

VALENCIA COLLEGE

Career Center Job Readiness Guide

LOCATIONS

East Campus | Bldg. 5-230 | 407.582.2259

Osceola Campus | Bldg. 2-140 | 407.582.4391

(serves Lake Nona & Poinciana campuses)

West Campus | SSB-206 | 407.582.1464

(serves Downtown campus)

Winter Park Campus | Bldg. 1-217 | 407.582.6882

valenciacollege.edu/careercenter

Table of Contents

Job Search Strategies	Page 3
Researching Companies	Page 4
Resume Purpose	Page 5
Resume Format Styles	Page 6
Resume Strategies	Page 7
Action Verbs	Page 8
Verb Phrases	Page 9
Resume Sample: Chronological	Page 10
Resume Sample: Functional	Page 11
Resume Sample: Targeted	Page 12
Reference Page Sample	Page 13
Cover Letter Purpose	Page 14
Cover Letter Format Tips	Page 15
Cover Letter Sample	Page 16
Job Applications Tips for Ex-Offenders	Page 17
Interview Process	Page 18
Big Interview	Page 19
Video Interview Tips	Page 20
Interview Questions	Page 21 - 22
Interview Like a Superstar	Page 23
After the Interview Thank You Note	Page 24
Thank You Note Sample	Page 25
Considering an Offer	Page 26
Competencies Skills Employers Seek	Page 27

Job Search Strategies

KNOW YOURSELF

- Identify your interests, skills, and values.
- Be prepared to communicate your skills and accomplishments to potential employers verbally and in writing. Don't forget development of your "elevator pitch".

CREATE AN ACTION PLAN

- Create a list of target companies that match your interests, skills and values.
- Research each organization and the available career opportunities.
- Set, track, and meet short-term goals and urgent deadlines.

DEVELOP A NETWORK

- Conduct informational interviews with various contacts and companies.
- Consider joining a professional network.
- Utilize social media to connect with other professionals in your area of interest.

OBTAIN EXPERIENCE

- Engage in volunteering, part-time work, internships, or a club on campus.

BE OPEN-MINDED

- Be open to possibilities outside of your particular degree field and focus on developing valuable skills even if it is not your "dream job."
- Broaden your search to a variety of geographical locations, part-time or contract work, and starting salary options.

CONSIDER LESS POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS

- Non-profit, federal government, and small—medium size companies also have a variety of valuable opportunities and room for advancement.

CREATE A POWERFUL PRESENCE

- Clearly demonstrate relevant skills in a resume and cover letter.
- Focus on accomplishments rather than duties or responsibilities performed.
- Tailor requested documents to each job posting or organization.

MAINTAIN A PRESENCE

- Periodically keep in contact with the individuals in your network. Contact employers 1 1/2 - 2 weeks after submitting your resume to see if they received your application materials and to reinforce your interest..

BE PATIENT AND POSITIVE

ASK FOR ASSISTANCE

Visit the [Career Center](#) for job search guidance and support

Researching Companies

Know Yourself

- Reflect on your own career interests and work values to assess whether the company will support you both professionally and personally
- Develop your resume to reflect skills and accomplishments specific to the company so you can better articulate how you're qualified to work for them.

Know the Company

- Read the company's mission statement, history and values to gain an understanding of how you match their goals.
- Brainstorm questions related to job description, work culture and professional advancement to prepare for career fairs and interviews.

Know the Staff

- Review current staff biographies, either on the company's website or through LinkedIn, to learn about their academic backgrounds, career development and strategies for landing their current position.
- Conduct informational interviews with current staff to gain their perspective about the company and their position.

Know the Industry

- Subscribe to professional publications and organizations so you have access to current journals and newsletters relevant to your field.
- Talk to people in your professional network to gain their perspective on companies.

Know Your Resources

- **Use career resources to further explore opportunities:**

Occupational Outlook Handbook – www.bls.gov/ooh

O*Net Online – www.onetonline.org

America's Career INFONET – www.careerinfonet.org

Salary.com – www.salary.com/

CandidCareer - <https://valenciacollege.edu/students/career-center/explore-majors-and-careers.php>

- **Social Media:**

Use LinkedIn and Twitter to follow companies, groups, and job listings

- **General Job Boards:**

www.careerbuilder.com

www.linkedin.com/jobs

www.careersourcecentralflorida.com/

www.indeed.com

www.ziprecruiter.com

Resume Purpose

The purpose of your resume is to get an interview. This written document is used to highlight skills, contributions, and experiences that represent the personal brand you want to portray to potential employers.

Most employers decide **within** thirty seconds or less, whether or not to consider applicants for employment, so your resume's content must be **CLEAR, CONCISE, and COMPELLING**.

KEEP IN MIND: Not all of your experiences are likely to be included in your final version, but a running list can help you craft and tailor a resume for any opportunity.

Begin the resume writing process by jotting down **EVERY** position or experience you've had.

Here's a list of example experiences to help you brainstorm:

Organizations to which you've belonged

Leadership Positions

Current or Previous Jobs

Volunteer Experiences

Special Class Projects

Awards | Honors

Languages you speak

Computer | Technology Skills | Certifications

Special Interests | Hobbies

Travel | Study Abroad

Anything else significant

NEXT STEP FOR YOUR FIRST DRAFT:

Decide on the resume format that you prefer to use based on the message you want to portray to Employers.

TIP: See Sample Resumes starting on Page 10

Resume Formats | Styles

The format or style you choose should draw attention to your qualifications and attract a potential employer's interest. When choosing a resume format, consider your skills and experience, and choose the format that best highlights your qualifications.

