



**CAREER SERVICES**  
McKENDREE UNIVERSITY

## **JOB SEARCH & INTERVIEW GUIDE**

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McKendree University Career Services



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## **EXPERIENCE COUNTS**

Before you embark on your first professional 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, 75% of hiring decisions are based on relevant work experience. 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 various internship opportunities in our online database.

### **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 Community 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 Guide, located on the Career Services website, contains a list of websites that provide potential volunteer opportunities nationwide.

### **Organizations**

Go to the Involvement Fair at the beginning of each fall semester to connect with a wide variety of campus organizations. You can also reach out to the Campus Activities office to find out more about all of the Registered Student Organizations on campus.



## **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, keeping electronic 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 two hours a day if you are employed or in school full-time.
4. Utilize Career Services for job fairs, workshops, online job postings, résumé/cover letter/reference page critiques, mock interviews, and campus interviews, among other services. Join our Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages for tips.
5. Network! Up to 80% of jobs are found via networking. See page seven for information.
6. Identify and research companies (mission statements, goals, news, annual reports, etc.).
  - a. Individual company websites.
  - b. [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com): Companies can be searched and “followed” to gain a lot of good information.
  - c. [www.bizjournals.com](http://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* at some libraries.)
  - d. [McKendree Library web page](#): Research companies to find contact information, classifications, business descriptions, current news, yearly finances, executives, and key competitors. Go the main Library page; go to A-Z Database List.
7. Find out about posted openings on:
  - a. Individual company websites
  - b. Handshake (<https://joinhandshake.com>) through McKendree Career Services
  - c. LinkedIn
  - d. Networking
  - e. Job boards: indeed.com, monster.com, and careerbuilder.com, among others
  - f. Free staffing agencies
8. Prepare and tailor all materials needed to apply for each position, including your 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:**

<https://joinhandshake.com>

[www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)

[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)

[www.us.jobs](http://www.us.jobs)

**For articles, job information, and salary information:**

[www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)

[www.bls.gov/ooh](http://www.bls.gov/ooh)

[www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com)

[www.jobipedia.org](http://www.jobipedia.org)

[www.salaryexpert.com](http://www.salaryexpert.com)

**Primary website for federal government jobs:**

[www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)

**For community college and university positions:**

[www.higheredjobs.com](http://www.higheredjobs.com)

[www.academploy.com](http://www.academploy.com)

**Various other websites:**

[www.theromgroup.com](http://www.theromgroup.com)

[www.talentzoo.com](http://www.talentzoo.com)

[www.dice.com](http://www.dice.com)



## **NETWORKING**

Networking involves interacting with others to exchange information and develop both professional and social contacts. This should be mutually beneficial for both parties.

- 1) **Get involved** - Find internships, do part-time work, and volunteer in the community. Find groups through LinkedIn and request to join them, if required. Join professional organizations in your field that allow student membership. 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.
- 2) **Utilize 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. Please see details on informational interviews in this Guide. Remember, quality is better than quantity.
- 4) **Have a student business card and a commercial** - Be prepared to talk about yourself. Apply yourself to the industry, but don't make it only about you. Also, create and put together samples of your work to share. See Career Services for business card ideas!
- 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** – Keep detailed notes about your connections. 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 following the event, then perhaps contact them periodically 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 proactive, credible references that can help you network.
- 8) **Know your limit** - Do not target one person, but also do not 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 would 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 organization 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. Also, ask professors about professionals or alumni you might contact and attend Career Services events where you can meet alumni. You can also research specific companies and determine the names of people who have the job titles you want, and then personally contact them to request an informational interview. The more people you interview, the more information you will learn.

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, best prepared you for a 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?
- What degree or major is preferred for entry into this field?
- 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 organization 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 organization 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.
- 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**

**McKendree holds a Fair each February on our campus. Check our online calendar for dates.**

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

Some recruiters will not accept résumés at fairs and ask applicants 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, and more.

