer a question about yourself, think about how to tailor your answer to what the company would be most interested in hearing. Try to keep more personal information to yourself unless it is absolutely relevant to the job and focus on the aspects of yourself that you feel fit in best with that company. Think about how you choose to disclose information and how much information you want to give.

Why should we hire you?
This is a great time to pitch why you are a good fit for both the company and the role. Make your response clear and concise. Try not to restate your cover letter word for word. Pick one or two reasons you feel like you are a good fit for the job and then the company. Talk about ways your experience aligns with the job description and ways you align with the company values.

Why do you want to work for our company?
Make sure you explain specifically what you like about this company and do your research. Read LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Indeed.com, research the news about the company and read the company website, especially their About Us page and their mission or vision statements. Share specific information about why you can imagine yourself working for this company.

What do you consider to be one of your greatest achievements?
Talk about something that was somewhat challenging for you. Maybe speak to how getting into college was an accomplishment, making choir auditions, or getting a leadership role in a club on campus. Make sure when you answer this question, you explain why this accomplishment was important to you. For this question, it is okay to get a little bit personal. For example, maybe you are the first generation in your family to go to college.

Describe a difficult work or project and how you overcame it.
This is a great chance to use the STAR method. Talk about a task that you were faced in a group project, in an internship, or in a club and discuss the planning that went in to solving this issue. The employer is testing your critical thinking and problem-solving skills so they want to know 1) can you determine the problem 2) can you brainstorm solutions 3) can you act on those solutions. The employer will also be watching in this question to see if you are team player, so make sure (if you worked with a team) that you describe how you were able to collaborate and listen to others.

What are your strengths / weaknesses?
These questions are asked less by the employers as a lot of recruiters try to determine the answer to this question through situational questions and ask for specific examples of how candidates have dealt with different challenges. When you discuss your strengths, discuss the ones that align with the job. When you are asked about your greatest weakness pick a less great weakness. You do not want to share something that you are working on to show you have the ability to grow.

For example, "My weakness has been public speaking; however, I am challenging myself to overcome those fear through offering to present group projects and joining organizations on campus that require group presentations."

Using the **STAR** Method

If you are answering a question that involves describing a specific situation or "tell me about a time" prompt, try using the STAR method (below) to answer it.

S - Situation:
Talk about the event or challenge you navigated. Provide context or background information to the problem.

T - Task:
Explain the task at hand that you had to complete or figure out.

A - Action:
Describe the specific actions you took to complete the task and with whom you collaborated.

R - Result:
Describe the results of your effort and describe your impact.

Interviewing Mishaps:
Things to Avoid During an Interview

We hear a lot about things that we should do in an interview, but what about the "do nots" of an interview? Here are a few tips on things that you should avoid when interviewing.

- **Do not arrive late.** Aim to save a few extra minutes to find the building and the right room for the interview. Arrive at the location between 10 and 15 minutes before the interview, and make sure you have a phone number to reach out to if you have trouble finding the location. If you are doing a video interview, give yourself extra time to test the technology and check your lighting.

- **Do not let your phone or watch ping.** Turn your cell on airplane mode or do not disturb before you go into the interview to avoid getting updates. You do not want your phone to vibrate during the whole interview. Also disable texts/notifications if you have a fitness watch or digital watch. And under no circumstances should you look at your watch for the time while the interviewer is speaking.

- **Try to avoid closed body language.** You do not want to be jumping out of your chair, but you also do not want to have your arms folded across your chest. Sit with open and engaged posture and slightly lean towards your interviewer to show you are engaged in the conversation.

- **Do not show lack of interest.** Try to avoid saying something like, "I'll do whatever or I'm okay with any job here." A hiring manager wants to know someone has specific passions or interests and is not ambivalent about a job. If you are at the point where you just need a job, that is okay. Just do not communicate that through your tone or by showing lack of interest! Make sure you find things you are interested in about the company online because an interviewer can quickly tell if someone is A. Uninterested or B. Has not done any research about the company. Those two things usually prevent the interviewee from making it to the next stage.

- **Do not think too far ahead about what you are going to say.** If you are constantly thinking of what

you want to say next, chances are it will be hard for you to pay attention to the interviewer in the moment. Make sure you listen to your interviewer actively and consider paraphrasing some information back, when appropriate, to show that you have heard them.

- **Avoid asking questions that you should have Googled.** It sounds simple, but it is important to try to ask questions that cannot be determined through an online search. Strong questions often show interest in the future of the company or the future of the role. (For a list of suggested questions for the interviewer, see the colored box below)
- **Do not complain or talk poorly about your last job/boss.** A recruiter or interviewer can tell when you likely did not get along with someone, but it is all about how you communicate that. Keep it professional 100% of the time. You can say you did not feel the company culture was the best fit for you, but you cannot say I did not like working for my boss or I did not like working for that company. That is a definite interview NO.
- **Avoid asking about things unrelated to the job description initially.** In the first five minutes of the interview, you do not want to ask when the work happy hours are or how much vacation the company is allotted.
- **Try not to order messy food.** If you are taken out to lunch order something that is easy to eat that will not make a mess. Perhaps avoid something with a lot of strong smells. You can bring a tooth brush for a bathroom break if you need or some floss for emergencies. Also, since employers typically pay for the meal during a lunch or dinner interview, wait for others to order first and order something of similar value. For example, if everyone orders a sandwich, do not order the $25 steak.