Chronological Resume Organizes information chronologically from current to previous. Emphasizes education, career growth, and work experience. Prioritize your sections so you start with the most important first.

When to use this format...

- Staying in the same field as past jobs
- Job history shows growth & development
- Name of last employer is impressive
- Want to emphasize employment history

When not to use this format...

- Changed employers frequently
- Changing career goals or work focus
- Want to de-emphasize dates
- Absent from job market for a while

Functional Resume Highlights information in categories based on commonly grouped skills.

When to use this format...

- Have performed specific skills in past jobs
- Changing career goals or work focus
- Have been out of the job market for a while
- Changed employers frequently

When not to use this format...

- Skills and experience are limited
- Want to emphasize employment history
- Name of last employer is important
- Job history shows growth & development

Targeted Resume Highlights capabilities, skills and supporting accomplishments for a **specific** job.

When to use this format...

- Very clear about job direction or skill focus
- Revise resume for each target job
- Have the required skills, but a short work history

When not to use this format...

- Unsure of the type of job interested in
- Uncertain of skills and capabilities
- Limited experience and/or skills
- Only want one all-purpose resume

Unsure which format you should use? Please consult with a [Career Services Team Member](#) to identify which resume style is best for you.

When applying for an internship

- Focus on your knowledge, skills, and abilities that match the needs of the employer/career field. Example: Computer/Technical Knowledge, Leadership Training, Communication Skills, etc.
- Analyze each work or volunteer experience so that you can explain to an employer what knowledge and skills you have gained. Example: Working as a Camp Counselor might not relate to your chosen career field, but Camp Counselors learn "transferable" skills such as managing groups of people, facilitating activities, and fostering relationships with "campers/customers." These are skills that could be used in future positions.

Resume Strategies

DO:

DO BE CONCISE

Your resume should be an outline of your experience (including internship and volunteer experience), qualifications and education. Use short phrases or bullets to highlight key points; save details for your cover letter and/or interview. Limit your resume to one page. Two page resumes are applicable only if you have extensive experience or education

DO TARGET RESUME

Think about what is important in your field. Consider including class projects that highlight your skills or show experience implementing concepts into real-world applications.

DO BE CONSISTENT

Be consistent with all formatting. For example, if you italicize one job title, then you should italicize all job titles. Consistency shows that you are detail oriented, an important skill in most occupations.

DO HIGHLIGHT SKILLS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Instead of simply listing job duties, communicate relevant skills and accomplishments. Emphasize leadership, organizational, communication, and teamwork skills. Demonstrate results of your efforts by including figures wherever possible. (Ex. "Decreased costs by 20%")

DO BE HONEST & ACCURATE

Convey your qualifications in a positive light without embellishment or exaggeration. Employers often advertise a "wish list" of qualifications and don't necessarily expect applicants to have them all.

DO CREATE A PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

The employer's first impression of you is based on your resume. Make sure it reflects the professional image you want to convey!

DO PROOFREAD & EDIT

Have someone else review your resume to check for errors or awkward phrasing. Bring your resume to the [Career Center](#) for review by a Career Advisor.

DON'T:

DON'T INCLUDE IRRELEVANT INFORMATION

Leave out irrelevant information such as personal interests, family status, and salary requirements. Include only information pertinent to your job-related qualifications.

DON'T USE PASSIVE PHRASES

Use action verbs to help emphasize your accomplishments rather than passively listing your job duties or responsibilities.

DON'T USE HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

High school information is ancient history to recruiters. Stick to career-related and education-related accomplishments during college.

DON'T LABEL THE DOCUMENT "RESUME"

It will be clear to the reviewer that this is your resume.

DON'T EXAGGERATE

You may be asked to expound on any information you include in your resume. Be as accurate as possible without selling your skills short.

DON'T OVERLOOK EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Experience gained during volunteer work, participation in campus or community organizations, and leadership experiences are all valid. Valuable transferable skills can be learned and practiced through volunteer and extracurricular experiences.

DON'T INCLUDE SALARY INFORMATION

If a company requires a salary history, include it as a separate page or address it in your cover letter. Save discussion on this topic until after the employer has introduced the subject.

DON'T LIST REFERENCES ON RESUME

References should be listed on a separate page and provided on request. Inform your references each time you submit their contact information to an employer. Make sure your references have current copies of your resume so that they can speak knowledgeably on your behalf.

Additional Tips:

- There is no use of pronouns (i.e. I, me, we, my, them, etc.)
- Easy to read, professional fonts such as Calibri, Arial, or Garamond should be used
- Font size is in the 10-12 point range (headers can be 14-16 point and margin size is between .5 to 1 inch)
- Bullet points are not comprised of full sentences or paragraphs - begin each bullet with an action verb (use the correct verb tense)

Action Verbs

Begin each bullet statement with a strong action verb to describe your accomplishments and experience. Make sure that you are using the correct verb tense ("ed" ending = past tense).

Formula: Power Action Verb (skill) + Identifiable Task + Result

Example: Coordinated a campus event involving 200 individuals that resulted in \$3,300 collected for the Valencia Success Scholarship.