### **BEFORE 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 fair from the Career Services webpage. After deciding what companies 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 at this point, but some knowledge 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. Make at least 20 copies on résumé paper.
- Prepare a thirty-second “commercial” about yourself. Introduce yourself, share your major/degree or job title (for alums), demonstrate knowledge about the company, tell them what you seek (internship or job, for example), 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 a couple questions about their organization. Be aware that you might have to adjust what you say based on how busy the fair is at that time.

**EXAMPLE:** *My name is Ann Smith, and I am majoring in Accounting at McKendree University. I had the opportunity recently to gain a deeper understanding of auditing while completing a year-long class project for a mid-sized company. Currently I am completing a tax accounting internship for Turner West, where I prepare income tax returns, review financial records, and work with various tax and accounting software systems, among other responsibilities. I have enjoyed learning more about both areas, so I am looking to obtain a position in one of these two areas after my graduation this May. I have been very active during my time at McKendree, having served in leadership roles for the Accounting Club and Student Government Association, and volunteer weekly at a local animal shelter.*

- Obtain a nice pad folio, paper, and pen that you can take with you to the fair, along with breath mints. Consider creating a student business card, which includes your name; school; contact information; major/degree; and highlights of academics, activities, or experiences.

### **DURING FAIR**

- Wear professional clothes! Please see our Interview Attire page in this Guide for details.
- Behave professionally, even in parking lots, restrooms, and corridors.
- Don't walk around with friends or family members!
- Nonverbal communication can speak a thousand words. 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 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 through what you say and questions you ask, and answer questions with a good response. Obtain a 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.
- Ask open-ended questions, avoiding questions you can find through research or salary questions.
- Take short breaks to write down important information about the companies.

### **AFTER FAIR**

- Thoroughly read the information you have collected and review the notes you made.
- Follow up with companies 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. 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 would a typical day be like for a newly-hired graduate?
6. What are possible career paths within your company?
7. What advice would you offer to someone who wants to work for your company?
8. How can I receive further consideration for the positions you have described?
9. When do you expect to fill the available position(s)?
10. Can I provide you with any additional information?

## **INTERVIEWS**

The interview is a very 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, and it is their opportunity to assess your potential as an employee. Below are some qualities that interviewers are looking for in candidates:

- **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 and position, thoughtful responses

### **INTERVIEW TIPS – Before, During, and After**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ✓ Dress professionally   | ✓ Maintain eye contact                 |
| ✓ Organize your materials in a pad folio   | ✓ Be friendly, relaxed, and respectful |
| ✓ Bring copies of your résumé, business cards, and supporting materials                | ✓ Use the interviewer's last name      |
| ✓ Arrive early (but only approximately five minutes early to the interviewer's office) | ✓ Accentuate your skills               |
| ✓ Display proper behavior the moment you arrive in the parking lot                     | ✓ Do not monopolize the conversation   |
| ✓ Take time to use restroom and check your hair, makeup, etc.                          | ✓ Smile when appropriate               |
| ✓ Have a firm handshake  | ✓ Maintain good posture                |
|  | ✓ Ask questions to show interest       |
|  | ✓ Control nervous mannerisms           |
|  | ✓ Ask for interviewer's business card  |
|  | ✓ Make notes after interview           |
|  | ✓ Immediately send a thank you letter  |

## **PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW**

Now that you know the basics, follow these preparation steps for a successful interview.

1. **Ask who you will be interviewing with that day and the approximate timeframe of the interview** - This will allow you to conduct some research and help plan your day. Ask for parking instructions if necessary.
2. **Practice your interviewing skills** - Career Services conducts mock interviews by appointment, and you can also ask someone you trust professionally to 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.
3. **If possible, talk with people who work for the company** - Ask them what they like/find challenging about the company, what the culture is like, and other important areas.
4. **Research the company prior to interviewing** - Valuable information can be found on a company's website and on other web sources. Have five to seven prepared questions that relate to the company and its products, based on preliminary research that you have conducted. You will ask two or three questions, but it's better to have more in case they answer some of your questions during the interview.
5. **Acquire appropriate interview clothing** - Appropriate professional business attire is required. Please see detailed information on our Interview Attire page.
6. **Practice exhibiting appropriate behavior during the interview** - Smile, be calm, confident, and prepared; give complete answers, speak clearly; show enthusiasm; make good eye contact; have a firm handshake; use good posture and body language; be prepared for small talk before interview begins.



