

A large, light gray paw print graphic is centered on the page. The text 'Career Services' is written in a purple, cursive font across the middle of the paw print.

Career Services

**JOB SEARCH & INTERVIEW
GUIDE**

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McKendree University Career Services



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EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Before you embark on your first job search, be sure you are always getting experience on- and off-campus to make yourself marketable for this first job. The experience can be part-time work, internships, volunteerism, or roles in organizations. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, “Seventy-three percent of hiring decisions are relative to experience (work, followed by internships and volunteering).” Also keep in mind that with every experience, your network grows!

Part-time Work

On-campus: Check with Financial Aid to check your eligibility and openings for work study positions.

Off-Campus: Visit our website and click on “Job Opportunities” for a listing of current and continuous local openings. All experience counts!

Internships

Having an internship enables students with junior or senior status the opportunity to apply classroom theory and knowledge in a “real world” setting. Internships are available each term for academic credit and can be paid or unpaid. An internship can build valuable professional relationships that may play an important role in your future. Please visit Career Services for binders of various internship possibilities.

Volunteerism

Volunteering not only benefits the recipient, but benefits you as well. Volunteering gives you purpose, builds professional relationships, gives back to your community, and provides you the time to practice and use skills in your area of interest. The McKendree Center for Public Service sponsors weekly volunteer experiences in which any student can participate, as well as a list of local agencies in need of assistance. Also, the “Get Involved” packet, located in Career Services, contains a list of websites that provide potential volunteer opportunities nationwide.

Organizations

Come to Career Services to look through the “Get Involved” packet. This packet has national, local, and campus organizations divided by major with which you can get involved during your time at McKendree. It would be beneficial to hold leadership positions within the organization when possible.



BEGINNING A JOB SEARCH

1. Know the type of position, company, and location for which you are searching.
2. Get organized and make to-do lists. Keep records of where you search.
3. Arrange the time to search and stay on task. Spend at least 40 hours/week searching if you are unemployed and 2 hours/day if you are employed or in school full-time.
4. Utilize Career Services for campus interviews, career fairs, workshops, job postings, résumé/cover letter critiques, and mock interviews. Join our Facebook page for tips.
5. Network! Up to 80% of jobs are found via networking. See Page 7 for more information.
6. Identify & research companies (mission statements, goals, news, annual reports, etc.).
 - a. www.hoovers.com/free: Company descriptions, location, competitors, executive names, phone numbers, websites, and other related areas.
 - b. www.bizjournals.com: Job postings, lists of employers, and news stories on businesses in the local area. (Information also available in the *Book of Lists* in most public libraries. McKendree Career Services has a copy as well.)
 - c. www.acinet.org: Largest, highest-paying employers and declining employers, as well as career/labor market, education, and cultural/recreational information.
 - d. www.magicyellow.com: Online yellow pages (or you can use a phonebook).
 - e. www.newslinks.org/biznews.html: Find business newspapers, journals, and magazines organized by geographic location.
 - f. http://www.mckendree.edu/academics/library_infor_svcs.aspx: Research companies to find contact information, classifications, business descriptions, current news, yearly finances, executives, and key competitors. Click Database link → Lexis-Nexis Academic → Business Tab → Search for Company.
7. Find out about posted openings on:
 - a. Individual company websites.
 - b. College Central Network (CCN) through McKendree Career Services.
 - c. Job boards: monster.com, careerbuilder.com, indeed.com.
 - d. Local newspapers through <http://www.rileyguide.com/>
 - e. Free staffing agencies.
8. Prepare and tailor all materials needed to apply for each position: Cover letter, résumé, reference page, 30-second commercial, interview skills, interview attire, prepared questions to ask the employer, and thank you letters.

WEB RESOURCES FOR A JOB SEARCH

Many employers are advertising their job openings on job sites. The best search engines to use are ones that are of no cost to you. The following is a list of popular job databases and their addresses. Because the Internet is constantly changing, some websites may no longer exist.

For a variety of positions around the United States:

www.flipdog.com

www.indeed.com

www.monster.com

www.spherion.com

www.truecareers.com

www.mckendree.edu/careerservices

www.hippopie.com

For newspaper classified ads from around the United States:

www.careerbuilder.com

For articles, job information, and position openings:

www.jobweb.com

www.salary.com

www.bls.gov/oo

For job postings from companies that are site members:

www.us.jobs

For local job opportunities:

www.adclubstlouis.org

www.illinois.jobing.com

For jobs in other countries:

www.jobs.goabroad.com

For various federal government jobs throughout the United States:

www.federalgovernmentjobs.us

www.usajobs.gov

For K-12, community college, and university positions:

www.higheredjobs.com

www.academploy.com

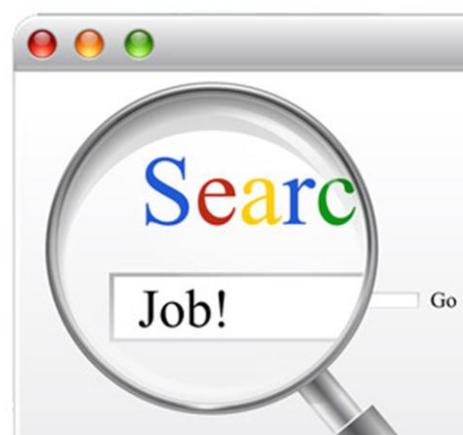
For information technology positions throughout the United States:

www.dice.com

www.odinjobs.com

For jobs in Marketing, Public Relations, Advertising, and Publishing:

www.talentzoo.com



COLLEGE CENTRAL NETWORK (CCN)