Reach out to the CCPD for more help interviewing via a mock interview or use Big Interview videos on our website, careers.wcu.edu.

Questions to Ask the Interviewer(s)

Interviewers almost always end the interview with an invitation to ask your own questions. **Always** bring 2 to 3 questions to ask at the end of the interview! This shows you are interested in the position and the company. As mentioned above, do not ask questions you could have found online. Additionally, never ask about salary expectations during the interview; save those questions for when you are extended a job offer and at the negotiation stage of the job search process (See Negotiating Job Offers on page ___). Instead, focus your questions on work culture, community engagement, or specific details about the job expectations. The following are general questions you can ask during an interview, but feel free to brainstorm additional questions as it might pertain to your specific career field.

1. What are some of the reasons you like working at this company?
2. How would you describe the work environment here?
3. What are the growth opportunities for this role?
4. What are some challenges you expect someone to face in this role?
5. What is the first thing you will want someone to address coming into this role?
6. What would a typical day look like in this role?
7. Where do you see the company headed in the next five years?
8. Are there any questions or concerns you have around my candidacy for this role?
9. What would a 30, 60, 90 day plan look like for someone in this role?
10. What does on-boarding a new employee typically look like at your organization?

CALCULATING SALARY NEEDS ACTIVITY

Researching salaries in your field is an important part of the career/ major exploration process; but have you ever calculated how much you need to make to lead the life you desire? Use this worksheet to help you estimate how much you'll need to make using current average costs of popular categories. Feel free to add additional categories as needed.

Anticipated location: _____ **# of people in household:** _____

Housing:

To determine the average cost of rent in an area, visit www.zillow.com and enter in your anticipated location. Using their filter tools, select the type of apartment or house you would like to rent (# of bedrooms, bathrooms, square feet, etc.). Look at a few of the listings estimate how much monthly prices are in your desired area, then multiply by 12 months.

Rent per month: $ _____ **X 12 months = $** _____

Average Utilities:

Phone: $70 x 12 months = $840 (Average phone bill per month)
Internet: $65 x 12 months = $780 (Average Internet bill per month)
Electricity: $110 x 12 months = $1,320 (Average monthly rate)
Water: $70 x 12 months = $840 (Average water bill for family of four)

Utilities per month: $ _____ **X 12 months = $** _____

Transportation:

Depending on where you intend to live, you may need to purchase a car; In some cities, you also have to pay to park your car or, you might need to invest in an annual bus pass, subway pass, train pass, etc. To calculate the average monthly car payment, visit www.carvana.com. You may also elect to include average costs of the below items. You pick and choose what to include as it makes sense for the location.

Car payment per month: $ _____ X 12 months = $ _____
Average monthly car insurance payment: $185 x 12 = $2,220
Average monthly cost of gas: $150 x 12 months = $1,800
Average monthly car maintenance fees: $40 x 12 months = $480
Average monthly bus pass: $60 x 12 months = $720
Average monthly subway pass: $125 x 12 months = $1,500
Average monthly train pass: $100 x 12 months = $1,200

Transportation per month (including car payment, if applicable): $ _____ X 12 months = $ _____

Food/ Groceries:

The average cost of groceries (including food, hygiene items, etc.) for one person is $200 per month; Add $50 per person in your household. Remember, these are items you need to sustain yourself from one day to the next; this does not include going out to eat.

Food/ Groceries per month: $ _____ X 12 months = $ _____

Clothing:

The average person in the U.S. spends about $125 per month on clothes; but remember, this category is reserved for basic needs clothes. You decide based on the average per month how much you think you'll spend on clothes for items you need.

Clothing per month: $ _____ X 12 months = $ _____

Debt Repayment:

How much debt you have depends on the types of loans and amounts you take out; debts include student loans, credit card loans, or personal loans from family and friends. You are not calculating car loans or mortgages in this category.