## **COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

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, part-time/full-time jobs, internships, activities, volunteer service, and athletics. 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, most employers seek:

1. Ability to work in a team
2. Ability to make decisions and solve problems
3. Strong verbal communication skills
4. Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work
5. Ability to obtain and process information
6. Understanding of global and intercultural areas
7. A solid grasp of digital technology
8. A 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 two greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
2. If three or four 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 was 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 do you look for in a supervisor?
7. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor?
8. Why are you leaving this position?
9. If we talked to your supervisor, what do you feel he/she would say about you and your performance?
10. Of the various environments in which you have worked, in which were you most productive? Least productive?
11. What factors accounted for higher productivity?
12. Which of your past positions or experiences has prepared you for this job?
13. What specific capabilities do you bring to the job that should prove helpful?
14. What specific capabilities do you lack that are required for successful performance of this position? What do you plan to do about these deficiencies?
15. What would be some of the first things that you would do? Why?
16. Why should we hire you?
17. On a scale of one 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 do you feel you have to offer?
5. Why do you want to work for the (insert name) company?
6. What are your compensation requirements?
7. With what references can you provide me?
8. 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. Were 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 what you are tasked to do/solve)

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

**R** = Result (Tell about your results, and how it turned out)



## **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 or are a non-traditional student: “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.





## **SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK INTERVIEWERS**

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!**

### **The Company**

1. What are the prospects for future growth and expansion of the company?
2. What new products or services is the company planning to introduce?
3. What has accounted for fluctuations in sales (or profits) over the last \_\_\_\_ years? Why?
4. How would you best describe the company culture?
5. What kind of annual growth rate do you expect to see over the next five years?
6. What do employees seem to like most about this company? Least?
7. What type of orientation/training do new employees receive?
8. What do you enjoy most about working here?
9. Read company's website, and ask questions about current initiatives found on site.

### **The Department**

1. How is the current department organized?
2. What do you see as the strengths of this department?
3. What are the current improvement opportunities of this company?
4. How would you best describe the department culture?
5. 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. How does this position contribute to the company's mission/goals?
4. What are some of the department's current and anticipated special projects?
5. What are the quantitative dimensions of this position (number of persons managed, budgets, sales volume, cost of goods manufactured, etc.)?
6. What are the major projects I will be working on in the first six months?
7. What are some challenges that will face the person filling this position?
8. Is there opportunity with this position to work both independently and as a team?
9. With whom does this position interact during a typical day?
10. What have past employees done to succeed in this position?

### **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. What factors are used to determine promotion eligibility?
2. What training and development opportunities are provided to the employee?

## **INTERVIEW ATTIRE**

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 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:

**Suits** - A suit is very appropriate for interviews. Possible colors include black, pinstripe, navy blue, or dark gray, and should be conservative instead of trendy. 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. If wearing a skirt suit, the skirt should be at or slightly above the knee. Most department or suit stores will give guidance in this area.

**Ties** - Conservative is the key word. Do not wear anything with bright colors or wild patterns. A tie with a small print or conservative stripes that matches the suit is ideal. The bottom of your tie should end at the middle of your belt buckle. You could try and match your color to the potential employer's colors.

**Shirts** - A long-sleeved neutral colored shirt is a good choice, one that fits properly in the shoulders and neck. Wearing another layer under your shirt is highly recommended in many cases, such as a white t-shirt or cami.

**Shoes, Socks, and Belts** - Shoes should be a complimentary color to your suit, in a conservative color. Shoes should be freshly shined and not scuffed! Dress socks and belt should be dark in color and should match the suit; panty hose should match your skin color. Keep any heeled shoes at a reasonable length.

**Jewelry** - Body rings such as tongue rings or eyebrow rings should not be worn. Jewelry is fine to wear, as long as it does not distract from your interview.

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

**Miscellaneous** - Clothes should be clean and neatly pressed. Avoid wearing cologne/perfume 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. Bring a portfolio or briefcase, and if bringing a purse make sure it is small.

