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Our Vision
The vision of the Career Centers is that all Cougars attain career fulfillment.

Our Mission
Empower students and alumni to design and manage their career paths with clarity, competence, and confidence.

Our Values
The Career Center aspires to demonstrate the following values through our work with students, alumni, employers and campus partners. These values also guide the development of new programs, services, and strategic plans:

  - Collaboration
  - Cultural Sensitivity
  - Empathy
  - Holistic Approach
  - Integrity
  - Innovative Thinking
  - Professionalism
  - Respect
  - Student Centered
  - Social Mobility

How to Use This Guide
We want to meet you where you are as a student, so this is not a step-by-step guide, but rather a guide for you to find help right now in your journey. The icons below are sprinkled throughout this success guide and they each have meaning:

### Career Success Skills
Each icon represents a skill that is essential to new college hires. Candidates who demonstrate and articulate these skills will gain a competitive advantage over their peers. These eight icons will be placed throughout the guide to let you know which skill you’re developing:

- **CT**: Critical Thinking
- **T**: Teamwork
- **C**: Communication
- **P**: Professionalism
- **L**: Leadership
- **CM**: Career Management
- **DT**: Digital Technology
- **GF**: Global Fluency

Continued on the next two pages with complete descriptions of each icon.
**Career Road Map**

**ASSESS YOURSELF**
Learn what jobs go with your major. Begin exploring your strengths, skills, interests, values, personality and abilities. Join on-campus organizations. Register and sign-on to Handshake (jobs, career workshops, counseling appointments, etc.) Check out Career Center events!

**GET CONNECTED & EXPLORE**
Get involved on campus — network! Visit the Career Center and attend events. Begin exploring options through part-time jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities. Do informational interviews to learn about your career interests.

**NETWORK**
Begin researching organizations; attend career fairs. Really get to know faculty, advisors, peers. Intern or part-time job related to your career goals. Network — on and off campus. Begin preparing for the job search process and researching options for graduate school.

**PREPARE TO LAUNCH**
Continue the job search process. Customize your resume/cover letter for your job search. Apply for jobs. Practice interviewing. Participate in job fairs, on-campus recruiting, networking events, etc. Get the job you want!
Employers emphasize eight competencies as essential to new college hires. Candidates who demonstrate and articulate these skills will gain a competitive advantage over their peers.

**CT**
**CRITICAL THINKING**
- Identify relevant information and analyze data.
- Restrain emotions during analysis.
- Collaborate to develop and test possible solutions.
- Adopt multiple perspectives and distinguish between fact and opinion.

**T**
**TEAMWORK**
- Effectively communicate to define common goals.
- Reach consensus on processes and solutions.
- Work together to identify and utilize the strengths of each member.

**C**
**COMMUNICATION**
- Create and edit written reports.
- Adjust communications based on audience needs.
- Listen well and read body language.
- Articulate clearly and accurately when speaking and writing.

**P**
**PROFESSIONALISM**
- Work productively with others.
- Manage time and workload.
- Have a professional work image.
- Use social media responsibly.

**L**
**LEADERSHIP**
- Manage projects from beginning to end.
- Define and clarify roles, objectives, and processes.
- Coach others on performance improvement.
- Understand how to motivate others and delegate responsibilities.

**CM**
**CAREER MANAGEMENT**
- Identify areas of professional growth.
- Navigate and explore job options.
- Take necessary steps to pursue and advocate for opportunities in the workplace.

**DT**
**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**
- Value continuous learning.
- Be responsive to a variety of training formats.
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt to new and emerging technologies.
- Use technology ethically and efficiently to solve problems and accomplish goals.

**GF**
**GLOBAL FLUENCY**
- Value differences and implement strategies for inclusion.
- Interact effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Understand one’s own biases and use that awareness to work to eliminate them.

Developed by National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) based on extensive research among employers: www.naceweb.org
Understanding your interests, personality, strengths, and values can help you make informed choices about your major and career. You can discuss these different topics with a career counselor and/or take career assessments to learn more about yourself.

**Interests**
What activities do you enjoy? What do you dislike? These questions can help you find activities and paths to explore and the factors that motivate you in careers. The Career Center offers the *Strong Interest Inventory*, a career assessment that explores your interests in six broad areas and suggests compatible occupations based on your responses.

**Personality**
The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* helps you understand your personality preferences and how you experience the world. Understanding how you operate can help you identify work tasks or environments that align with your personality.