Average student loans (4-year degree): $300 x 12 months = $3,600
Average credit card payments: $150 x 12 months = $1,800

Debt Repayment per month: $ _____ X 12 months = $ _____

The rest of these items are things that might make your lives more entertaining; these are things you may want but don't necessarily need. This is not an exhaustive list. People spend their income in drastically different ways, but this gives you a general sense of what people send their money on. Feel free to adjust and "spend" as you see fit:

Entertainment:
Netflix: $14 x 12 months = $168
Hulu: $13 x 12 months = $156
Amazon Prime: $13 x 12 months = $156 (or $120 annual fee)
Disney+: $8 x 12 = $96
Average cost of cable: $75 x 12 = $900
Going out to eat: (Average is $250 per month, or $3,0000 annually): _____ x 12 months = _____
"Fun" money (e.g. money to have to spend of yourself): _____ x 12 months = _____
        Entertainment per month: $ _____ X 12 months = _____

Self Care:
Average cost of gym membership: $40 x 12 = $480
Average cost of massages: 150 x 12 = $1,800
Average cost of counseling (without insurance): 150 x 12 = $1,800
Other: _____ x 12 months = _____
        Self care per month: $ _____ X 12 months = _____

Vacation:
The average cost of a modest vacation in the U.S. is $1,500 per person
        Vacation total: $ _____

Childcare:
The average cost of childcare in the Southeast U.S. for one child is $725 per month or $8,700 per year
        Childcare total: $ _____ X 12 months = _____

Savings and Charitable gifts:
In general, people save about 10% of their net income in savings and give 10% to charitable causes; however, for this exercise, you determine the amount per month you want to put back into savings/ charitable gifts, if any.
        Savings per month: _____ X 12 months = _____
        Charitable gifts per month: _____ X 12 months = $ _____

Annual Costs (Net Income Needs):
Add the annual costs of each category to estimate your NET income needs (or your "take-home" pay).

Housing: $ _____   Entertainment: $ _____
Utilities: $ _____   Self Care: $ _____
Transportation: $ _____   Vacation: $ _____
Food/ Groceries:$ _____   Childcare: $ _____
Clothing: $ _____   Savings: $ _____
Debt Repayment: $ _____   Charitable Gifts $ _____
        Grand Total: $ _____

Calculating Gross Income
Net income is the income you need to have after taxes, retirement, etc. are taken out (e.g. "take-home" pay).
Gross income is the income you need on top of your net income before taxes, retirement, etc. are calculated (e.g. the salary listed on job ads are gross income figures). The average person in the U.S. spends approximately 28% of gross income on federal, state, and county income taxes, Social Security requirements, personal healthcare, and retirement plans. This percentage will change depending on where you live and the costs of your individual healthcare plans and retirement goals. For now, we will use the average 28% rule.
        NET Income: _____ X 0.28 = _____ + NET Income: _____ = _____ (Gross income)

Evaluating Multiple JOB OFFERS

So you've applied, interviewed (maybe more than once for the same position), and now you have more than one job offer to consider (congratulations!). Which job and which offer should you accept? No one can tell you that, of course, but here are some things to consider and prioritize depending on what is more important to you. Remember, a job offer is more than just a salary!

Salary

Salary is among one of the most important things to consider when evaluating one or more job offers, as your starting salary is often the basis for any pay raises you receive within a company. Your initial salary is also often asked about when searching for other positions outside of the company you're currently working for. To understand a fair salary, you need to do some research: the average pay for someone with your level of experience and education or what competitor employers pay for similar positions.

Do this first....

Visit websites such as Salary.com, onetonline.org, LinkedIn, or indeed.com. Do some research into what other employers pay for similar positions with similar experience and education and in similar locations. Remember, when researching fair salaries for positions, you need to go to more than one resource, so try it out with the following four websites:

1. Salary.com: Visit www.salary.com and under What Am I Worth?, type in the position title and location for which you are evaluating. Salary.com will give you a salary range with an estimated salary depending on your education level, years of experience, etc.

Position Title: _____   Salary range using Salary.com: _____

2. Onetonline.org: Visit www.onetonline.org and type in the position title for which you have applied. Click on the most relevant link listed and scroll towards the bottom of the page. Under **Wages and Employment Trends,** O*Net will give nationwide averages based off data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. You can search by state or by zip code to get more accurate information for the region you're targeting.

Position Title/ Group: _____   Salary range using O*Net: _____

3. LinkedIn.com: Visit www.linkedin.com/salary and enter in the position title and location.

Position Title: _____   Salary range using LinkedIn: _____

4. Indeed.com: Visit www.indeed.com and click on **Find Salaries** in the top tool bar. Enter in the position and location information. NOTE: You can also search for the company(ies) for which you have applied on Indeed.com and review employee reviews, salary information, and other pertinent information. Glassdoor.com also has similar pieces of information.

Position Title: _____   Salary range using Indeed: _____

Once you have reviewed data from all four sites, compare and contrast. Are the salary ranges comparable to one another or do they vary? If the information you have pulled are all within $1,000 or so, you can assume the information is fairly reliable. Is/ Are the salary(ies) you have been offered comparable to your research?