STUDENT & ALUMNI REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

All Students & Alumni are eligible to use the McKendree University online job board and alumni mentoring network after completing the following registration process through a site that has been specially designed for McKendree's Career Services office. Follow these simple steps:

- Go to your school's Career Center URL: **www.collegecentral.com/mckendree**.
- Select the **Student** or **Alumni** Icon, and read the instructions on the next page.
- Go to the **Register Now** link.
- Enter McKendree (if it's not already pre-filled), a **unique ID**, and a **Password** that you will remember. Confirm your password.
- Then **Continue Registration**.

REGISTRATION ENTRY

- Enter all demographic information. Fields with an asterisk (*) are required, including email. Answer questions about where you want to work, the kinds of jobs that interest you, and your education. Employers will search this information to choose appropriate candidates, so be as thorough as possible.
- Go to your homepage where you can access the Mentoring Network. Here you can search the database for alumni who are willing to mentor and assist you in many ways. You may also search for jobs without uploading a résumé.

JOB SEARCH

- From your homepage, select **Search for Opportunities Posted to My School**, enter criteria specific to the type of job you are seeking, and then **Begin Search**. You may also **Search for Jobs in CCN's Jobs Central**, our national jobs database.

RESUME ENTRY

- From your homepage, select **Upload a Résumé** under the **Manage My Résumé** section. You should have a résumé completed at this time to upload. Acceptable formats are listed. Browse for the file, select it, then **Upload Your Résumé**. If you do not upload a résumé, employers will not be able to contact you.

From now on you can now visit your school's site at www.collegecentral.com/mckendree or the CCN icon on the Career Services' home page to search for jobs and network with McKendree University alumni through the Mentoring Network. Enter McKendree, and then enter your unique ID and password. From this main page you can go into the Mentoring Network or Job Search pages.

NETWORKING

Networking is connecting with people in your field to gain information about your career field and to assist you in your career development. Here is a quick “Networking 101” course:

- 1) **Get involved!** Find internships, do part-time work, and volunteer in the community. Join professional organizations in your field, found on the following website:
http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Organizations/Professional/
Attend a local Chamber of Commerce meeting or visit their webpage for a great place to network and find out about area business contacts and employment. This involvement will give you the opportunity to connect with many professionals in your field.
- 2) **Use social media!** Talk about your job skills and interests on LinkedIn, Facebook, e-mail, and other sources. Just remember to keep these pages appropriate.
- 3) **Develop a pool of contacts!** Start small. Choose a couple of people and work to expand your contacts. A good way to start might be an informational interview with a professional in the field. Remember, quality is better than quantity.
- 4) **Have a business card and a commercial!** Be prepared to talk about you. Apply yourself to the industry, but don't make it only about you. Also, create and put together samples of your work to share.
- 5) **Have a positive attitude and a smile!** Body language, tone of voice, and eye contact impact your conversation and the impression you make.
- 6) **Research and record!** Take mental or written notes, whatever strategy works for you. Write notes on the business cards you have collected or a piece of paper immediately after the meeting or event. Think about the next step and the next conversation.
- 7) **Stay in touch!** Be sure to connect with new contacts in the future. Do not pester them; simply send a message or a note following the event, then perhaps contact them over holidays or about an upcoming event. Write about specific things you have discussed or have in common. Always approach them at events where you both are in attendance. You may also contact pro-active, credible references that can help you network.
- 8) **Know your limit!** Do not target one person, but also don't try to reach everyone. Make a targeted effort and focus on a few to engage in meaningful conversations.
- 9) **Always be professional!** In dress and behavior, it is important to be professional. Make a good first impression. For information on professional dress, visit Career Services.
- 10) **Have a résumé ready!** You never know who will ask, and you want to be prepared. Give your résumé to people you know in companies for which you'd like to work.
- 11) **Write thank you letters!** After an informational interview or being provided with helpful information, write a thank-you letter. Manners and kindness go a long way.

INFORMATIONAL (OR NETWORKING) INTERVIEWS

Informational (or networking) interviews are a great opportunity for individuals to learn more about a specific company or career path. Informational interviews should be used to network, gain information, and help you become more confident for future job interviews, not to drop off résumés and/or ask for a job. However, if these interviews are conducted correctly, job opportunities can definitely exist in the “hidden job market,” which means jobs that are open but not advertised. One of the best ways to find out about a career field or particular position is to speak with people in that particular field. You will also find out what companies are looking for, which can make you a stronger job candidate.

The best place to start looking for informational interviews is with people you already know, and then you can expand your professional network once you talk to those people. You can also contact specific companies and ask for the names of people who have the job titles you want, and then personally contact them to request an interview. The more people you interview, the more information you will learn. You can also connect with McKendree alumni in your field through College Central Network (CCN) at Career Services! To register, go to:

www.collegecentral.com/mckendree

There are many questions that you can ask in this type of interview, and they will be dependent on the person’s position and the organization. Below are some questions that may assist you in getting started with this type of interview. However, be spontaneous and do not feel that you must follow a specific set of questions.