**Strengths**
Everyone has natural abilities and talents but we don’t always know how to describe or identify them. Knowing what you are good at can help you sift through career options and find a path that you can be successful in. Discuss your experiences and strengths with the Career Center and take the Clifton Strengths assessment to better understand what you have to offer.

**Values**
Your values are the things that you prioritize or view as important. In the work setting this may relate to stability and finances, work culture and relationships, or independence and ability to be creative. Come to the Career Center to discuss your values or take the Kerwin Values card sort to identify and prioritize what is most important for you in a career.

If you are interested in taking any of these assessments and talking with a career counselor, schedule an appointment on Handshake – csusm.joinhandshake.com

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**Student Organizations**
Cal State San Marcos is home to 130+ student organizations, including clubs and organizations with an academic, cultural, or special interest affiliation. These organizations are a great way to meet other students with similar interests; many organizations will bring to campus guest speakers or coordinate site visits that can help build your personal and professional network. [https://www.csusm.edu/orgs/](https://www.csusm.edu/orgs/)

**Take Charge of your Online Branding**
The Career Center can help you develop an online brand by critiquing your LinkedIn, Portfolium and Handshake profiles. Feel free to bring your social media questions to a career counseling appointment.
Using Handshake

Handshake is a free Career Center tool available to all CSUSM students and alumni (for six months after graduation), as well as all Alumni Association members.

Handshake allows you to:
- Search for on-campus, off-campus, part-time, and full-time jobs.
- Narrow down positions by keyword and geographic area, with a focus on jobs for college students and recent graduates.
- Read students’ reviews of companies and positions.
- Apply to jobs directly through the system.
- Submit resumes and cover letters for critique by Career Center staff.
- Register for upcoming events offered through the Career Center and companies.
- Schedule an appointment with a career counselor or for the Cougar Career Closet.

Welcome to the Career Center!

LOGIN TO HANDSHAKE HERE

Step 1 – You can find the Handshake login on our Website www.csusm.edu/careers:

Step 2: Click the “Student” icon and enter your CSUSM username and password

Step 3: Complete your profile to personalize your job feed!

Step 4: Start searching for your future career or make an appointment to see a Career Counselor!
GET CONNECTED AND EXPLORE

ALIGN YOUR SKILLS, VALUES AND GOALS WITH THE RIGHT EMPLOYER

Research employers before you apply:
• Organizational mission, vision, values, and culture
• Size and location of employer and service area
• Employer resources and benefits offered

Evaluate employer information along with your own self-knowledge:
• Does their mission reflect my own values?
• What training and professional development opportunities are offered?
• What industries, employer size, and environment are most appealing?

Sources for Finding Information
• CSUSM Career Center website, Handshake, Cougar Connect: www.csusm.edu/careers
• Employer websites
• Professional association websites
• Networking and informational interviews
• LinkedIn and social media
• Career fairs

GAIN RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Job candidates with relevant experience are viewed more favorably by employers.

Experience can take many forms:
• Part-time or full-time employment
• Internships (contact the Office of Internships: www.csusm.edu/internships)
• Volunteer, service learning or leadership experience
• Course-based projects or personal projects
• Find a mentor on Cougar Connect: www.csusm.peoplegrove.com

Benefits to Gaining Experience:
• Apply theory to practice, and acquire new skills
• Explore and make decisions about future career options
• Build your network of connections and potential references

Strategies for Success:
• Establish clear objectives with your supervisor
• Learn the organizational culture
• Document your new skills, projects, and responsibilities in your resume and online platforms such as LinkedIn or Handshake

Professional Associations
• Membership in professional associations is typically open to students with similar professional interests and goals (such as biotechnology, social work, human resources or journalism)
• Students can often join at reduced rates or for free
• Professional association websites include information about relevant jobs, graduate programs, and networking events
• Professional groups offer a great opportunity to connect with people already working in your field
What is Networking?
Networking is the ongoing process of developing and maintaining reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships.

Why Network?
- Build your reputation and brand.
- Learn about opportunities, advice, and connections.
- Collaborate and share information with others.

Many studies reveal that the majority of jobs are obtained through networking.

Who is in your Network?
- Family, friends and their contacts
- Neighbors and their contacts
- Classmates and roommates
- Faculty and staff
- Current and former colleagues and supervisors
- Student organization members
- Find a mentor on Cougar Connect @ www.csusm.peoplegrove.com

Conduct Informational Interviews
One of the best ways to find out about the realities of a career or job is to talk to people currently employed in the field. Through informational interviews, you identify individuals in your field or industry of interest and contact them to gain insight into their career path.