Health and Life Insurance

When an employer extends a job offer to you, they'll likely go over their benefit package, which typically includes insurance benefits. Even under the Affordable Care Act, not every employer is required to provide health insurance. Pay attention to the type of health insurance offered (or not offered). Does the employer offer dental and vision as well? Do they offer disability and/or life insurance? And if so, how much are those policies worth? What insurance companies does the employer/s work with? Are they large insurance companies with an extensive network? What kind of co-pays (or cost you pay at the time of your visit) are you expected to pay when you visit the doctor? What additional expenses can you expect to pay out of pocket, even with health insurance? What type of insurance policies are most important to you? Some people feel they don't need vision insurance; so if that's the case, do you mind if an employer doesn't offer vision insurance? These considerations are going to differ from person to person, but the ability to have health and life insurance plans is a major consideration for most people.

Retirement Benefits and Planning

Believe it or not, you should be planning for retirement starting the day you begin your first full-time job. Does the employer offer some type of retirement planning benefit? Some employers will offer a 401-k, which is a company-sponsored account in which a percentage of your paycheck is designated to your 401-k account and the employer matches up to a certain percentage. For example, if an employer offers a 6% match to your 401-k, most employees will also give 6%. With the employers match, 12% of your salary is being put towards your retirement each month (but only 6% is deducted from your paychecks). Typically, 401-k plans are also linked with the stock market; so this choice, while popular, is also a bit riskier. You should consider other retirement options as well to diversify (or protect) your retirement from fluctuations in the sock market.

There are other types of retirement accounts as well. Some employers offer a pension plan, which guarantees benefits and income to its employees upon retirement for life. Employers who offer a pension plan will usually require employees work for the company for a period of time before becoming eligible for the program. Typically, pension plans are not linked to the stock market but can still be risky, depending on the financial security of the company. Ask about what each employer offers in terms of retirement planning and savings. We also encourage you to work with a financial planner once you have secured a full-time position. Your employer might also work with a financial planning office to offer you consultations free of charge.

Other Benefits

What other types of benefits does the employer offer? For example, does the employer offer sick days or PTO (Paid Time Off) days, and if so, how many days can you use each year? Do you have to work a certain period of time before you become eligible to take those days off? Do you have to work on holidays? What is the employer's policy on maternity or paternity leave, or any other kind of medical leave? Does the employer offer tuition reimbursement or help with tuition payments? Does the employer pay for any future degrees or professional development experiences like conferences you would be interested in participating? Does the employer help with relocation costs? Are they flexible on start dates? Do they offer help in finding temporary housing while you look for a permanent living situation in a new area? Are there any other perks to working for this employer? For example, some employers offer discounts to community-area businesses.

Once you have had a chance to go through each offer including salary, health and other insurance plans, retirement benefits, and other items, you'll need to decide what's a priority for you. Are you deciding between two different positions, and if so, is there a position you are just genuinely more interested in? Or is there a company that has a better reputation for treating its employees well? These are all decisions that only you can make.

Below are hypothetical job offers. Based off of what is most important to you and/or your family, which job offer would you take, assuming the positions and employers are similar in nature? Remember, there is no "right" answer. Each job may be compelling to you in different ways.

JOB OFFER A

- $52,000 salary
- $2,000 sign on bonus
- Basic health insurance
- No dental or vision insurance
- 10 days of vacation each year starting in January and MUST be used by December
- 10 days of sick leave, which rolls over into the new year if not used
- Paid federal holidays
- Work hours are typically 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, but weekend and evening work is also required during the company's peak work season. Working remotely is not an option.
- 30-minute commute from current address
- 50% tuition reimbursement
- No guaranteed professional development funds, but employees may apply for company scholarships to participate in professional development activities such as conferences and webinars.
- 6 weeks paid maternity leave; no paid paternity leave; must use sick leave for additional leave
- 401-k with 5% employer-matched contribution, which the employer will begin starting the first month you work; you have the option of cashing out your contributions at any time.

JOB OFFER B

- $47,000 salary
- $2,000 sign-on bonus
- Basic health insurance including dental and vision insurance
- 10 hours of vacation accrued each month; rolls over into next year if not used
- 8 hours of sick leave accrued each month, which rolls over into the new year if not used
- Paid federal holidays
- Work hours are typically 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. but employees have the option of adopting a more flexible schedule, provided they meet deadlines and attend synchronous meetings. Working from home could also be an option when necessary.
- 1 hour commute from current address; may need to consider moving
- No tuition reimbursement for degrees earned, but employees may take up to 3 collegiate classes per academic year towards additional degrees.
- Up to $2,000 toward professional development activities such as conferences and webinars
- 8 weeks paid maternity leave; 4 weeks paid paternity leave; must use accrued sick or vacation hours for additional leave
- Pension plan for retirement, but must work for the company for 20 years to be eligible for full lifetime benefits; employees may cash out their contributions to the pension plan at any time.