COMMUNICATION	Organized	Allocated	Diagnosed	Delegated
Addressed	Reviewed	Analyzed	Educated	Developed
Advertised	Summarized	Appraised	Encouraged	Directed
Arbitrated	Surveyed	Audited	Expedited	Evaluated
Arranged	Systematized	Balanced	Facilitated	Executed
Authored		Budgeted	Familiarized	Improved
Collaborated	TECHNICAL	Calculated	Guided	Increased
Convinced	Assembled	Computed	Motivated	Organized
Corresponded	Built	Developed	Referred	Oversaw
Developed	Calculated	Forecasted	Rehabilitated	Planned
Directed	Computed	Managed	Represented	Prioritized
Drafted	Designed	Marketed	Volunteered	Produced
Edited	Devised	Planned		Recommended
Enlisted	Engineered	Projected	DETAIL	Reviewed
Formulated	Fabricated	Researched	Approved	Scheduled
Influenced	Maintained		Arranged	Strengthened
Interpreted	Operated	CREATIVE	Cataloged	Supervised
Lectured	Overhauled	Acted	Classified	
Mediated	Programmed	Composed	Collected	ACCOMPLISHMENT
Moderated	Remodeled	Conceptualized	Complied	Achieved
Negotiated	Repaired	Created	Dispatched	Expanded
Persuaded	Solved	Customized	Executed	Improved
Presented	Upgraded	Designed	Generated	Pioneered
Promoted		Developed	Implemented	Reduced
Publicized	TEACHING	Directed	Inspected	Resolved
Reconciled	Adapted	Established	Monitored	Restored
Recruited	Advised	Fashioned	Operated	Spearheaded
Solicited	Aided	Founded	Organized	Transformed
Spoke	Clarified	Illustrated	Prepared	
Translated	Coached	Initiated	Processed	EFFICIENCY
Wrote	Communicated	Instituted	Purchased	Accelerated
	Coordinated	Integrated	Recorded	Allocated
RESEARCH	Demystified	Introduced	Retrieved	Boosted
Clarified	Developed	Invented	Screened	Centralized
Collected	Enabled	Originated	Specified	Eliminated
Critiqued	Evaluated	Photographed	Systematized	Enhanced
Detected	Explained	Performed	Tabulated	Expanded
Diagnosed	Facilitated	Planned	Validated	Leveraged
Evaluated	Guided	Revitalized		Maximized
Examined	Informed	Shaped	MANAGEMENT	Merged
Extracted	Instructed		Administered	Outlined
Identified	Persuaded	HELPING	Analyzed	Prevented
Inspected	Set goals	Assessed	Assigned	Prioritized
Interpreted	Stimulated	Assisted	Attained	Reduced
Interviewed	Trained	Clarified	Chaired	Simplified
Investigated		Coached	Consolidated	Standardized
Located	FINANCIAL	Counseled	Contracted	Stream-lined
Measured	Administered	Demonstrated	Coordinated	Upgraded

Verb Phrases

Sample Action Verb Phrases for Common Jobs

Having a tough time getting started with your action verb phrases? Never underestimate the value of what you may think of as "just a simple part-time job." Here are a few common jobs and some great action verb phrases worded professionally and effectively to attract employer interest.

<p>General Office Administrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answered and directed over 100 telephone calls per day from clients and vendors.• Greeted customers and provided accurate information on services available.• Retrieved, forwarded and responded to over 500 emails daily from customers and vendors.• Filed and retrieved over 200 time-sensitive documents each day.• Processed over 100 cash, check and credit transactions each day with deposits in excess of \$300,000.• Managed administrative tasks such as data entry and appointment scheduling.• Assisted management with the use of social media to target new audiences.	<p>Short-Term Volunteer Activity Campus Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participated in a week-long, 24-member Habitat for Humanity team charged with roofing over 100 homes damaged by hurricanes.• Coordinated and staffed the walker registration table at the annual "Walk for Life" event which raised over \$15,000.• Served on three-day community clean-up projects designed to provide assistance to elderly community members.• Set-up and broke-down charitable community event for local church which raised college funds for at-risk youth.• Gathered clothing donations and distributed to neighborhood homeless shelter for school community project.• Co-organized the college's annual holiday canned-food drive for the city's food bank.
<p>Retail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greeted shoppers and assisted them in selecting and purchasing personal items and gifts.• Operated a cash register and credit card approval machine to process customer transactions at a high-volume retail store grossing annual sales in excess of \$5,000,000.• Monitored, maintained and refreshed a sales floor inventory valued at over \$100,000.• Prepared attractive merchandise displays designed to attract attention and increase sales returns and responded to angry customers with professionalism, clear communication and tact.• Opened and closed the store during the absence of the store manager.	<p>Fast Food Worker Restaurant Server</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greeted customers, took their orders, and delivered their orders in a fast, efficient, and friendly manner.• Maintained the cleanliness of the kitchen and service counter in compliance with state health and safety regulations.• Developed speed and accuracy in preparing customer food orders from a variety of work-stations including front counter, grill, fryer, beverage machine, drive-through window and salad bar.• Earned the Employee of the Month Award three times in a six-month period.
<p>Stocking Shelves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processed, categorized, and shelved new inventory.• Monitored, maintained, and ordered inventory to refresh stock to prescribed levels.• Noted changes in inventory flow and alerted management of impact on supply and demand.• Coordinated and supervised the annual year-end inventory check which included supervising and scheduling 20 temporary Employees during the week-long activity.	<p>Childcare Provider Baby Sitter Nanny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planned and initiated after school indoor and outdoor activities for five children ages 6 to 12 for over five years.• Transported children from school to extracurricular activities and prepared snacks and meals.• Maintained constant communications with parents regarding discipline, health and safety issues related to their children.• Led six first-grade children in after-school activities including light exercise program and educational games.