Sample Questions

- What is your educational background?
- What aspects of your education, including internships or co-op employment, best prepared you for your career?
- What was your first job after finishing school, and how did you find this position?
- Please tell me about the path your career has taken.
- What is a typical day like in your current position?
- What are your responsibilities, and what skills are particularly useful to you for them?
- What kinds of problems do you face?
- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- What percentage of your time is spent doing what duties?
- What do you like the most about your job and the field? What is the most challenging?
- Are there any moral issues or ethical challenges that tend to arise in your career?
- How does your company differ from its competitors?
- What is a typical career path in this field (or organization)?
- What does your company do to promote professional development?
- Do you have busy and slow times of the week/month/year, or is it pretty consistent?
- What impact does your career have on your home life or personal life?
- How does your company utilize technology such as e-mail, teleconferencing, video conferencing, internet, intranet, and various other methods?

Sample Questions, continued

- How did you become interested in this line of work?
- What advice could you offer me in terms of academic goals, activities, or work experience to enhance my career development?
- What does your company look for in a new employee?
- What types of continuing education do you believe are important?
- What entry-level positions/titles are most common in this field?
- To which community agencies or professional organizations do you belong?
- What are some ways to achieve success in this field?
- What is the work climate like in your organization? Your corporate culture?
- How long, on average, do people stay in your position?
- What other areas should I research before deciding about my area of interest/major?
- Is there high demand for people in this profession?
- What are the requirements for this position (i.e. education, certifications, and skills)?
- How important is my GPA?
- What personal qualities do you find the most important in this position/company?
- Is relocation a factor in your job and/or this industry?
- To what professional associations do you belong? Are there any that I can join now?

Tips for Success

Before the Interview

- Confirm your appointment the day before by e-mail or telephone.
- Research the company before visiting with your interviewee so that you have some knowledge about his/her organization and industry.

During the Interview

- Be punctual, allowing yourself plenty of time to find the company and individual office.
- Introduce yourself and shake his/her hand. State again you are there to gain more insight and knowledge about his/her field. Give some information about yourself!
- Stay within the time frame you originally promised, normally 25-30 minutes.
- Ask as many industry-specific questions as possible.
- Take interest in what the interviewee says; you can take notes.
- Make good eye contact and have good posture.
- Do not ask about job openings or give out your résumé; try to gather insight into the field and this person's experience that led to his/her success. This experience is about networking!
- If you feel comfortable doing so:
 - Have the interviewee critique your résumé and give you a tour.
 - Ask the interviewee for referrals of others you may contact.
 - Ask if you can shadow him/her for a day or two.

After the interview

- Send a thank you letter to show appreciation for his/her time within a day or two.
- Evaluate the interview, determining what you learned.

CAREER FAIR TIPS

There are a few main reasons employers attend career fairs. They want to increase awareness of their company by distributing company literature, make contacts with candidates who may be a good fit for their company, obtain résumés for potential openings in the near future, and fill current position openings within their company/organization. Candidates need to do all they can to make a positive first impression.

Some recruiters now, however, are not accepting résumés at career fairs and, instead, are directing students to apply online. If this is the case, you should take advantage of the opportunity to get your questions answered. You can get valuable information about the application process, employment needs, the corporate culture, and more.

Instead of distributing résumés, you may also consider creating and handing out business cards—complete with name; school; contact information; major; and highlights of academics, activities, or experiences. Handing out business cards can make a good impression on a recruiter and it allows the recruiter to make notes about you on the back of the card.

Attending a career fair is definitely an opportunity to network and make a memorable first impression. Below are some before, during, and after tips:

BEFORE CAREER FAIR

- Understand your goals by asking yourself why you are going and what you hope to achieve, and then begin to prepare so that these goals can be met. Do you want to gain more information about certain companies, obtain an internship, or find a full-time position?
- Obtain a list of employers attending the career fair from the Career Services webpage. After deciding what companies/organizations you may want to speak with, go to their webpage to learn more about them. You do not need to know everything about a company/organization at this point, but some knowledge of their company/organization will help you stand out in a positive way. We encourage you not to limit your interactions with companies that have recognizable names. Please explore all your options!
- Prepare or update your résumé, and then have it critiqued by Career Services; you might want to customize your résumé to certain companies.
- Prepare a one-minute “commercial” about yourself. Introduce yourself, demonstrate knowledge about the company, express your sincere interest in the company, and let the recruiter know what you can offer them (e.g. related coursework, activities, leadership roles, internships, relevant work experience). Make sure to also ask them some questions about their company/organization. Be aware that you might have to adjust what you say based on how busy the fair is at that time. BE FLEXIBLE!
- Obtain a nice padfolio, paper, and pen that you can take with you to the fair.