Which job offer would you choose and why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Quick Negotiating Tips

As mentioned before, your starting salary is among the most important salaries you'll ever have. Most merit-based or cost-of-living raises are based on your current salary. Plus, any other job you apply for will most likely ask for your current salary. In the book, *Women Don't Ask,* authors Linda Babcock and Sara Lashever, writes:

> *"One of the things I ask my students is: If you think of a $100,000 salary, and one person negotiates and gets $107,000, and the other doesn't—what's the cost of that? In a simple-minded way, some people say, "Is $7,000 really worth risking my reputation over?" And I agree, $7,000 may not be worth your reputation.*
>
> *But that's not the correct analysis, **because that $7,000 is compounded.** If you and your counterpart who negotiated are treated identically by the company—you are given the same raises and promotions—35 years later, you will have to work **eight more years** to be as wealthy as your counterpart at retirement."*

Did you know...

In a 2015 survey by the personal finance website, Nerdwallet:

38% of new grads negotiate salary or other benefits?

—— **BUT YET** ——

80% of those who did negotiate were at least partially successful!

—— **WHAT'S MORE** ——

90% of employers stated they have never retracted an offer because a candidate wanted to negotiate.

Understanding a fair salary (see page 90 is just the beginning. In addition to these quick tips on negotiating salary (and other benefits! Remember, it's not always about the salary!), we highly recommend you check out the negotiating curriculum on Big Interview (wcu.biginterview.com).

1. Understand your walk-away point. Do a cost analysis on how much rent will be, costs of food, gas, and other necessary items (See activity on page 88). Calculate how much you *need* to make to understand how low you are willing to go.

2. Do your research. Research fair salary ranges for the job you want and for the area you want to live. Then take the average salary for your position and area and add anywhere from 5% to 10% (or more if you have more leverage than the average student). They will likely counter with something a bit lower, but most will settle for somewhere in between the two salary ranges. Even if you negotiate for $1,000 more, that's still $1,000 more than you had before.

3. Ask for your offer and listen intently. Your goal is to get what you want while simultaneously making the employer feel as though they're also getting what they want. Try to find common ground and use that to your advantage. *"My expectation is $X amount based on my qualifications, the scope of this position, and the salary research in this region I've conducted on similar roles at this level/ organization."*

4. Consider other items to negotiate. If negotiating salaries is absolutely off the table, what other items would you be willing to negotiate? Top negotiating items other than salary include a flexible schedule, additional time off, or flexibility in start dates. You can also request to be evaluated after a certain period of time and revisit the negotiation discussion. *"I appreciate your honesty in this negotiation process. Is there any way to negotiate other items such as vacation, or could I request an early evaluation and revisit this discussion within 6 months?"*

GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Thinking about graduate school? Hey, we can help with that, too! Read on to evaluate if and when you should apply for graduate school and learn about application materials.

Is **GRADUATE SCHOOL**
right for me?

This can be a daunting question for many people, with many factors to consider before making and committing to a decision. A graduate degree can mean the opportunity to earn higher pay, advance in your desired field, and gain specialized knowledge in your chosen subject. But there are several questions you should answer that may help you determine if graduate school is correct for you.

Do I need this degree to work in my desired field?
One of the first things to consider before applying for graduate school is whether this degree is required for your career goals or if a graduate degree would be beneficial to you in the long-run. This is a wonderful time to speak with professors, professionals in your field, and a career counselor to learn about the benefits of a graduate degree within your career field.

How long will it take me to complete my degree? Will I be a full or part-time student?
The time commitment for a graduate degree is steep. Will you be able to dedicate the time necessary to complete your degree? Would you be a full or part-time student? What works best for your educational needs and other aspects of your schedule? These are all things that need to be considered before attending graduate school, especially if you want to work while obtaining your graduate degree.

Can I afford this degree?
Graduate programs can be expensive, grants, loans, and graduate assistantships can help offset costs, but some people have to work full time while pursuing their graduate degree. Look at the overall financial cost of a graduate degree, and consider any other debt you may have either from your bachelor's degree or other items (credit card debt, mortgages, etc.) before enrolling.

Why am I interested in this degree or program?
What are your motivations for applying to or seeking out a graduate degree? Have you been in the workforce for several years and are hitting a wall? Do you need an advanced degree to continue on an upward path? Or are you not looking forward to graduating from your bachelor's and want to stay in school? Do you have a legitimate interest or passion for the field/profession the graduate degree is in? When applying for a graduate program, you should consider whether you need or are even interested in what you will be learning.

Am I ready to go back to school or continue school for several more years?
Graduate degrees are typically more rigorous and demanding than a Bachelor's, so one thing to consider is whether or not you're ready to go back to school and complete the schoolwork required, especially if you have been out of school for several years. While rigorous, graduate programs can be rewarding. Be sure you are able and willing to invest the time and effort to complete one.

Once you have considered all of the above questions and graduate school still seems to be the next proper step in your career and education, you should consider researching and applying to programs. If you answered no or are unsure of any of the answers to the above questions, considering talking to a career counselor at the CCPD for further guidance. You may reconsider attending graduate school later in your life. Regardless, this decision should be made with care and should fit your needs and best interests.