Chronological Resume Sample

Your Name

Orlando, FL (407) 555-xxxx yourname@mail.valenciacollege.edu

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a full time position as an Instrumentation Technician where I can implement my industry-specific skills to XYZ Company in order to help expand the new Electronics Department

EDUCATION

Valencia College Orlando, FL
Associate in Science in Electronics Engineering Technology 20xx
Specialization: Telecommunications and Wireless Technology
Honors
- Dean's List: Fall 20xx, Spring 20xx
- Florida Bright Futures Scholar

Co-Curricular Distinction
- Career Action Distinction 20xx
• Completed career and professional development activities

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Intern, Research and Development 20xx – xx
Motorola, Inc. Orlando, FL
• Performed battery life testing and evaluation on batteries under redesign
• Assisted with the instrumentation of mobile computers for further testing
• Analyzed and performed troubleshooting to reporting system and board-level issues

Office Assistant 20xx – xx
RGS Electrical Services Clermont, FL
• Managed and organized office files and accounting records
• Assisted in obtaining proper permits for various projects
• Assisted with the development of cost estimates and maintained project budgets

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sales Associate 20xx – xx
Macy's Orlando, FL
• Assisted customers with merchandise selection and sales transactions
• Maintained an orderly sales floor and stocked merchandise

SKILLS

Computer: Proficient in AutoCAD, Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint
Language: Fluent in Portuguese; Basic Spanish

CAMPUS/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Student Government Association, **Treasurer** 20xx – Present
• Manage finances and allocation of funds to various student organizations

Meals on Wheels, **Community Volunteer** 20xx – Present
• Deliver meals to senior members of the community

Functional Resume Sample

Orlando, FL (407) 555-xxxx Your Name
yourname6@mail.valenciacollege.edu

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Management

- Managed customer service/marketing program targeting the company's top customers nationally, resulting in \$437,000 sales per year
- Supervised staff of six sales representatives
- Identified organizational impact of issues and recommended alternative options
- Regulated reduction in staff due to organizational budget cuts, maintaining productivity standard with fewer staff members

Organization

- Oversaw transition to a fully automated office system, resulting in increased staff productivity and higher morale
- Developed and refined computerized database management program, improving speed in retrieving information used in decision-making

Marketing/Public Relations

- Edited managerial materials for presentation to board, consulting with senior level executives in development of information
- Targeted top customers during marketing campaign creating solid partnerships
- Developed decision papers for trustees and executives with a \$360 million HMO budget
- Wrote newsletters and speeches for trustees

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint
- Fluent in English and Spanish

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Public Relations
University of Central Florida

Expected 20xx
Orlando, Florida

Associate in Arts
Valencia College

20xx
Orlando, Florida

RELATED COURSEWORK

Public Relations
Principles of Advertising

Ad-PR Campaigns
Mass Communication Law

Writing for Public Relations
Journalism Ethics

WORK HISTORY

Marketing Manager - Crestline Communications; Orlando, Florida
Administrative Analyst II - Group Health Associates; Orlando, Florida
Assistant Office Director - Tri Health Associates; Miami, Florida

20xx-20xx
20xx-20xx
20xx-20xx

Targeted Resume Sample

Your Name

1805 Pine Tree Lane Orlando, FL 32811 (407) 555-xxxx yourname@mail.valenciacollege.edu

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- ◆ Experienced manager with expertise in marketing and public relations
- ◆ Superb written and oral communication skills
- ◆ Experience in survey design and market research
- ◆ Strong graphic design skills
- ◆ Organizational and strategic planning experience
- ◆ Active member of the Public Relations Society of America, Orlando Chapter

RELATED SKILLS

- ◆ Manage customer service and marketing programs
- ◆ Identify opportunities, formulate strategies and implement plans to stimulate sales
- ◆ Supervise sales, marketing and clerical personnel
- ◆ Develop decision papers for HMOs
- ◆ Identify organizational impact of issues and recommend alternative options
- ◆ Edit managerial materials prepared for presentations
- ◆ Write company newsletters and executive speeches

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Managed customer service/marketing program targeting company's top customers nationally, resulting in \$437,000 sales per year
- ◆ Supervised staff of six marketing representatives
- ◆ Developed decision papers for trustees and executives with a \$360 million HMO budget
- ◆ Oversaw transition of office to full-automated office system, resulting in increased staff productivity and higher morale
- ◆ Wrote newsletters and speeches for trustees of Tri Health Associates
- ◆ Managed reduction in staff due to organizational budget cuts, maintaining productivity standard with fewer staff members

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- ◆ Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint; 10-Key calculator by touch
- ◆ Fluent in English and Spanish

WORK HISTORY

March 20xx - Present	<i>Marketing Manager</i> Crestline Communications, Orlando, Florida
January 20xx - December 20xx	<i>Administrative Analyst II</i> Group Health Associates, Orlando, Florida
August 20xx - November 20xx	<i>Assistant Office Manager</i> Tri Health Associates, Miami, Florida

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Public Relations, Expected 20xx
University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

Associate in Arts, 20xx
Valencia College, Orlando, Florida

Reference Page Sample

Your Name

Orlando, FL
(407) 123-xxxx
Yourname@gmail.com
www.linkedin.com/yournameexample

REFERENCES

Reference Name
Company of Employment
Job Title
Phone Number
Email

Reference Name
Company of Employment
Job Title
Phone Number
Email

Reference Name
Company of Employment
Job Title
Phone Number
Email

Reference Page Tips

- References should not be listed on your resume
- Select 3-5 references (employers, professors, advisors) that can speak to your ability to do the job.
- Ask your references for their permission and correct contact information before listing them
- Provide a copy of your most current resume and a job description to references for their use if contacted
- Ensure references are able to speak positively about your professionalism or character
- Avoid using family members or friends as references
- Keep the header of your Resume, Cover Letter, and Reference page consistent
- Be sure to include the following for each of your references: Full Name, Company, Job Title, Phone Number, Email
- You may also consider listing additional information such as, relationship (how you know the person), length of relationship

Cover Letter Purpose

Cover letters create an employer's first impression of you as an applicant by highlighting your communication skills, interest in the position, and knowledge of the organization and career field. It is beneficial to include a cover letter when you are applying for a position, even when it is not required.