DURING CAREER FAIR

- Wear professional clothes! For women this includes a skirt suit that is not too short or a pants suit. The blouse should be a neutral color and one that is not low cut. Men should wear a suit with a white dress shirt and conservative tie. Dark colors are best for suits. Make sure your shoes are shiny and not scuffed. Don't wear too much jewelry or perfume, and make sure nails are neatly manicured. Please see the "Interview Clothing" section of this guide for more information on this area.
- Take several copies of your résumé on quality paper with you, along with a nice padfolio, paper, and pen. Consider taking business cards with you as well. Try to leave backpacks and other unnecessary items somewhere, and hang your coat if space allows.
- Nonverbal communication can speak a thousand words. So when you are visiting companies/organizations, look professional, have a firm handshake for each recruiter, use good eye contact, stand up straight, and avoid distracting movements such as wringing your hands, rocking back and forth, or playing with your hair. Make sure to also smile! Your tone of voice should be enthusiastic, but pleasant and conversational.
- Present your "commercial" to the employer, highlighting your skills and experience. Show why you would be the best candidate, let him/her know you are knowledgeable of the company/organization through what you say and questions you ask, and answer his/her questions with a good response. Obtain his/her business card, and ask about the time frame for hiring and how you can follow up about openings. Ask if he/she is the contact person for the positions.
- Take short breaks to write down important information about the companies/organizations.

AFTER CAREER FAIR

- Thoroughly read the information you have collected and review the notes you made.
- Follow up with companies/organizations in which you are interested through e-mails, phone calls, or letters. Make sure to submit any necessary applications in a timely manner.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

1. What advice would you offer to someone who wants to work for your company?
2. What are the typical entry-level positions for which you hire?
3. What qualifications are you seeking in new employees?
4. Do you offer a training program? Could you please describe the training?
5. What are possible career paths within your company/organization?
6. What are my chances for advancement within your company/organization?
7. How can I receive further consideration for the positions you have described?
8. When do you expect to fill the available position(s)?
9. Can I provide you with any additional information?

INTERVIEWS

The interview is the most important part of the job search. It is usually the last and most decisive part of your campaign for a good job. Initial contacts by letter and résumé, by telephone, or in person are necessary components of the job search, but it is the interview that is usually the determining factor.

The interview is your chance to learn more about the company/organization, and it is their opportunity to assess your potential as an employee. Overall, here are the qualities that interviewers are looking for:

- **Personality:** genuineness, self-confidence, honesty
- **Communication Skills:** clear, concise answers; good listening skills; poise
- **Reactions:** alertness, spontaneity, intelligent and relevant responses
- **Energy Level:** enthusiasm, appropriate eagerness
- **Maturity:** expression of career goals, self-awareness, appropriate seriousness/use of humor
- **Motivation:** willingness to learn, interest in the position
- **Compatibility:** ability to get along with others, sensitivity to others
- **Preparation:** knowledge of company/organization and position, thoughtful responses

INTERVIEW TIPS

- ✓ Dress conservatively
- ✓ Organize your materials in a padfolio
- ✓ Bring copies of your résumé, business cards, and supporting materials
- ✓ Arrive early (but only 5 minutes early to the interviewer's office)
- ✓ Display proper behavior the minute you arrive in the parking lot
- ✓ Take time to use restroom and check your hair, makeup, etc.
- ✓ Have a good, strong handshake
- ✓ Maintain eye contact
- ✓ Be friendly, relaxed, and respectful
- ✓ Be yourself
- ✓ Use interviewer's title and last name
- ✓ Accentuate your skills
- ✓ Do not monopolize the conversation
- ✓ Smile when appropriate
- ✓ Maintain good posture
- ✓ Ask questions to show interest
- ✓ Control nervous mannerisms
- ✓ Immediately send a thank you letter



PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Now that you know the basics, for a successful interview process, follow these specific steps:

- 1. Send your résumé, cover letter, and any other requested materials to the company** - Career Services can help you to prepare these materials.
- 2. Consider Putting Together a Portfolio** - To make you stand out, consider creating an electronic portfolio (e.g. PowerPoint) to send to the recruiter before the interview, or assemble an organized portfolio in a binder that is both professional looking and easily viewed. Some items to include are:
 - A current copy of your résumé on high quality paper and an official transcript.
 - Writing samples from a variety of areas. These include classroom and internship samples, newspaper articles, press releases, and other relevant samples.
 - Samples that show creativity, such as one from a marketing or art project.
 - The final employer evaluation from your internship.
 - Honor society and awards certificates.
- 3. Practice your interviewing skills** - Career Services conducts mock interviews by appointment, and you could also ask someone you trust to ask questions and critique you. It is also helpful to write down answers to sample questions that you may have a difficult time answering and then practice giving a response.
- 4. Research the company prior to interviewing** - Valuable information can be found on a company's website and on other web sources. Have three to five good questions to ask the employer that relate to the company and its products, based on preliminary research that you have conducted.
- 5. Acquire appropriate interview clothing** - Appropriate professional business attire is required. For men, a conservative suit and tie will be expected. For women, a skirt or pants suit is expected. Conservative accessories, light or no cologne, and polished dress shoes will complete your professional image.
- 6. Practice appropriate behavior during the interview** - Be on time, smile, be calm and confident, be prepared, give complete answers, speak clearly, show enthusiasm, make good eye contact, have a firm handshake, use good posture, and show interested body language.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In general for an interview, know yourself--both your **strengths** and your **weaknesses**. Be prepared to emphasize your strong points, such as: achievements and honors, skills and training, and reliability. Also, be prepared to account for your weaknesses, such as: low GPA, lack of work experience or no experience in the specific field, a bad reference or record of some kind, or a time gap on your résumé. Use examples from class projects, activities, volunteer service, sports, internships, and part-time jobs. The recruiter may ask general questions to expand on your résumé or to get to know you, as well as behavioral interview questions to see how you've handled situations in the past.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' *Job Outlook 2012* survey, virtually all employers look for the following in your answers:

1. Ability to work in a team
2. Leadership skills
3. Written communication skills
4. Problem-solving skills
5. Strong work ethic



GENERAL QUESTIONS

College

1. What was your major?
2. What were the factors that led to this decision?
3. What was your overall GPA? Major GPA?
4. What accounted for your low (or high) GPA?
5. What academic honors did you receive?
6. In what extracurricular activities did you participate?
7. What leadership role(s) did you play in these activities?
8. How has your college education prepared you for your career?

Personal Effectiveness

1. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
2. If 3-4 of your close peers were in this room, how would they describe you?
3. Would you classify yourself as having a hard-driving or relatively laid-back personality?
4. How do you handle interpersonal conflicts?
5. If there were something that you could change about yourself, what would it be? Why?
6. What are your short-term career objectives? Long-term?
7. To what extent is this position relevant to your career objectives?
8. How would you describe your level of interest in this position?
9. Are you active in the community? In which community organizations are you involved?
10. What self-improvement plans do you have?

GENERAL QUESTIONS, continued

Work Experience

1. Did you work while in school?
2. What were your key responsibilities or objectives? How well did you perform toward these objectives?
3. What were your most significant accomplishments?
4. What positive impact did you have on the company?
5. What aspects of that position did you enjoy most? Least?
6. What adjectives would you use to describe your supervisor?
7. What do you look for in a supervisor?
8. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor?
9. Why are you leaving this position?
10. If we talked to your supervisor, what do you feel he/she would say about you and your performance?
11. Of the various environments in which you have worked, in which were you most productive? Least productive?
12. What factors accounted for higher productivity?
13. Which of your past positions has prepared you for this job?
14. What specific capabilities do you bring to the job that should prove helpful?
15. What specific capabilities do you lack that are required for successful performance of this position? What do you plan to do about these deficiencies?
16. What would be your overall job strategy or approach?
17. What would be some of the first things that you would do? Why?
18. Why should we hire you?
19. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your probability for successful performance in this position? Why?

Miscellaneous

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. How long do you feel you would continue to be challenged in this position?
4. What concerns do you have about this position?
5. What do you feel you have to offer?
6. Why do you want to work for the _____ company?
7. What are your compensation requirements?
8. With what references can you provide me?
9. Are there any remaining questions that you would like to ask?



BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell me about a time when you...

1. Worked effectively under pressure.
2. Handled a difficult situation with a co-worker.
3. Were creative in solving a problem (or missed an obvious solution to a problem).
4. Were unable to complete a project on time or achieve a goal.
5. Persuaded team members to do things your way.
6. Wrote a report that was well-received.
7. Anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
8. Had to make an important decision with limited facts.
9. Were forced to make an unpopular decision.
10. Had to adapt to a difficult situation.
11. Were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.
12. Had to use written communication to get your point across.
13. Was proud of (or disappointed in) your behavior.
14. Had to deal with an irate customer.
15. Delegated a project effectively.
16. Set your sights too high (or too low).
17. Acted as a leader to complete a group project.
18. Put your own work aside to help someone else.
19. Were able to find common ground in a team to achieve a result.
20. Were able to make each team member feel important and valuable.
21. Were able to delegate an important task to another team member.
22. Successfully pushed yourself and others to achieve a goal.
23. Exceeded a goal you set for yourself.
24. Had passion for a project or idea that was contagious.
25. Came up with a new and unique idea that paid off.
26. Organized your time to ensure that you met your deadlines.
27. Dealt with the most difficult communication challenge you've ever had.
28. Admitted a mistake and it paid off.
29. Felt that you exceeded the needs of a professor, supervisor, or team.
30. Made a commitment to quality (or sacrificed quality) to achieve a result.
31. Overpromised and under-delivered.
32. Identified or dealt with a potential safety hazard.
33. Were rewarded for your dependability and consistency.
34. Felt you could have been more reliable.
35. Took a calculated risk to achieve a goal.

STAR Answers:

S = Situation (Explain the situation)

T = Task (Tell about the task at hand)

A = Action (State what you did to accomplish the task)

R = Result (Tell about your results)



ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Federal law protects job applicants from questions that might be used to discriminate against them. Interview questions should only be directly related to the duties of the job for which the applicant is applying. Illegal questions could include any about race, age, religion, marital status, family planning, sexual orientation, etc.