Is Graduate School Right for Me? Worksheet

Use the following worksheet to help you collect your thoughts on your motivations and interests in pursuing a graduate/ professional degree.

1. What are your motivations for considering graduate school?

2. What are your career goals?

3. How is graduate school beneficial to you?

4. What types of graduate degrees or programs are you thinking about pursuing?

5. How much time are you willing to commit to additional schooling? (e.g. are you willing to attend graduate school full-time? part-time? Do you need to graduate within a certain time frame?)

6. Do you want to go straight to graduate school from your undergraduate program or go to work first? Another option is to go to graduate school part-time and work while you study.

7. What is most important to you when choosing a program? (e.g. location, finances, modality, admission requirements, etc.)

8. What are some barriers/ challenges you may encounter?

9. Who will support you in this process/ what resources will you use to overcome these barriers/ challenges?

Potential Benefits	Potential Costs

Finding *graduate school* programs

Once you have explored your motivations for continuing your education, the next step is to begin searching for appropriate programs which are aligned with your goals. Below are resources and ideas to help you navigate this process.

1

Peterson's: www.petersons.com

Similar to Princeton Review, Peterson's is a comprehensive education service company with ample resources. Although you can pay monthly for their app if you wish, their blog is free for you to search and is chock full of helpful advice and resources for scholarships, examination prep, etc. It's also a helpful tool to search for graduate programs. The main difference in Peterson's is that it also includes information on application deadlines and fees, and has a useful Scholarship search function.

Instructions:

1. Visit www.petersons.com and scroll to the very bottom of the main page.
2. Under School Search, click Grad Search.
3. Type in the name of a program that interests you and hit Enter.
4. Then further filter your results by using their filter toolbar, located on the left sidebar.
5. Click on the name of the school/ program to review the school's profile page, including application deadlines and application fees.

Be sure to also use their Scholarship tool, also located at the very bottom of the main page under Search School. Here, you can search for scholarships for graduate students by program name or by school.

2

Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com

The Princeton Review is a resource you can use to help you prepare for graduate/ professional school admissions. Although their resources have a cost associated, you can use their Explore Schools function for free. The benefit of searching with Princeton Review is that you can view each school's profile page with pertinent information including type of institution (public or private), average cost of tuition, number of part-time vs. full-time students enrolled, modality (in person or online), etc. You can also check out Princeton Review's Top Schools for your program of interest.

Instructions:

1. Visit www.princetonreview.com and click on the **Explore Schools** tab, located at the top tool bar
2. Click **Search Schools** and choose from the list of types of schools which makes sense for you (e.g. Med schools, Business schools, Grad schools, etc).
3. On the "Find your Dream School" page, click on the link that says "**or browse by location or program.**
4. Use their filter tools, located on the left sidebar. Choose your state, type in the name of the program that interests you, etc.
5. You can either view the school's profile page for preliminary information or save the school's information to come back to later.

3

O*Net Online: www.onetonline.org
O*Net is a free online database of career paths, job titles, education requirements, etc. It is an extremely useful online tool and one you can use to find graduate programs as well!
Instructions:

1. Visit www.onetonline.org and begin by entering a position title or career path into the search bar in the upper right corner.
2. A series of links will appear on the next screen. Choose a link which best describes your interests.
3. After reviewing some of the information listed (especially the Education and Salary sections), scroll to the **Training & Credentials** section, directly underneath the Job Zone section.
4. Select a state in which you would like to attend school and click the Go button.

O*Net will list every school with programs (undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral) within your chosen career, both public and private institutions. O*Net also reports on the most recent data on the number of graduates from each program. This information helps you gauge how large the cohorts are for each school.

Graduate school **FAQS**

1. How many programs should I apply to?: The number of programs you apply to is completely up to you. Some students only apply to 1 or 2 programs, while others apply to many more. The national average of the number of graduate schools students apply to in a non-medical school fields is **5 graduate schools.** The national average of **medical schools students apply to is 15.** Keep in mind that application fees quickly add up. **NOTE:** Most schools have scholarships available to help students with application fees for those who are eligible. Make sure you check out those opportunities as well.

2. When should I apply for graduate/ professional school? Most graduate/ professional school admission deadlines are between December and February. Depending on your own time table for attending graduate school, you might be applying in this time period your last year at WCU. However, be aware some schools, like medical schools, operate on a rolling admissions basis where the application period might open in late May and close by August; we would encourage you to apply as early as possible in the application cycle as admissions administrators will begin deciding on admittance sometimes as early as a few weeks into the cycle.

3. Do you have to have a 3.0 or higher to get into graduate/ professional school? Having a high GPA helps, but it isn't always required. If you have an undergraduate GPA lower than a 3.0, we recommend studying for and doing well on the GRE (or other required examination) to help alleviate an admission committee's concerns over your ability to handle graduate-level work. You may also consider re-taking some of the required courses for the graduate-level program that you didn't do as well as you had hoped.