- Find someone to interview through online research or your network of contacts.
- Request an introduction through your referral or contact directly via phone, email, or LinkedIn.
- Request 20-30 minutes of their time to speak in person, by phone, or virtually.
- Do research in advance about the position, company, and field. Try to familiarize yourself with the interviewee’s bio or LinkedIn profile.
- Develop a list of questions to ask, but be prepared to listen carefully and adapt to their responses.
- Dress professionally, if meeting in person.
- Bring a resume, in case they request to see it or offer advice.
- DO NOT ask for a job/position.
- DO NOT ask their salary.
- Within 24 hours of the interview, send a typed or handwritten note thanking the person for their time and advice. Follow up on any advice or contacts shared, and keep them updated or share information to continue the professional relationship.

Note: If you’re nervous about contacting someone for an informational interview, know that many people enjoy helping students by sharing advice and enjoy talking about their career paths. Some busy professionals may not respond, but many will because they remember what it was like to start/change career paths.
GET PREPARED

SAMPLE EMAIL TO CONTACT

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name,

My name is Mary Marketing, and I am a junior Business Administration: Marketing major at Cal State San Marcos. I was looking through alumni on LinkedIn who also studied marketing and came across your profile. Digital marketing is an area that I’m exploring, and I wondered if you would be open to answering a few questions about your career path. Would you be available to meet sometime in the next month? I can be flexible according to your schedule. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

SAMPLE LIST OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Can you tell me about your career path?
- How did you decide to pursue the work you do?
- What are tasks you do on a typical work day?
- What are your favorite parts of the job?
- What are the biggest challenges? What do you like least about your job?
- What are the most critical skills needed for this field?
- What do you think are the biggest trends in this industry?
- What training, experience, or advice would you recommend for someone wanting to go into this field?
- What are typical career paths, from entry level positions to opportunities for advancement?
- What is the salary range for a person in this field from entry level to top salary?
- Are there any relevant professional associations you recommend?
- What are some related occupations?
- Can you refer me to others who would be helpful for me to meet?

ATTEND NETWORKING EVENTS:

Networking events offer an opportunity to meet others in a group-based setting. They are often organized to provide people within the same profession or region an opportunity to meet and share advice or resources.

- Set a goal in advance to meet new people, ranging from one person to several, depending on your networking experience and personality preferences.
- Try to research attendees in advance or check out the nametags upon checking in.
- Arrive early/on time. Greet your host(s) and consider offering assistance.
- Introduce yourself to someone standing alone or ask to join a small group.
- Ask questions about the other person, such as how they know the host or why they’re attending this event. Be a good listener.
- If you’ve made a good connection, you can ask to exchange business cards or contact information. Then follow up within 72 hours of the event.
- Always thank the host(s) while leaving.

2018 CSUSM Career Center “Mix and Match” Event
DEVELOP AN ELEVATOR PITCH
An elevator pitch is a 30-60 second “commercial” about yourself, based on the idea that you could share this information with someone during an elevator ride. This can be tailored to different networking events or even the “Tell me about yourself” question in interviews.

ELEVATOR PITCH TIPS
• Think about your pitch in advance, so you’ll be ready to share it.
• Include your name, major, and educational (college) background.
• Mention your career interests and any relevant experience, organizations, or accomplishments.
• Try to find common ground with the person to whom you’re speaking.
• Be sure to sound conversational, not as though you’ve memorized your pitch.

GET LINKEDIN
LinkedIn is the largest online professional networking site worldwide. Use LinkedIn to build your professional brand, network, and search for opportunities.

STRATEGIES FOR USING LINKEDIN EFFECTIVELY
1. Craft an informative profile headline.
2. Display an appropriate photo. (Check dates to get your free professional headshot taken by the Career Center.)
3. Develop a Summary statement that showcases your career interests, skills, and experience. Include relevant key words for your industry of interest.
4. List your educational information accurately, and include any academic honors or highlights.
5. Fill out your experience completely. A complete profile will be seen by more recruiters on LinkedIn.
6. Update your status regularly.
7. Share your work by incorporating projects, photos, or other media.
8. Build your network by sending personalized invitations.
9. Join groups to increase your visibility and connect with people who have similar career interests.
10. Utilize the CSUSM alumni feature to identify alumni with a common school affiliation.

For more information and tips, check out these links:
http://students.linkedin.com

2018 CSUSM Career Center “Mix and Match” Event
LinkedIn Profile Checklist

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

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

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

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

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

Continued >>
- **EDUCATION:** Starting with college, list all the educational experiences you’ve had - including summer programs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Want more LinkedIn tips for students? Check out students.linkedin.com
Do you have an upcoming job interview but nothing to wear?