If asked these questions, try to direct the conversation toward your skills and abilities. The following questions will give you some ideas for tactful ways to approach sticky questions:

1. Do you have plans for marriage and a family? (Gender Discrimination)
 - “I am definitely committed to this company and am able to handle all of the job’s responsibilities.”
2. How old are you? (Age Discrimination)
 - If you’re a recent graduate: “Because of my age, I feel that I have fresh and exciting ideas to bring to the company!”
 - If you’ve been in the workforce for a while: “I feel that my age is an advantage, in terms of the broad experiences I have gained and can bring to this position.”
3. What is your ethnic background? (Racial Discrimination)
 - “I am very proud of my roots, but regardless of my ethnic background, I truly believe that I have the abilities and skills to qualify me for this position.”
4. What religion do you practice? (Religious Discrimination)
 - “I make it a practice not to involve my religious beliefs in my work.”

If you have further concern or questions, contact Career Services.



QUESTIONS TO ASK

After the recruiter asks you interview questions, he/she will most likely ask if you have any questions. **Do not ask about salary/benefits/hours on the first interview!** Below are some of the questions you may choose to ask:

The Company

1. What are the prospects for future growth and expansion of the company?
2. What new products/services is the company planning to introduce?
3. What has accounted for fluctuations in sales (or profits) over the last ____ years? Why?
4. What kind of annual growth rate do you expect to see over the next 5 years?
5. What do employees seem to like most about this company? Least?
6. What type of orientation/training do new employees receive?
7. Are employees encouraged to express their ideas and concerns?

The Department

1. How is the current department organized?
2. What are the major challenges and objectives currently faced by the department?
3. What are the major opportunities for the department to improve its overall contribution to the organization?
4. How large is the department where this opening exists?

The Job

1. Why is the position open?
2. What are the key responsibilities of this position?
3. What are some of the department's current and anticipated special projects?
4. What are the quantitative dimensions of this position (number of persons managed, budgets, sales volume, cost of goods manufactured, etc.)?
5. What improvement would you like to see in the areas of this position?
6. What key problems or barriers have prevented progress in these key areas in the past?
7. Is there opportunity with this position to work both independently and as a team?
8. With whom does this position interact during a typical day?

Performance Evaluation

1. How does the performance evaluation system work?
2. How frequently are performance evaluations done?
3. What opportunity is there for employee input?

Advancement Opportunities

1. Assuming good performance, how long might I expect to be in this position?
2. What factors are used to determine promotion eligibility?
3. What training and development opportunities are provided to the employee?

Adapted from The Five-Minute Interview, Richard Beatty

INTERVIEW CLOTHING

Research shows that it only takes six seconds or less for someone to make a decision about what type of person you are and if you could be a good fit for their company/organization. This decision can be made before you even speak! It is for this reason that your attire needs to be considered a crucial part of the interviewing process. Below are guidelines for appropriate attire, accessories, and grooming habits:

INTERVIEW CLOTHING FOR MEN

Suits - A suit should be worn for all interviews. The suit should be a dark color, such as black, pinstripe, navy blue, or dark gray, and should be conservative instead of trendy. A suit makes a much better impression than a dress shirt and pants, and it is something that will last well into your career. Make sure that the suit fits properly; for example, the sleeves should come to the top of your wrist, the material should fit properly in the shoulders and around the neck, and the pants should just touch the top of your dress shoes. Most department stores will give guidance in this area.

Ties - Conservative is the key word. Do not wear anything with bright colors or wild patterns on it. A tie with a small print or conservative stripes that matches the suit is ideal.

Shirts - A long-sleeved white shirt should be worn under the suit, and it should fit properly in the shoulders and neck. Be sure to wear a short-sleeved, white t-shirt under your dress shirt.

Shoes, Socks, and Belts - Shoes should be a dark color, depending on the color of the suit, and they should also be conservative. Trendy shoes should be avoided, such as ones with buckles on them and ones made out of suede. Shoes should be freshly shined and not scuffed! Dress socks should be dark in color and should match the suit. These include colors such as black, navy blue, and dark gray. White socks should **never** be worn. A black or brown belt should be worn, depending on the suit color.

Jewelry - Earrings, bracelets, neck chains, or any type of body rings such as tongue rings or eyebrow rings should not be worn. Men can wear a wedding band and class ring, as long as it is limited to one ring per hand. A nice watch is also acceptable.

Grooming - Hair, facial hair, and nails should be short, clean, and neatly trimmed. Be aware that some employers do not allow any type of facial hair.

Miscellaneous - Clothes should be clean and neatly pressed. Avoid wearing cologne or aftershave. Try to keep tattoos covered at all times. Do not chew gum. Do not have the odor of cigarette smoke on your clothes and/or body.

INTERVIEW CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

Suits - A conservative skirt or pants suit is considered appropriate business attire for interviews. Dark colors such as black, navy blue, dark brown, and dark gray are best. Do not wear a trendy or low-cut suit! The skirt length should be at or slightly above the knee, and one that is shorter is considered inappropriate as business interviewing attire.

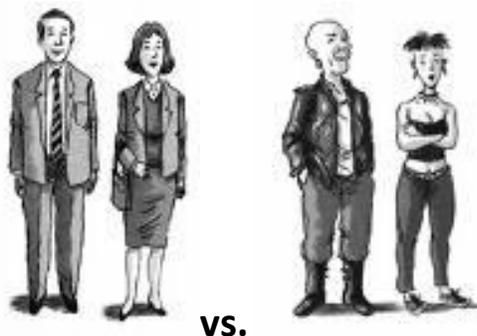
Blouses - A neutral-colored blouse is best. Bright colors and bright stripes should be avoided. Long sleeves are best if the jacket might be taken off, and the blouse should have a modest neckline.