A well-written cover letter introduces your resume and gives you the opportunity to direct the employer's attention to specific areas of your background. Make every effort to tailor each cover letter to show the connection between your qualifications and the position's requirements.

PURPOSE

- *Identifies the position for which you are applying.*
- *Indicates your interest in the position and employer.*
- *States your main qualifications, with supporting examples.*
- *Refers the reader to your enclosed resume.*
- *Specifies the action(s) that you will take in pursuit of this employment opportunity.*

Steps for Writing a Cover Letter

Writing a strong targeted cover letter requires you to take time to reflect on both the position for which you are applying and your past experiences. The steps below will provide you with a structured way to write a successful cover letter.

1. **Learn about the organization.** What are its goals and mission? Pay attention to the language used to describe the organization and use similar language when talking about yourself. You can often find information about a company on their website.
2. **Review the position listing and highlight important words and phrases.** A position description is the employer's way of telling you exactly what they are seeking in an applicant.
3. **Consider skills you have relevant to the employer's needs.** These may be from a variety of experiences (internship, job, volunteering, clubs, class projects). It is up to you to make the connection so the employer sees how and why you meet their needs.
4. **Write a draft that clearly explains how and why you should be considered for the position.** Describe two or three experiences, accomplishments or skills that demonstrate your fit with the position. Be specific and provide **examples** to support your claims. Avoid the temptation to copy wording from sample cover letters and do not simply repeat what is on your resume. Be sure to highlight what you have to offer, rather than what you want to gain.
5. **Carefully Revise Your Cover Letter.** Cover letters should be free from grammatical and spelling errors. Reading your cover letter aloud can assist you in identifying errors. Also consider scheduling an appointment with the Career Center to have your cover letter reviewed. Customize your cover letter to match the position and organization for which you are applying.

Cover Letter Format

WHO AM I?

Opening paragraph: *Capture the interest of the employer*

- 1) Name the position you are applying for and how you heard about it.
- 2) Include the name of a mutual contact if you have one.
- 3) Express your interest in the position and/or the company.
- 4) Provide a brief summary detailing 2 - 3 reasons why the company should hire you.

WHY SHOULD YOU HIRE ME?

Middle paragraph(s): *Create a desire on the part of the employer to know more about you.*

- 1) Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and how the position aligns with your values, skills, and experience.
- 2) Point out your achievements or qualifications in this field, especially those that meet the job description or requirements
- 3) Reference a relevant fact, accolade, or unique aspect of the company's operations and connect this with your desire to work there.

CALL TO ACTION

Closing paragraph: *Pave the way for the interview.*

- 1) Ask for an appointment.
- 2) State that you will contact the employer in the near future.
- 3) Thank the employer for the consideration of future employment.

Cover Letter Tips

- Address your letter to a specific individual whenever possible. When a name is not available, use "Hiring Manager" or "Internship Coordinator" instead of "To Whom It May Concern" or "Sir/Madam."
- Cover letters are usually uploaded as part of an online application or included as an attachment with an e-mail.
- Avoid beginning each sentence with "I" - it is a sign of weak writing skills.
- Limit your cover letter to a one-page standard business letter format with margins ranging from 3/4" to 1" on all sides and a basic font (Arial, Calibri, Garamond) in sizes 10-12 point size.
- The heading (*your name & contact information*) on your cover letter should match the heading on your resume.

Unsure which format you should use? Please consult with a [Career Services Team Member](#) to identify which cover letter style is best for you.

Traditional Cover Letter Sample

Your Name

Your Street Address
City, ST Zip Code

Phone Number
Professional Email Address

Date (*Type entire month, date, and year*)

Contact's Name
Contact's Title
Organization Name
Street Address
City, ST, Zip Code

Dear Mr., Ms., or Dr. (*last name of hiring manager if known | if unknown use Dear Hiring Manager*):

I am excited to submit my application for the Network Administrator Internship at XYZ Technology. My experience building local area networks, my excellent communication skills in English and Spanish, and my ability to troubleshoot and think on my feet make me the ideal candidate that you have been seeking. I am impressed with XYZ Technology's mission to enhance the productivity of users by delivering secure support services, and I have the skills and abilities to contribute to that mission.

In a recent class project, I demonstrated my ability to think on my feet and lead a team when creating a local area network (LAN) utilizing several Cisco switches and accessing them wirelessly for remote management via laptop. In this simulation, our task was to collect information from the "customer" and implement the system in a two hour class. We configured and connected a Cisco AP (Access Point) to one of the switches so the same wired network would be extended to WLAN (Wireless Local Area Network) and be accessible wirelessly. Working under a tight deadline, our team of three students were successful in meeting the customer's needs by configuring each switch, so it could be remotely managed via SSH.