Career Center
Craven Hall 1400
SIGN UP FOR A 5 MINUTE APPOINTMENT ON HANDSHAKE

*DRESS PROFESSIONALLY!*

We’ll email your edited photos within 3-4 weeks. If you need pictures sooner, please bring your own camera or smartphone.
 WHAT IS COUGAR CONNECT?

Cougar Connect is a mentorship program offering you “flash mentoring” opportunities. These are 30 minute or less meetings will CSUSM alumni, faculty and staff, and employer supporters offering you life and career advice.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Claim your profile at csusm.peoplegrove.com. Search the database for a mentor in your area of interest. **PRO TIP:** Take the short matching quiz for a list of suggested mentors.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

Cougar Connect makes it easy for you to connect with a potential mentor. The program offers email templates or you can create your own. You can suggest a meeting time right in your email.

WHY DO I NEED A MENTOR?

Whether you are currently looking for a job or not, mentors can offer you advice throughout your college career. Our mentors have the knowledge and expertise to help you navigate college, career exploration, job search and the transition from college to career.

JOIN TODAY: CSUSM.PEOPLEGROVE.COM
QUESTIONS? BRENDA DUMAS, BDUMAS@CSUSM.EDU
PARTICIPATE IN JOB FAIRS
The Career Center offers job fairs each semester where multiple organizations promote their organization and job openings. For information about the CSUSM fairs and other networking events, check the Career Center website at www.csusm.edu/careers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOB FAIR SUCCESS
• Research participating organizations. Develop questions to ask recruiters.
• Bring multiple copies of your resume, although you may be asked to apply online.
• Dress in professional attire with a clean, well-groomed appearance.
• Establish good eye contact, present a firm handshake, introduce yourself with confidence, and smile!
• Keep an open mind, ask lots of questions, and visit with a variety of representatives.
• Within 24-hours, send thank you notes to employers that piqued your interest.

BE READY TO ASK QUESTIONS
• What positions do you anticipate having open this year?
• What hiring do you plan to do in the next three to four months?
• What skills and qualities are needed to be successful in your organization?
• What led you to choose your employer?
• Can you describe your company/organizational culture?

CREATE AN ONLINE PORTFOLIO
Another strategy to highlight your work is to create an online portfolio. One free portfolio resource available to CSUSM students is Portfolium: https://csusm.portfolium.com/ or http://portfolios.csusm.edu/, where you can upload work samples and projects for viewing by potential employers.
EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

- **One on One**: One interviewer interviews an applicant.
- **Panel**: Several interviewers interview an applicant.
- **Group**: Multiple applicants interviewed at the same time.
- **Screening**: Initial interview to refer potential applicants to a second, in-depth interview.
- **Live Video**: Interview via Skype, Zoom or other interface.
- **Recorded Video**: Series of answers are recorded in a specified amount of time.
- **Second Interview**: More in-depth interview at the employer site. (half hour to all day)
- **Meal Interview**: Interview that includes a meal such as lunch or dinner.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

- Attend *Resume/Cover Letter, Interview and Salary Negotiation* workshops.
- Watch *Big Interview* videos, practice answering questions, and record your interview responses.
- Schedule mock interviews with a career counselor.
- Find out the 4Ws: Who, What, When, Where.
- Research the company on their website and Linked In.
- Dress professionally: Take advantage of *Cougar Closet* and *Suit Up* events.
- Bring your resume to the interview, maybe even a portfolio.
- Plan to arrive early to allow time for the unexpected (traffic, parking).

AREAS COVERED IN THE INTERVIEW

**Introduction**

- Establish relationship with interviewer and provide first impression through appearance, manner, and personal energy.
- Show enthusiasm for the job and interest in the employers' organization.
- A solid handshake, confident smile and direct eye contact are essential.

**Discussion of Qualifications and Goals**

- Communicate skills, experience and goals.
- Employers are looking for skills and qualifications that fit the position and personal qualities required for success in the job, as well as goals appropriate to the organization.

**Closing**

Summarize strengths and interests.
- Ask how and when employer will be in touch concerning next steps.
- Ask for a business card/contact information to send a follow up email or handwritten card within 24 hours (thank interviewers for the opportunity and express your interest in the position).