4. What else can I do to be competitive in the graduate/ professional school process? High GPAs and GRE scores are only part of most graduate admission committees' consideration. They will also look at your personal statement, your resume/ CV, and consider any unique perspectives you may have to contribute to the classroom dialogue. We highly recommend that you do some type of hands-on opportunity to put you in the professional environment. These might include internships, job shadowing experiences, volunteer work, or part-time jobs. Use these experiences in your personal statement essay so that admission committees know that you are not only capable of successfully completing their program but have the motivation and desire to represent their program well.

General Application Guidelines

Resumes vs. CVs:
Most graduate schools will give you the option of uploading a resume or a CV. Depending on your undergraduate experiences, most likely you'll be uploading a resume. If you have done research, have taught classes (or tutored other students), or have been published, you would probably upload a CV instead. Additional distinctions between the two can be found on page 50. If you need help deciding which document to attach, feel free to make an appointment with a career counselor.

Personal Statements:
Each school will have distinctive instructions, from specific prompts to address to specific maximum word count or character limits and types of font to use. Make sure you pay attention to each school's instructions and follow them closely. If you are applying to schools which use nationwide application systems (for example, Physical Therapy students upload documents to Physical Therapy Centralized Application System, or PTCAS), usually you'll upload one resume or CV but can upload multiple personal statements for each school. Again, pay attention to the instructions given and ask questions if you are unsure of what to do.

If your school does not give a specific prompt or instructions, then they are wanting you to upload a general personal statement. Typically, these statements should be no more than 2 pages in length (either single- or double-spaced) and should include:
- Why you want to go into your career field (include specific experiences that have brought you to this point in your life. Think about part-time jobs, internships, job shadowing, or personal firsthand experiences)
- Your short- and long-term career goals
- Your motivations for continuing your education (this could be tied in with your career goals)
- Why you're interested in their program or school specifically

Letters of Recommendation
Most schools will ask for letters of recommendation from usually two to four professional references. Think about the influential people in your undergraduate career who know you well enough to speak to your work ethic, personal attributes and characteristics, or academic strengths. These references could be specific professors, academic advisors, counselors, supervisors, upper level administrators, etc. Be sure you pick references who are not related to you and make sure you give your references plenty of time (at least 4 weeks) to write letters for you. **Do not ask them at the last minute!**

After you have chosen your references, contact them ahead of time to ask if they will write a **positive** recommendation for you. If they agree, be sure to email them information on the graduate program(s) to which you are applying (including specific links) and include your professional resume and personal statement so that they have additional information to reference. You will also need to send them instructions on how to send or upload their letters as most schools have specific guidance on how they want to receive these letters. If possible, provide your references with the name(s) of the program director or selection committee so they know to whom they should address the letter. Also include the deadline to write and send in the letters and remind your references if they have not finished this step.

And finally, be sure to thank your references for taking time out of their busy schedules to write positive letters of recommendation for you. We often don't achieve our goals by ourselves and it's important to recognize the people in our lives who help us get to where we want to go.

Paws Catamount – Personal Statement
Master of Education, Higher Education Student Affairs, Paws University

Attending the NASPA Annual Conference during my sophomore year of college is where my journey in student affairs began. I was a Resident Assistant when I was given the opportunity from the Office of Residence Life to travel to South Florida for the NASPA annual conference. I attended the conference with no idea of what to expect or what I was going to get out of attending. Little did I know it would be the conference that would ultimately reveal the industry of work I wanted to pursue. My experiences as a Resident Assistant, an intern for Greek life, and a member of my fraternity's executive board all strengthened my passion for becoming an advisor and a mentor for students.

All of my experiences are what have driven me to earn a Master of Education in Higher Education Student Affairs at Paws University. I believe that this program will successfully prepare me for a career in student affairs by advancing my knowledge in student advising and the ability to connect with students on personal and professional levels. After researching multiple graduate programs, I believe that this program best connects my experience to the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in the field. I am especially interested in the hands-on and practical experiences afforded to graduate students in this program through two required internships as well as opportunities for full graduate assistantships. The focus on career development evident in this program is something I am very interested in pursuing.

If given the opportunity, I would want to further my experience in the university's housing, student activities, and Greek life departments. My short-term goal is to learn more about each of these areas and how each of them work together to create a holistic student experience. My past experiences and the knowledge I would gain would help me in my long-term goals of enhancing these programs for institutions I will serve in the future.

When I began my undergraduate journey, I did not expect that I would have gotten as involved as I did. As a reserved first-year student, I did not think I would hold multiple leadership positions in various departments across campus. However, during my first year, I took a work-study position in the school library working at the circulation desk and doing other small, office tasks. Towards the end of that year, I applied and was offered a Resident Assistant position for male residents. It was this leadership position that made me recognize my passion in assisting students.