## **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.

*[2 returns]*

**Paragraph 2:** Re-emphasize your strongest qualifications. 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.

*[2 returns]*

**Paragraph 3:** Thank the employer again for their time and consideration. Provide your phone number and email address.

*[2 returns]*

Sincerely,

*[3 or 4 returns between closing and typed name]*

Your signature (omit if electronic)

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, 2019

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 am excited to begin service to the company and am confident I will be an asset to your company.

Per our conversation, I will start on August 15, 2019 and my salary will be \$35,500. 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 during this process. I look forward to joining the team.

Sincerely,

*Ava M. Richards*

Ava M. Richards

## **JOB OFFER EXTENSION REQUEST LETTERS**

Employers will typically give you a timeline to accept or decline a job offer. You may ask for an extension to the timeline if you need one, but if you do so it is best to call the employer to respectfully request the extension and give a valid reason. For example, you may have a previously scheduled interview with an employer and want to honor that commitment. Please understand that employers are not obligated to grant an extension, but if they agree, you should then send an email to confirm the new date.

---

123 Main Street  
Collinsville, IL 62234  
August 1, 2019

Ms. Julie Smith  
Director of Human Resources  
Myer & Murphy  
893 Wonder Street  
St. Louis, MO 67890

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you again for the offer of Management Trainee with Myer & Murphy. I greatly appreciate this opportunity and am excited about the position. Thank you for the confidence you have placed in me with the offer of this position.

You asked for a response by August 5, but I would like to request some additional time since this is a very important decision. I want to ensure that I have all of the information needed before I respond. To follow up on our phone conversation today, I am asking you to consider my request of extending the deadline to August 14. I know that I can make a firm decision by that date.

Thank you very much for considering this request.

Sincerely,

*Michael L. Wright*

Michael L. Wright

## **JOB OFFERS & SALARY NEGOTIATION**

### **THE JOB**

- There are many questions to ask yourself as you evaluate the job. Do you like the key functions of the job? Are there opportunities for professional development? Is there an opportunity for future advancement? Who is your supervisor? How many hours will you work each week? Do you fit in with the company culture?

### **SALARY AND BEYOND**

- Do research on salaries in your area/field and geographic area. [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com), [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com), [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com), and <https://www.linkedin.com/salary/> are all good places to begin. You can then follow up with professionals in your industry, asking them if the range you found through research appears to be accurate. Review similar positions on online boards in your geographic area, since some will post salary ranges. Keep in mind that salaries can vary greatly depending on geographic area. If searching out of the area, research cost of living at <http://money.cnn.com/calculator/pf/cost-of-living/> or [www.bestplaces.net](http://www.bestplaces.net). Do not bring up salary until the employer does, and do not negotiate your salary until the position offer is made. If possible, do not be the first person to list the exact figure. A last thought is that you do not want to settle, but do not overestimate what you are worth.

### **NEGOTIATIONS**

- It is common to focus on just the salary/hourly rate, but there is much more to consider!
  - Various benefits, which include paid time off, various types of insurance, retirement, and a relocation allowance. For example, Job A may have a higher starting salary than Job B. However, after determining how much vacation/sick leave granted, how much you pay for various insurance premiums, tuition reimbursement, if the employer contributes to your retirement account, and parking, among other factors, you may actually earn more at Job B!
    - Does the employer offer various types of insurance, such as health/eye/vision, disability, life, and accidental death? You need to know what you pay monthly, what your out-of-pocket costs will be, and if you must wait for coverage to begin.
    - What plan is offered for retirement, what do you and the employer contribute, and do you have to wait a certain amount of time before you can enroll in the plan?
    - What amount of vacation/sick/holiday paid leave do you earn each month or year? Do you have to wait a certain amount of time to use leave?
    - Do they offer a signing bonus? Certain industries do.
    - Is a relocation allowance available for your moving and transportation costs?
  - If you cannot negotiate salary, you may be able to negotiate vacation leave or something else.