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) Tell me about yourself (academics, relevant work experience, activities and interests, personal qualities valued by the employer).
2) Why are you interested in this position?
3) Describe your most recent role.
4) What extracurricular activities were you involved in and what did you learn from them?
5) Why should I hire you?
6) Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
7) Why do you want to work as a …?
8) What led you to choose your major field of study? …this chosen career?
9) Why did you apply for a position with our organization?
SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

• What are 3 of your strengths? What is a weakness?
• What was your most successful life experience? Why do you think it was successful?
• How do you handle criticism?
• What qualifications do you have that will make you successful in our organization?
• What motivates you to put forth your best effort?
• Describe a problem or challenge you had in your last job and how you handled it?

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Demonstrate your interest by asking questions; it’s good to have 2-3 questions prepared

• What are you looking for in this position?
• What are the biggest challenges the person in this position will face?
• What are prospects for future growth in your organization?
• How would you describe your organization’s culture and management style?

BEHAVIORAL

• Describe a situation where you led a team with diverse interests and objectives.
• Tell me about a situation when you demonstrated initiative.
• Describe a time when you went above and beyond what was required.
• Use STAR to answer questions (Situation, Task, Action, Result).
• Look at job description to decide which highlights will STAR in your story.

“STAR EXAMPLE:“
“Tell me about a situation requiring both big picture and detail oriented thinking.”

• Situation - I was elected to the Campus Visiting Speakers Bureau for 2018-2019 and was responsible for getting 3 to 5 speakers with a budget of $56,000.

• Task - My goal was to generate a list of speakers for the planning committee who would make the final decision. The speakers needed to appeal to the entire campus community, be available within budget when the auditorium was available, and convey a motivational message.

• Action(s) - I reached out to the rest of the planning committee, students in my dorm, and my Marketing class for speaker suggestions. Then, I used their suggestions to identify 15 speakers who fit the budget. I researched the speakers’ career profiles and reviews of past speaking events. I led 3 student focus group to generate a prioritized list of speakers. I connected with speakers’ agents to check for availability, verify fees and travel and submitted the top 5 to the committee for their decision.

• Result - The planning committee was "wowed" by the speakers I submitted as well as my attention to detail. From my list, they selected motivational speaker Cindy Jones to appear on September 15. We sold all 2,500 tickets and received positive evaluations from attendees.

IF YOU HAVE AN INTERVIEW TRY TO SCOPE OUT THE LOCATION A DAY OR TWO IN ADVANCE! THEN, YOU’LL KNOW WHERE TO PARK AND HOW LONG IT TAKES TO GET THERE.
#CAREERTUESDAY
**ILLEGAL QUESTIONS**

If you’re asked an illegal question during an interview, typically it’s because the interviewer is new to interviewing or unfamiliar with employment law. It’s generally best to assume good intentions and consider the following strategies:

**Reframe the question**

**Interviewer:** “Do you have children?”

**Your response:** “If you’re concerned about my availability to work, I have an excellent attendance record and have been recognized by previous supervisors for my dependability.”

**Answer with a question**

**Interviewer:** “Were you born in the U.S.?”

**Your response:** “Are you asking if I am legally authorized to work in the U.S.?”

**Clarify the question**

**Interviewer:** “Are you married”?  

**Your response:** “I’m willing to answer the question but I am curious about how it relates to the position. Can you please clarify?”

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<th>Inquire Area</th>
<th>Illegal Questions</th>
<th>Legal Questions</th>
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| National Origin/ Citizenship | • Are you a U.S. citizen?  
  • Where were you/your parents born?  
  • What is your "native tongue"? | • Are you authorized to work in the United States?  
  • What language do you read/speak/write fluently?  
  (This question is okay only if this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.) |
| Age | • How old are you?  
  • When did you graduate?  
  • What’s your birth date? | • Are you over the age of 18? |
| Marital/Family Status | • What’s your marital status?  
  • With whom do you live?  
  • Do you plan to have a family? When?  
  • How many kids do you have?  
  • What are your child-care arrangements? | • Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?  
  • Would you be able and willing to travel as needed for the job?  
  (This question is okay if it is asked of all applicants for the job.)  
  • Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary?  
  (This question is okay assuming it is asked of all applicants for the job.) |
| Affiliations | • What clubs or social organizations do you belong to? | • List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job. |
| Personal | • How tall are you? How much do you weigh?  
  (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential for the safe performance of the job.) | • Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job? |
| Disabilities | • Do you have any disabilities?  
  • Please complete the following medical history.  
  • Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list them and give dates when these occurred.  
  • What was your last physical exam?  
  • How’s your family’s health?  
  • When did you lose your eyesight? How?  
  • Do you need an accommodation to perform the job?  
  (This question can be asked only after a job offer has been made.) | • Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job?  
  (This question is okay if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.)  
  • Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions?  
  • As part of the hiring process, you will be required to undergo a medical exam.  
  (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on exam results.) |
| Arrest Record | • Have you ever been arrested? | • Have you ever been convicted of ____________?  
  (The crime named should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.) |
| Military | • If you’ve been in the military, were you honorably discharged? | • In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?  
  • What type of training or education did you receive in the military? |