During the same time, I became a founding member for my chapter of Kappa Sigma. After one semester, I took the opportunity to serve as the new member where I taught our new members about the history of Kappa Sigma. It was this same semester that I was also elected to my fraternity's executive board as the Grand Master of Ceremonies, where I oversaw multiple committees and assisted all members in becoming ritually proficient. Additionally, I applied and accepted a position for Secretary for the Interfraternity Council (IFC) beginning my junior year. Being an executive board member for my University's IFC, I gained more leadership skills that I brought back to my fraternity and my community.

It is through all of my experiences that I am confident I possess the characteristics and skills that are necessary for a career in higher education. Attending Paws University's higher education program will not only help me further my knowledge about student affairs but will assist me in putting those characteristics and skills into practice by successfully preparing me for my future as a leader in my field. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to the opportunity to meet with you in person.

Graduate School Application Tracker

Keep yourself organized during the graduate school application process by using this graduate school application tracker:

School/Program	Deadline to apply	Application fee	Required Pre-Reqs	Min. GPA requirement	Min. GRE Score	Interview dates	Notes (e.g. keep notes regarding admissions processes)

Graduate School Preparation Checklist

Center for Career and Professional Development | careers.wcu.edu | 828.227.7133

Feeling overwhelmed? The CCPD is here to help you with any of the below suggestions! Drop by the Career Studio between noon and 4 p.m. Monday-Friday or make an appointment with a counselor via your MyWCU!

RESEARCH

Typically, you should complete this phase within your first and second years of college.

☐ Research career paths and their educational requirements

☐ Consider if graduate school is for you and when you would ideally like to apply

☐ Use O*Net, Petersons.com or Princetonreview.com to begin a list of possible graduate school programs for your career path. Choose 5-10 programs

☐ Start an Excel spreadsheet to collect admission requirements including minimum GPA, GRE scores, Pre-requisite courses, application deadlines, interview requirements, letters of recommendation, etc.

☐ Based off your preferences and priorities, narrow your list down to the schools and programs you are excited about (NOTE: Medical students should consider 10-15 programs)

PREPARE

Typically, you should complete this phase within your third year of college, or in the summer after your third year.

☐ Write a draft of your resume and personal statement essay

☐ Visit the CCPD or WaLC for review of your resume and personal statement(s)

☐ Check out examprep.wcu.edu for other examination preparation materials

☐ Schedule your professional examination at testing.wcu.edu (for GRE, Praxis, TEAS, ACT, CLEP, DSSAT, or MAT only; please schedule all other professional examinations through the appropriate third-party resource such as the AAMC for MCAT)

☐ Touch base with your professional references and ask for a letter of recommendation (NOTE: Give at least 4 weeks' notice. You will need 2-3 references)
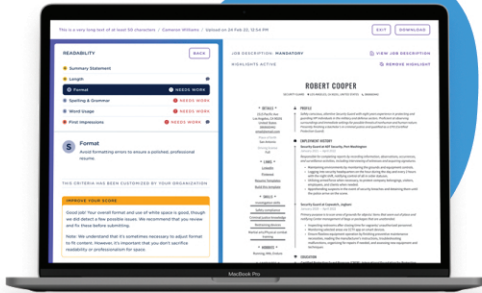
APPLY

Typically, you should apply the year/semester before you want to start graduate school.

☐ If applying to health-related programs, register using the appropriate Centralized Application System (e.g. PTCAS for physical therapy; DICAS for dietetic internships, or AMCAS for medical schools)

☐ For all other graduate school programs, create an account on each graduate school's application system

☐ Upload resume, personal statement, and letters of recommendation (NOTE: some systems will require your references to upload directly to their system)

☐ Pay attention to application fees, deadlines, and timelines.

☐ Prepare for graduate school interviews using CCPD resources, if applicable

TRANSITION

☐ Apply for scholarships, grants, and/or financial aid

☐ Search for student housing on- or off-campus

☐ Look for assistantships, fellowships, or part-time work to help you with your finances

☐ Get to know your cohort members and professors

☐ Keep on top of your reading and schoolwork. Graduate-level work is very different from your undergraduate experience

☐ Explore your new community

☐ Use your on-campus resources such as the career center, counseling center, or graduate school

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Level 1   Level 2   Level 3

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how can we
HELP?

CAREER & MAJOR EXPLORATION
RESUME & COVER LETTER REVIEW
INTERVIEW PREPARATION
JOB & INTERNSHIP SEARCH STRATEGIES
GRADUATE SCHOOL PREPARATION
STUDENT-EMPLOYER INTERACTIONS
ONE-ON-ONE & DROP-IN APPOINTMENTS
ONLINE CAREER SOFTWARE & RESOURCES

Make an appointment in Navigate via MyWCU or drop by the
Career Studio (Reid 150), 12 PM to 4 PM, Monday - Friday, no
appointment necessary!

*NOTE: Career/ major exploration and mock interview sessions require an appointment with a career counselor