I have also been an active volunteer at Community Technology Support Services for two years. As a more seasoned volunteer, I have taken the initiative to troubleshoot devices, complete detailed reports, and provide excellent customer support. This experience has strengthened my communication skills and confirmed my belief that my motivation soars when my work provides beneficial and technical support to colleagues and clients. I would be delighted to bring my focus and dedication to another organization whose mission I believe in.

Through these experiences, along with my coursework in Computer Information Technology at Valencia College, I am confident that I would be able to successfully navigate the challenges of the internship program at XYZ Technology. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you about my qualifications and look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign your name (*if you scan your signature and save it to a .jpg file, you can insert it into digital files above your typed name*)

Typed Student Name

Job Applications

Filling Out the Application

- Print clearly and do not use abbreviations
- Follow directions; be sure to proofread before submitting
- Use a professional email address
- Apply for a specific position; do not list "Any" or "All" when asked what job you are applying for
- Be honest! Employers have access to lots of personal information and lies are easily found out
- Make sure the job duties match what is on your resume
- Leave nothing blank
- Write N/A (not applicable) if a question does not apply to you
- Explain gaps in employment (Ex. Attending school or stay-at-home parent)
- For questions about salary, write 'negotiable' and wait for the employer to discuss it with you during the interview or offer stage

Tips for Ex-Offenders

Tips for Ex-Offenders

- Be honest; dishonesty is grounds for disqualification or firing
- Read questions carefully and only answer what is asked
- Obtain a copy of your record; seek to have it expunged or sealed if possible
- Know your chances; you may automatically be excluded from jobs with the government, military, insurance or banking, and working with children
- Be prepared to start with a job you are over-qualified for and work your way to a better position
- Give good references; verify with your references that you can list them on an application
- Brush up on interviewing skills and job search documents, such as resume, cover letter, and thank you's
- Learn to network
- Don't get discouraged
- For additional job search resources go to [Career One Stop](#)

Interview Process

Before | During | After

CONGRATULATIONS!

You made it to the interview, now what?

BEFORE: Prepare and create a good foundation of research by answering these three questions.

The Company: Who Are They?

Research the company and its management. Look to get a feel for the company culture and philosophy, current projects, dress code, names of the interviewers and their backgrounds.

The Candidate: Who Do They Want?

Don't assume the same job means the same thing to each company. Read the job advertisement thoroughly to identify key words, skills, and qualifications desired by the company.

Who Are You and How Does this Match the Role?

What are your skills, abilities, and personality traits and how does it all fit together with who they are and what they are looking for?

PRACTICE: Use [Big Interview](#) to learn and practice your interview skills. Schedule a practice interview with the Career Center.

DURING: Studies show that first impressions are formed within 7 - 17 seconds of meeting someone. Make Yours Count! Focus on the four ways in which we communicate.

What is said - be precise

Your answers need to be detailed; convince the interviewer you can add value to their organization by selling your skills and experiences, and provide real-life examples. A good length is 2 - 3 minutes (depending on the question).

How it is said - clarity

Speak clearly and pause for breath, remain professional, bring a pen and notebook.

How you act - body language

Smile and maintain eye contact. Avoid fidgeting, relax and be yourself!

How you dress - appearance

Select conservative | business attire and arrive at the interview 15 - 20 minutes early.

AFTER: The interview is not over once you shake hands and leave the employer. Follow up by sending a thank you email, letter, or phone call. See below to find out why following up is important.

Differentiate yourself from other candidates who did not take the time to follow up.

Reiterate your skills and interest in the job.

Show appreciation for the interview.

Mention anything that you forgot to state during the interview.

Big Interview

On-demand Interview Training System

We are pleased to offer you a **free** training system that features a new and innovative way to help you prepare more effectively for a job interview.

Big Interview is an online system that combines training AND practice to help improve your interview technique and build your confidence.

You have at your disposal a variety of tools including:

- Challenging, virtual practice interviews for all experience levels and dozens of industries
- A database of thousands of interview questions with tips on how to answer them
- The ability to rate and share your interview answers for feedback
- A comprehensive video training curriculum covering all aspects of landing a job
- A step-by-step interview Answer Builder for crafting answers to behavioral questions

CREATE YOUR BIG INTERVIEW ACCOUNT

STEP 1: Go to <https://valenciacollege.biginterview.com/> and click on "register" in the top banner, right side

STEP 2: Complete the registration process **using your Atlas email and password**

STEP 3: You will receive a confirmation email sent to your Valencia College Atlas email address. Click "**Verify**" in the email.

BIG INTERVIEW OPTIONS

- Be sure you have a web camera set up and ready to go.
- Once logged in, you will see Learn, Practice, My Videos, My Resume, and Assignments in the top banner.
- To start a practice interview, click on "Practice", select "Practice Interviews" and then select an interview type:
 - *General*: covers 80% of the interview questions you might get
 - *Admissions*: interviews by program type and school
 - *Industry*: hundreds of practice interviews by industry and job title
 - *Government*: interviews for a variety of federal and state jobs
 - *Competency | Skillset*: questions are sorted by competency level & skillset
 - *Veterans*: practice interviews for some of the fastest growing jobs for veterans
- If you want information about interviewing techniques with tips on how to respond to questions, click on "Learn" and select the Fast Track or Mastery Track curriculum.
- To complete an assignment for class, select "Assignment" and enter the code that was given to you by your instructor. Once you enter the code, click on Assignment to start and remember to follow the directions.

Video Interview Tips

It's always important to create a first impression! Preparation is the key whether the interview takes place in-person or on the computer. Below are tips to help you feel confident, connect with the interviewer, demonstrate your preparation, and help you to be more successful!