*By Rochelle Kaplan, *Job Choices: 2006, National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)
EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

*NOTE: There may be some exceptions to the following guidelines—research the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HAIR</th>
<th>Neatly trimmed. Hair out of face. Tie back if long hair. Shave facial hair.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JEWELRY</td>
<td>Keep it simple and conservative. Remove all body piercings other than earrings and cover tattoos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BODY ODOR</td>
<td>Avoid strong perfume or cologne to avoid triggering allergies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLOTHES</td>
<td>Skirts and dresses should hit at or just above the knee. Jacket sleeves just below the wrist. Belts and shoes same color. Ties touch top of belt. Need professional clothes? Check out the Cougar Closet and attend Suit Up!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDS</td>
<td>Clean and trim fingernails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHOES</td>
<td>Close-toed polished shoes—no scuffs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESSORIES</td>
<td>Folder or padfolio to hold extra copies of your resume or related work. No cell phones. Small purse (shoulder strap preferred) or briefcase/laptop bag.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DINING TIPS: INTERVIEWING OVER A MEAL**

- Turn off cell phone/personal technology device during an interview or meal.
- Don't apply lipstick, comb your hair, blow your nose or use a toothpick at the table.
- Put purse or wallet on your lap, chair, seat next to you or on the floor under your seat.
- Place your napkin in your lap when you sit down and keep it there throughout the meal. Keep your free hand on your lap while you eat.
- Lean forward when you take a mouthful of food to avoid spilling on your clothing.
- Pass the salt and pepper together even if only one is requested.
- Break off bite-size portions of bread over bread and butter plate before buttering. Use the bread and butter plate to hold olives, radishes and other finger foods.
- Cut food two to three slices at a time. Pass dishes or bread baskets to the right.
- Don't gesture with utensils or rest your utensils half on or half off the plate like oars.
- Bread plates are on the left and drink glasses are on the right.
- Avoid alcohol while interviewing.
- Order something easy to eat and avoid the most expensive item on the menu; ask your host for recommendations.
- Leave eating utensils across the center of the plate to signal you’ve finished eating.
- When you leave, fold your napkin and place it on the left side of your table setting.

To gain dining confidence, plan to attend one of our Etiquette Dinners!
A resume is part of your professional brand. You’ll know your resume is in good shape if you are getting contacted for interviews. A recruiter typically screens a resume within a matter of seconds; therefore, it’s important to strategically position your content in an appealing format.

Keep the following in mind as you develop your document:

**FORMAT**

- **Margins:** Use .5” (smallest) to 1” all around
- **Font Size:** Aim for no smaller than 10 point for text in the body of the resume, larger font size recommended for name and section headings
- **Font Style:** Vary the style of the section headings by using bold, all caps, or italics and choose a sans-serif font when possible (includes Arial, Calibri, Franklin Gothic Book, and Helvetica)
- **Use of templates:** Avoid pre-made templates available on Microsoft Word, Canva, etc. as these may not be screened properly by Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software
- **Length:** 1 page recommended for most new grads; academic resumes or CVs and federal resumes can be longer
- **Order of sections:** Consider relevance to job posting (most important placed toward the top)
- **Type:** Most employers prefer a reverse chronological resume (lists most recent experience at the top of each section); in some cases, a functional or skills-based resume may be appropriate (please review with a career counselor to determine best format for your needs)
- **Numbers:** Write out all numbers below 10 (one, two, three, etc.) and use digits for 10 and above. Or you can use digits throughout (1, 2, 3, etc.)
- **Dates:** Use the longer en dash between dates as opposed to a hyphen

**CONTENT**

**DO:**

- Maintain a master resume so that you have a complete record of your past experiences
- Consider your resume a marketing document and modify your resume as needed according to position type
- Write in first person without using “I”: “Promote events through social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn) by posting marketing material 3 times per week” vs. third person “Promotes events…”
- Showcase Education towards the top of your resume, especially if applying for an internship
- Use short, bulleted phrases with a focus on identifying action steps and quantifying outcomes (refer to the STAR method to describe Situation, Task, Action, Result)
- Incorporate keywords consistent with job posting