## **JOB OFFER**

- Make sure to get the offer in writing, through an email message or formal letter. Information will typically include the position title, salary/hourly rate, and start date. We recommend also getting benefits such as sick/vacation leave, health care, and retirement outlined.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- Job functions and career path - Do you like what you will be doing on a daily basis? What future promotion opportunities are available? What will you learn in this position that will help you further your skills set?
- Location - Do you like the geographic location, or will you have to move? How much time will you spend on the commute?
- Hours and travel - Will the position require evening and weekend hours, or are the hours typically a standard schedule? Are there flex hours options? Will you be able (or have) to travel?

## **SALARY NEGOTIATION PROMPTS**

### **When asked about salary expectations in an interview...**

I would like to know more about the position and various benefits, but I am confident that your organization offers a competitive market salary.

### **If the pay is lower than you expected through research...**

Thank you for this offer! I am excited about this position and working for (xxx), and am confident that I can contribute a great deal. However, according to my research the average salary range for someone with my qualification in this position is (xxx). Would you be able to match that amount?

### **If you have another offer with a higher starting salary/compensation package....**

Thank you for this offer! I am excited about this position and working for (xxx), and am confident that I can contribute a great deal. However, as you know, I have been interviewing with other employers and do have another offer with a higher salary. Is your offer negotiable?



## **CAREER PLANNING CHECKLIST**



A Career Plan is a flexible tool to guide you in making decisions regarding courses, extra-curricular activities, part-time/summer jobs, internships, and special projects. Each year of college, your courses and activities provide experiences upon which to build and revise a Career Plan. Create your initial plan and follow up with 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. The ideas below will help you get started on your path to success!

### **FIRST YEAR – ASK & EXPERIENCE**

- ☐ Enroll in core/general education courses.
- ☐ Get to know other students, faculty, and staff on campus.
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with our website and “like” our Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages to stay up-to-date on a variety of areas.
- ☐ Visit Career Services. Most seniors who did not stop by early regret that decision.
- ☐ Conduct informational interviews with people in your area of interest. Information can be found in this Guide.
- ☐ Keep your grades up and seek help from McKendree’s Tutoring Services or Writing Center if needed.
- ☐ Take online career assessments through Career Services and then schedule an appointment.
- ☐ Get involved with clubs and organizations, volunteer, and/or obtain a part-time job to gain valuable experience. You can search for jobs on McKendree’s Handshake system at <https://joinhandshake.com>.
- ☐ Keep your social networking pages neutral; do not post negative and/or profane comments, inappropriate photographs, or other questionable posts.
- ☐ Attend the McKendree Job & Internship Fair to gather information on potential careers and employers, as well as to simply get acquainted with the format of this type of fair.
- ☐ Start creating your résumé, including high school information until sophomore year of college.

### **SOPHOMORE YEAR – ASSESS & EXPLORE**

- ☐ Take online career assessments through Career Services and then schedule a career counseling appointment.
- ☐ Explore potential occupations. Visit companies and working professionals in your field of interest and conduct informational interviews. See information listed in this Guide.
- ☐ Find three to five people in your field of interest to serve as mentors.
- ☐ Gain relevant work experience through volunteering, part-time work, or activities.
- ☐ Create or update your résumé.
- ☐ Attend the McKendree Job & Internship 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 and/or senior year.
- ☐ Create a LinkedIn profile and be aware of what you are posting on other social media sites.



### **JUNIOR YEAR – EVALUATE & NETWORK**

- ☐ Enroll in major/minor courses for the majority of your classes. Take electives in various areas and consider enrolling in *Careers, Job Search, and Beyond* for academic credit. This course helps to better prepare students for the job search and first year on the job.
- ☐ Register on Handshake at <https://joinhandshake.com> to have access to full-time/part-time/internship positions posted to McKendree in local and out of state locations. Students can also upload their résumé to be reviewed by approved employers on this system.
- ☐ Complete an internship for academic credit.
- ☐ Explore the possibility of studying abroad for a semester.
- ☐ Begin to plan your job search strategies. Create or update your résumé and cover letter for review 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 that is of interest to you.
- ☐ Check academic status related to credits and GPA to ensure you are on track to graduate.
- ☐ Review your voice mail message and email address to make sure they are professional.
- ☐ Continue to build professional relationships with people and remember that networking is something that should benefit both parties.
- ☐ Check your voice mail message and email address to make sure they are professional.
- ☐ Attend McKendree's Job & Internship Fair to gather information on potential careers, and to aid in your job search.