PREPARATION & EXPECTATIONS

1. Keep your research notes, resume, and the job description handy. Highlight the key items you want to talk about.
2. Review common interview questions and practice your answers. Practicing helps to eliminate awkward pauses and conversation fillers and ensures you include key talking points.
3. Prepare questions to ask at the end of the interview. This demonstrates your interest in the position, provides information that will help you to determine if this is the "right fit", and gives you one more opportunity to summarize your qualifications as they relate to the position and the work environment.
4. Listen carefully and allow the interviewer to finish speaking before you respond - don't interrupt.
5. It's okay to occasionally look down while the interviewer is speaking but when it is your turn, make sure you are looking directly at the camera.
6. Speak clearly and slowly, enunciating your words. Watch your body language and keep hand gestures to a minimum.
7. Dress just as you would for an in-person interview - from top to bottom! The right clothes put you in the right mindset.
8. Find a quiet location, silence your phone, turn off notifications on your computer, and let everyone know that you should not be disturbed. If there is an interruption, acknowledge it, apologize, and move on.
9. Set up early - be ready 10 to 15 minutes before the interview time. Have a bottle of water nearby and a pad to take notes.
10. Test everything days before the interview. Check your lighting and camera angle. The camera should be at eye-level so you can look straight ahead. If needed, raise the height of your computer. The light source should be in front of you or on either side of your computer. Avoid sitting with a window behind you.
11. Look at your background, is it professional and clean? The focus needs to be on you and not on your surroundings.
12. Check that your audio is crisp and clear. If your computer audio is not good, consider using ear buds or headphones.
13. Make sure your computer is fully charged or plugged in and that you are in an area with good Wi-Fi reception
14. Look directly into the camera, smile, and remember to breathe. **Try this tip:** find a favorite photo of someone who makes you happy and tape it directly above the camera - then look at the eyes in the photo. You'll end up projecting a warm vibe since looking at the photo genuinely makes you happy.

To learn more about video interviews, go to: <https://biginterview.com/video-interview/>

Interview Questions

PERSONAL | GENERAL

- Tell me about yourself.
 - Describe your strengths and weaknesses.
 - What can you uniquely offer this position?
 - Describe your current or most recent job role.
 - Why did you choose to interview with this organization?
 - What have you learned from a failure?
 - Share an accomplishment in which you are most proud.
 - Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
 - Do you have any questions for me? *(Be prepared with questions to ask the interviewer that will help you to determine if the opportunity is the "right fit" for you.) *see **After the Interview** page 25 for sample questions.*
-

EDUCATIONAL

- Why did you choose your major?
 - Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
 - In which campus activities did you participate?
 - Which class interests you the most?
 - Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
 - Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?
-

CRITICAL THINKING AND CHARACTER

- How would you describe yourself in three words?
 - What are you most proud of?
 - Pick a color that represents your personality and share why you chose that color.
 - What was the last book you read?
 - How do you persuade someone who firmly disagrees with your idea/suggestions/plan of action?
-

CAREER GOALS

- What other types of positions are you considering?
- How do you feel about travel?
- How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
- What qualities are you looking for in a supervisor?
- Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?

For additional interview resources, go to: <http://bit.ly/vcinterviewtips>

Interview Questions

BEHAVIOR | COMPETENCY BASED

Behavior-based questions are designed to elicit examples that showcase desired skills and behaviors. Employers typically ask for examples of transferable skills and abilities.

Adaptability

- Tell me about a situation in which you have had to adjust changes over which you had no control. How did you handle it?

Analytical Skills | Problem Solving

- Describe a situation in which you found a creative way to overcome an obstacle.

Decision Making

- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.

Team Work

- Tell me about a time when you worked with a classmate or colleague who was not doing their share of the work. How did you handle it?

Initiative

- Describe a situation in which you recognized a potential problem as an opportunity. What did you do?

Communication

- Tell me about a recent successful experience in making a speech or presentation.

Leadership

- Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills.

Interviewing Tips:

- Prepare strong, customized examples in each transferable skill area.
- Get specific about what you did.
- Examples can be pulled from experiences in a job, volunteer position, club/organization position, or from a classroom experience.
- Research the company and industry. Be prepared to answer specific questions about technical skills, industry trends, and current issues.

Contact the Career Center to schedule a practice interview
www.valenciacollege.edu/careercenter

Interview Like a Superstar

STAR(R) TECHNIQUE



SITUATION/TASK

Talk about the situation you were involved with or the task you were directed to complete.

ACTION

Discuss the specific actions that you took. Remember to highlight any relevant skills or competencies that you practiced in these actions.

RESULT

Tell the employer what resulted from your actions (i.e. a satisfied customer, an increase in sales, the resolution of a problem).

RELEVANCE

Loop back and tell the employer why your response is relevant.

TARGET YOUR RESPONSE

"Tell us about a time you had a conflict at work."

Remember, they don't actually care about the conflict. They care about:

- How you fit in with the team
- The way you handle stress
- If you are able to ask for help
- Your communication style

So make sure your answer highlights positive qualities that fit the skills they are listening for.



GET COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR AWESOMENESS

You are a rising star. You are awesome.

Start making a list of all the things you are proud of. Then, find the common thread - are those times that you helped people? Or were super organized? Maybe it was a time that you exceeded everyone's expectations or did more than was required.

Once you find a theme, run with it and make it part of your personal brand.

REMEMBER THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

Check out Simon Sinek's TEDTalk on YouTube called The Golden Circle.