**DON’T:**

- Use passive phrases such as “Responsible for”, and “Duties include”
- Avoid using personal pronouns (“my,” “our,” etc.)
- Include an objective statement; a summary statement is a more effective tool
- Use uncommon abbreviations, jargon, or slang
- Repeat the same verb many times (use the Career Guide’s list of action verbs for reference)

Note: These suggestions refer to resumes used for most jobs within the U.S. marketplace. If applying for a position abroad or within the federal government, please meet with a career counselor for additional guidance.
RESUME EXAMPLE

Name should be slightly larger
font size than body of resume

Kendra Communication
760-777-7777 ● kc@cougars.csusm.edu ● San Marcos, CA 92078 ● www.linkedin.com/kc/

Career Target: Public Relations
Recent Communication graduate pursuing entry-level opportunities in Public Relations. Effective communicator with experience building media lists, writing press releases, and conducting creative research. Enthusiastic team player who is driven and collaborative. Key strengths include:

- Content Creation
- Research
- Client Communications
- Public Relations
- Social Media Management
- Event Planning

Education
Bachelor of Arts in Communication
California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)
05/18

Communication Experience
Arts and Entertainment Editor
The Cougars Chronicle, CSUSM, San Marcos, CA
09/17–05/18
- Covered campus arts events and reported on happenings; produced two articles per week
- Developed engaging content for campus newspaper including movie and book reviews
- Adhered to Internal editor/review policy by soliciting constructive feedback on content

Public Relations Intern
Fidelitas Development, San Diego, CA
05/17–08/17
- Maintained media list and updated database for upcoming stories
- Helped write press material, creative pitches, blog content, and other client communications
- Fielded publicity requests and general inquiries for the Public Relations department
- Conducted creative research for client campaigns

Other Experience
Server
Tabu Sushi, San Marcos, CA
05/15–Present
- Provide patrons with a comfortable and friendly dining experience in fast-paced environment
- Demonstrate knowledge of menu and communicate options to patrons

Volunteer Experience
Alternative Spring Break, Habitat for Humanity, Wilmington, DE
03/18
- Collaborated with student group to build home for family in need

Leadership Activities and Affiliations
Vice President
American Association of University Women (AAUW), CSUSM
09/17–05/18
- Coordinated logistics, including event set-up/breakdown, registration, and tabling for career exploration workshop at local high school
- Assisted in planning a speaker series featuring local community leaders; marketed event via Facebook and Instagram, attracting 50% more participants than previous year

Member
Communication Society, CSUSM
09/16–05/18

Computer Skills
Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
Software: Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Office

Highlight skills based on relevance to job posting
### Teaching
- Accommodated
- Adapted
- Advised
- Advocated
- Assisted
- Clarified
- Coached
- Communicated
- Consulted
- Cooperated
- Coordinated
- Counseled
- Demonstrated
- Developed
- Empowered
- Enabled
- Encouraged
- Enforced
- Evaluated
- Explained
- Facilitated
- Fostered
- Graded
- Guided
- Informed
- Initiated
- Instructed
- Schooled
- Served
- Set goals
- Shepherded
- Stimulated
- Taught
- Trained

### Creative
- Acted
- Arranged
- Brainstormed
- Composed
- Conceptualized
- Cooked
- Crafted
- Created
- Demonstrated
- Designed
- Developed
- Devised
- Discovered
- Drew
- Energized
- Entertained
- Established
- Fashioned
- Founded
- Forged
- Formed
- Generated
- Illustrated
- Imagined
- Improved
- Innovated
- Inspired
- Instituted
- Integrated
- Introduced
- Invented
- Made
- Modeled
- Originated
- Performed
- Pioneered
- Predicted
- Produced
- Redesigned
- Reimagined
- Renovated
- Rejuvenated
- Revitalized
- Shaped
- Sketched
- Sparked

### Management/Leadership
- Accelerated
- Accomplished
- Achieved
- Administered
- Analyzed
- Appointed
- Assigned
- Attained
- Authorized
- Capitalized
- Chaired
- Compelled
- Conducted
- Consolidated
- Contracted
- Controlled
- Coordinated
- Curtailed
- Decided
- Delegated
- Delivered
- Designated
- Directed
- Drove
- Energized
- Enforced
- Exceeded
- Facilitated
- Governed
- Harmonized
- Headed
- Hired
- Improved
- Increased
- Initiated
- Judged
- Launched
- Led
- Leveraged
- Lobbied
- Managed
- Marshalled
- Maximized
- Motivated
- Named
- Obliterated
- Orchestrated
- Oversaw
- Piloted
- Pioneered
- Planned
- Presided
- Prioritized
- Propelled
- Produced
- Realigned
- Rebuilt
- Recommended
- Regulated
- Restructured
- Scheduled
- Spearheaded
- Steered
- Strategized
- Strengthened
- Supervised
- Transformed