### **SENIOR YEAR – MARKET YOURSELF**

- ☐ Review your social media accounts for any inappropriate content and create/update your LinkedIn account to network 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 McKendree Job & Internship Fairs 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 individuals (faculty, previous/current supervisors, and coaches, among others) if they would be willing to serve as a professional references, and then create a references page. Ask for letters of recommendation if needed.
- ☐ Schedule a mock interview session with Career Services. Purchase appropriate interview attire that is suited for your field.
- ☐ Target places of potential employment and begin researching the companies.
- ☐ Start the job search process early in your senior year through several methods.
- ☐ NETWORK with as many people as possible and obtain their business cards to follow up!
- ☐ Join related professional organizations while you are a student.
- ☐ Register on Handshake at <https://joinhandshake.com> to have access to full-time/part-time/internship positions posted to McKendree. Upload your résumé so that the document can be reviewed by employers on this system.

## **HOW CAREER SERVICES CAN HELP**

Career Services offers a variety of assistance throughout your time at McKendree. Some of these services include:

- **Handshake:** By uploading your résumé to our online career management system, you can have the document reviewed by Career Services and made viewable to approved employers. In addition, registering on Handshake allows you to search for local, regional, and out of state jobs. Go to <https://joinhandshake.com> to get started now!
- **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.
- **Career Counseling:** Do you need guidance on what areas to pursue with your major? We are happy to speak with you! In addition, there are online career assessments you can take before speaking with a staff member in our office.
- **Drop-in Sessions and Career Labs:** We will regularly set up a table next to the Piper lobby to offer students and alumni services on topics such as resumes, cover letters, interviewing tips, internships, and job fair suggestions. Stop by to ask questions – no appointment needed! We also offer drop-in times at the theHUB for you to come in and work on your job/internship search and graduate school materials.
- **Classroom Presentations:** Your faculty members can contact us to do a presentation for your class.
- **Career Fairs:** Career Services holds a Job and Internship Fair every February in the Hett. In addition, we co-sponsor several job fairs throughout the year/
- **Career Conference:** Our Career Conference brings employers 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.

**Enroll in our UNI 202 course, *Careers, the Job Search, and Beyond*, during the spring semester to gain valuable information AND earn one credit hour!**



## What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is an online professional networking service, commonly thought of as “social media from a professional angle.” You can create your professional profile, highlight your accomplishments, connect to other professionals, and explore career paths and professional opportunities.

## How do I get started?

Create your profile at [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com). Whether you are a current student or an alumni with many years of experience, as you create your profile, you will be prompted to create various sections that display your achievements, education, projects, positions, and involvement.

## I’ve created my profile...now what?

- **Keep it current.** As you take new courses, join a new organization, complete a project, or develop a new skill, add it to your profile.
- **Connect.** As you find peers, family, coworkers, professors, and past/current supervisors, send them an invitation to connect. Personalize your message, especially for those professionals you may only know on a limited basis.
- **Be a joiner.** Groups are a great feature of LinkedIn, and you will find many professional organizations with LinkedIn groups. Search for those groups that relate to your major/field and join them. This will allow you to discover the current “hot topics,” learn from experienced professionals, and potentially connect with those active in your field.
- **Explore opportunities and career paths.** Many mid-size and large companies now post open positions on LinkedIn, so be sure to add LinkedIn to your list of job search sites. In addition, you can view the profiles of those professionals with your “dream job” to gain information on potential career paths to reach your goals.
- **Research companies.** LinkedIn is a great tool to learn about company culture, search to see if any McKendree alumni are working at a particular company, and conduct other company research as you learn about potential future employers. This is just one way to gain insight about a company prior to an interview.

**Coming to a classroom  
near you each spring...**

***UNI 202: Careers,  
the Job Search, and  
Beyond***

***Discover how this one-hour course can guide you  
step-by-step in preparing for your  
life after graduation.***

***Taught by Career Services & Open to Juniors & Seniors  
Wednesdays, 12:00-12:50***