Shoes and Pantyhose - Shoes should be black, navy blue, or dark brown, and they should match the suit. Trendy shoes should be avoided, as should ones that are open-toed or open-back. Flats should not be worn, but heels should not be higher than two-and-a-half inches. Shoes should be freshly shined and not scuffed! Pantyhose should match the color of your skin tone.

Accessories - Minimal jewelry should be worn. One pair of earrings, a simple chain and bracelet, a nice watch, and one ring per hand are acceptable. Any other type of body ring, such as a nose ring, eyebrow ring, or tongue ring should not be worn! A lapel pin or neck scarf can also be worn, as long as it matches the suit and is a subtle color. However, do not wear any accessory that will draw negative attention to you or make you look unprofessional.

Grooming - Hair should be clean, neatly trimmed, and out of your face. Make certain not to wear heavy makeup; avoid bright and dark colors as well. Again, you do not want to attract too much attention to yourself. Nails should also be clean and trimmed; nail polish is acceptable as long as the polish is a subtle color and is not chipped.

Miscellaneous - Clothes should be clean and pressed. Avoid wearing perfume/cologne. Try to keep tattoos covered at all times. Do not chew gum! Do not have the odor of cigarette smoke on your clothes and/or body.



THANK YOU LETTERS

The thank you letter is used to establish goodwill, express appreciation, and strengthen your candidacy. When used to follow up on employment interviews, thank you letters should be addressed to the same person that sent you an application, as well as to your interviewers. These letters follow the same format as the cover letter, and should include the following information:

Return Address

City, State and Zip Code

Current Date

[3 or 4 returns]

Employer's Name

Title of Position

Name of Company or Organization

Street Address, P.O. Box or Building

City, State and Zip Code

[2 returns]

Dear (Mr., Ms., Dr.) last name:

[2 returns]

Paragraph 1: Express your sincere appreciation for the opportunity to interview, and reiterate your interest in the position. Also, re-emphasize your strongest qualifications. *[2 returns]*

Paragraph 2: Provide supplemental information not previously given through your résumé or interview that may help you attain the position. Also, draw attention to the good match between your qualifications and the job requirements. Express your thanks again for the interview. *[2 returns]*

Sincerely,

[3 or 4 returns between closing and typed name]

(Your signature)

Your typed name

(After you have accepted a position, be sure to also send a letter of appreciation, following this same general format, to everyone who assisted you in your job search, granted you informational interviews, or served as a reference.)

JOB ACCEPTANCE LETTERS

A job acceptance letter is used to formally show that you have accepted a position. Many companies require such a letter for your file. These letters follow the same format as the cover letter. Below is an example job acceptance letter:

6789 Main Street
Lebanon, IL 62254
August 1, 2012

Mr. Terry Grapp
Assistant Vice-President
Quality Company
792 Star Street
St. Louis, MO 67890

Dear Mr. Grapp:

This letter will serve as my formal acceptance of your offer to join the Quality Company as a Management Trainee. I appreciate this position offer and am excited to begin service to this company.

A two-week notice has been given to my current employer, so therefore I will begin work with Quality Company on August 15, 2012, as we agreed. Please let me know if there is anything you need me to complete or participate in before my start date.

Mr. Grapp, you and the rest of the staff have been very helpful and professional during this process. I look forward to joining the team and accepting the challenges that this position will bring. Thank you for all of the assistance you have given me.

Sincerely,

Ava M. Richards

Ava M. Richards

NEGOTIATING

In certain fields, you may have the opportunity to negotiate your salary. Here are some tips in doing so:



- **Never be the 1st person to list the exact figure:** It will cause you to lose the competitive advantage.
- **Never negotiate your salary until you are offered the position:** If the employer knows your price, he/she will compare you to others based on that price.
- **If you can't walk away, you're not negotiating; you're begging:** Don't settle, but don't overestimate what you're truly worth. Do your research to determine average salaries for your position (e.g. www.salary.com).
- **Know whether the company is a high-paying or low-paying one:** Again, do your research.
- **Always negotiate base pay to the highest # possible:** Changing your base just \$5,000 could be the difference of a half-million dollars over your lifetime.
- **Deflect, deflect, deflect...Be vague:** If the employer tries to get you to name your price, try to ask them other questions by deflecting their questions with your own:
 - "I'm really excited about the opportunity, but I really had in mind more than that. What can we do?"
 - "I think you're below the market."
 - "Is there any way we can increase this base pay?"
 - "What are typical starting compensation and benefits for this position?"

Based on presentation by Donald Asher, Asher Associates





CAREER PLANNING CHECKLIST



Would you build a house without a plan? As foolish as that sounds, many people attempt to build a career without a plan. A Career Plan is a flexible tool to guide you in making decisions regarding courses, extra-curricular activities, part-time/summer jobs, and special projects. Each year of college, your courses and activities provide experiences upon which to build and revise a Career Plan. Career planning doesn't require a great deal of time. What it does require is initial drafting followed by periodic assessments, additions, and revisions. The results are a better picture of who you are, what you can do, where you want to go, and how to get there.