People don't buy what you do, they buy WHY you do it. Start by telling people your purpose, your motivation for doing things.

Then, move on to how. What specific actions do you take to realize your why?

Finally, end on your "what" or your result. What do you do?

THINK AHEAD

Pretend you already work there.

What questions would you want to know about a new person? That's a great way to start practicing the answers you would give.

Make sure your answers not only match your personal brand, but also the job. If you already sound like you fit in, that makes it easier for the interviewers to picture you in the role.



After The Interview

QUESTIONS CANDIDATES CAN ASK EMPLOYERS

Prepare relevant and thoughtful questions that can't be answered with basic information on the company's website. For a comprehensive list of questions you might consider asking, go to, <https://www.themuse.com/advice/51-interview-questions-you-should-be-asking>

- What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
- Does your company provide professional development opportunities?
- What are your growth projections for next year?
- What do you like best about your job/company?
- How is your company environmentally conscious?
- Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
- Is there a lot of team project work?
- Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
- What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

Thank You Note

Always send a thank you note, whether you think you want the position or not!
This simple act may be the one factor that sets you apart from other candidates.

4630 Santa Ana Manor
Orlando, FL 32808
(407) 555-xxxx
yourname@valenciacollege.edu

April 29, 20xx

Mr. Henderson
Information Technology Manager
Orlando Regional Medical Center
1082 Kuhl Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803

Note: If submitting your thank you letter via email, the email's header section will provide similar information - it is not necessary to type this section in the message area of the email.

Dear Mr. Henderson:

It was a pleasure to meet with you today to discuss my qualifications for the Help Desk Specialist position. I enjoyed learning about the position and also about Orlando Regional Medical Center. After speaking with you, I believe that I have a solid understanding of the job responsibilities and am confident that my skills and experience will meet the needs of your department and the ORMC organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If I can provide you with any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 407-555-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Name

If printing your thank you letter, sign your name in black ink.

Thank You Note Sample

Dear Ms. Hope,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss your opening for an auditor. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about LVP Company and your current activities and upcoming projects.

I was impressed with LVP Company's strong commitment to innovation, employee satisfaction, and productivity. Your volunteer program is a wonderful example of your company's belief that corporations should be connected to their local community. As an active volunteer with the Boys & Girls Club of Central Florida, I am keenly aware of the importance of giving back to my community.

You mentioned that you need an auditor who has strong "people" skills, and this is an area in which I excel. Based on our conversation, I believe I have a solid understanding of the job responsibilities and I am confident that my qualifications align with the needs of your department.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you. If I can provide more information or answer any additional questions, please call 407.555.xxxx or email yourname@valenciacollege.edu.

Sincerely,

Your Name

A thank you note is an easy way to leave a lasting impression. It shows employers that you appreciate their time and value their insight. Whether for an informational interview, job shadow, or interview for a position, the thank you note is your final opportunity to shine! This message may be handwritten or emailed and should be sent within 24 hours.

Remember to ask for business cards or confirm the contact information for everyone you interviewed with prior to the end of the interview - you will need this for your note!

Considering An Offer

Compensation

- Compensation is only one factor in a ideal job offer, though it is often considered the most important.
- Check sites like [Payscale](#), [Salary.com](#) and [Glassdoor](#) to determine the range of compensation for similar roles. Then compare it to your offer and see if you would like to negotiate the salary.

Factors to consider when making your decision:

Benefits

- Examine the compensation packet carefully and don't hesitate to ask the HR representative questions about vacation, dental, medical, optical, and retirement benefits.

Work/Life Balance

- What will your expected work schedule be? Many companies now offer telecommuting or flexible work hours. Find out what options are open to you and weigh these with your preferred lifestyle.
- Will you be required to work overtime? If so, will you be compensated? Most organizations will not pay overtime for salaried employees but many will offer "comp time" or break-time for project teams.
- If you are expected to work overtime, inquire about how often it will happen; are there peak times for overtime?

Professional Development

- Will your career growth be supported and encouraged? Does the employer have a policy on helping with continuing education cost (a master's degree, technical training, writing courses, etc.)?
- Is there room to grow within the company? How often will your performance be reviewed and does this include a salary review?
- Will there be opportunities to work on challenging projects that will enable you to use skills and abilities that best reflect your strengths?

Office Culture

- Consider the environment you will be working in: Your boss, co-workers, and the overall focus and drive of a company will greatly impact your happiness, productivity, and success in an organization.

Multiple Job Offers

Accepting a job offer can be an exciting and happy time. But what happens if you accept a job offer and another better opportunity comes along. Keep in mind the following things:

- You have made a commitment to an organization. Think about how you would feel if the organization offered you a position and then called you to say "a better candidate became available, and we have decided to hire him/her instead. Reneging on a job offer is no different.
- You've heard the phrase "it's a small world". You never know when you will bump into manager or recruiter again. Protect your reputation by honoring your commitment that hiring

Next

Continue to build your network by joining the Valencia Alumni Association.

<https://valenciacollege.edu/alumni/>

CAREER READINESS SKILLS EMPLOYERS SEEK

Career & Self Development

Communication

Critical Thinking

Equity & Inclusion

Leadership

Professionalism

Teamwork

Technology

*Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers



EXPLORE: Discover your interests, skills, values and reflect on how they connect to your personal, academic, and professional goals.

ENGAGE: Participate in experiential opportunities that encourage professional development and strengthen your critical thinking, interpersonal, and communication skills.

EXCEL: Transition from college to career by applying your education, skills, and experience to attain your goals.

valenciacollege.edu/careercenter