1+ CREDIT HOURS – ASK & EXPERIENCE

- Enroll in core courses.
- Learn about the different majors you may be interested in at the annual Majors Fair event.
- Get to know other students, faculty, and staff on campus.
- Familiarize yourself with our website and “like” our Facebook page to stay up-to-date with events we hold, articles related to getting a job and current part-time/full-time positions available.
- Visit Career Services. Most seniors regret not stopping by their first year.
- Keep your grades up and seek help from the Academic Support Center or Writing Center, if needed.
- Take our FREE career assessments that can help to identify what careers best match your interests, skills, values, and abilities.
- Get involved with clubs and organizations, volunteer, and/or obtain a part-time job to gain valuable experience. See our “Get Involved” packet for ideas related to your major.
- Attend the McKendree Career Fair to gather information on potential careers and employers, as well as to simply get acquainted with the format of a career fair.

28+ CREDIT HOURS – ASSESS & EXPLORE

- Explore potential occupations and then select a major with your academic advisor. Visit companies and working professionals in your field of interest and conduct informational interviews. Career Services has information on this type of interview in the office.
- Find 3-5 people in your field of interest to serve as mentors. One way to find contacts is through the alumni mentoring program on College Central Network.
- Gain relevant work experience through volunteering, part-time work, or on-campus activities.
- Attend the McKendree University Career Fair to gather information on potential careers and employers, as well as to simply get acquainted with the format of a career fair.
- Talk to Career Services about completing an internship for academic credit your junior or senior year.

60+ CREDIT HOURS – EVALUATE & NETWORK

- Enroll in your major courses for the majority of your classes. Take electives in various areas and think about enrolling in the class, *Careers, Job Search, and Beyond* (taught in the spring semester by Career Services) that prepares students to get a job and enter the working world.
- Complete an internship for academic credit.
- Explore the possibility of studying abroad for a semester to help you stand out from others.
- Begin to plan your job search strategies. Draft your résumé and cover letter to have them reviewed by Career Services.
- If graduate school is an option, begin studying for your entrance exams and applying.
- Continue to participate in meaningful extra-curricular activities. Seek a leadership role within the group if possible.
- Check academic status related to credits and GPA to ensure you are on track to graduate.
- Build strong professional relationships with people that could be potential references for you.
- Attend the McKendree University Career Fair to gather information on potential careers and employers.

92+ CREDIT HOURS – MARKET YOURSELF

- Clean up any social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) for any inappropriate content, and create a LinkedIn account to begin networking professionally with others. Check your voice mail message and email address to make sure they are professional. Google yourself and see what others can find.
- Complete graduation requirements and an internship for academic credit.
- Attend the Career Fair and take advantage of on-campus interviews with employers.
- Participate in the Career Conference to increase your knowledge of networking techniques, interviewing skills, and how to financially succeed after graduation.
- Register and take graduate school entrance exams and submit applications if attending.
- Make sure you have a polished résumé, cover letter, and other employer correspondence.
- Ask three to five professional people if they would be willing to serve as your references, and then create a references page. Ask for any letters of recommendations.
- Schedule a mock interview session with Career Services. Purchase appropriate interview attire that is suited to your field.
- Target places of potential employment and begin researching the companies.
- Start the job search process early in senior year through several methods.
- NETWORK with as many people as possible and collect business cards for follow-up!
- Join related professional organizations while you are a student and save money.
- Register and post your résumé on CCN to have access to full-time positions posted specifically for McKendree graduates, as well as to obtain notices of great openings.

HOW CAREER SERVICES CAN HELP

Along with offering you a wealth of information through this guide, Career Services has other ways to assist you in your job search and in interviewing. These services include:

- **College Central Network (CCN):** By uploading your résumé to CCN, you can have it reviewed by Career Services and referred to interested companies. In addition, registering on CCN can allow you to search for jobs and connect with a McKendree alumnus in your field through the CCN mentoring program, giving you the opportunity to ask a professional about interview tips, job shadowing, further career development, and more.
- **Mock Interviews:** In our office, we offer mock interviews to help prepare you for your real interviews. We'll go over interview tips and etiquette. In addition, we will ask you questions that you may be asked in an interview, as well as give you a critique of your answers to help you perfect your interview strategy.
- **Drop-in Sessions:** We will occasionally set up a table in the Piper Lobby to offer students and alumni our services. Interviewing Q & A is a good one to catch.
- **Classroom Presentations:** Your faculty members can contact us to do a presentation for your class. A few of these presentations include: "Seal the Deal! Effective Interviewing Strategies" and "Network Your Way To a Job."
- **Career Fairs:** Career Services holds a Career and Internship Fair every February in the Hett. In addition, we co-sponsor several career fairs throughout the year at Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville.
- **Career Conference:** Our Career Conference brings alumni to campus to speak on topics such as networking, transitioning from college to work, dressing for success, and finances. In addition, this conference sets up mock interviews between the students and alumni.
- **Dining Etiquette Seminar:** Career Services offers a dinner workshop, instructing students on proper etiquette needed for dinner meetings in the working world.

Opportunity + Training + Initiative = Success