### Technical
- Adjusted
- Assembled
- Built
- Calculated
- Calibrated
- Coded
- Computerized
- Constructed
- Designed
- Devised
- Dissected
- Engineered
- Eradicated
- Fabricated
- Fabricated
- Installed
- Maintained
- Manufactured
- Maped
- Navigated
- Operated
- Overhauled
- Positioned
- Programmed
- Remodeled
- Repaired
- Selected
- Serviced
- Solved
- Trained
- Upgraded
- Utilized

### Research
- Analyzed
- Ascertained
- Authenticated
- Collected
- Compared
- Concluded
- Conducted
- Critiqued
- Detected
- Diagnosed
- Differentiated
- Discovered
- Distinguished
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Explored
- Extracted
- Gathered
- Hypothesized
- Identified
- Inspected
- Interpreted
- Interviewed
- Investigated
- Justified
- Located
- Observed
- Organized
- Perceived
- Predicted
- Proved
- Questioned
- Read
- Researched
- Reviewed
- Selected
- Studied
- Summarized
- Surveyed
- Synthesized
- Systematized
- Tabulated
- Tested
- Uncovered
- Verified
February 14, 2019

Dr. Susan Hume  
Wondfo USA San Diego Office  
6042 Cornerstone Ct. W.  
Unit E  
San Diego, CA 92121

Dear Dr. Hume:

I am writing today to express my interest in the Research Assistant Internship at Wondfo that I learned about through Professor Han at California State University San Marcos. I am sincerely interested in the opportunity to expand my knowledge base within the local biotechnology industry and learn from an organization that provides solutions to help manage chronic diseases.

I possess the necessary qualifications to succeed in this internship. I volunteered this past semester in Dr. Kennedy’s lab, which focuses on how the immune system functions to protect and maintain epithelial barriers. In this role, I kept meticulous notes and communicated frequently with Dr. Kennedy about the progress of various experiments. As a Biology student with a concentration in Molecular & Cellular Biology, I’ve also taken upper-division coursework including immunology and its lab, which afforded me the opportunity to gain experience in laboratory techniques including hemagglutination, ELISAs, immunoprecipitation and Western blot assays.

In addition to my related biology coursework and experience, I am an active member of my campus community, most recently serving on the board of our student government, Associated Students, Inc., as the liaison to the College of Science and Math. In this position, I worked both independently and within a multidisciplinary team of other student representatives and leaders. I advocated for students in my college by outlining their concerns to college leadership and effectively managed a $1500 budget allocated for student activities.

In sum, I believe I am a strong candidate for the Research Assistant internship due to a combination of relevant coursework and subject matter knowledge as well as experience working in a collaborative professional environment. I look forward to demonstrating my commitment to the Wondfo mission of constructing “first-class products while providing outstanding customer service.” Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bennett Biology

**Cover Letter Tips:**

- Replicate the header from your resume for consistency
- Address your cover letter to a person whenever possible (avoid “To Whom It May Concern”)
- Keep your cover letter to one page
- Follow this general format:
  1. **1st paragraph:** describe how you found the position and your particular interest in that organization (relating to the mission, values, or services provided; avoid stating how you hope to benefit)
  2. **2nd paragraph:** in this longest section (one or two paragraphs), focus on addressing the job posting requirements and how you meet them, providing specific examples that are more in-depth than your resume
  3. **3rd paragraph:** reiterate your interest in the position, offer your thanks for consideration, and remind the hiring manager of how you can be reached for follow up; avoid statements like “I will follow up with you to schedule an interview in x days” as most organizations discourage phone calls
REFERENCE LIST TIPS

• Replicate the header from your resume for consistency
• Do not include references on your resume; instead, create a separate page of references
• List 3-5 people who can attest to your professional qualifications, personal qualities, and work ethic; this may include supervisors, professors, mentors, and colleagues
• Avoid listing family members/friends as references
• Include full details for each of your references: name, title, department/organization, address, phone number, email, as well as your relationship
• Be sure to ask permission before listing the contact on your reference list; also, be sure to let them know each time the reference list is provided to an employer

Blake Owens
San Marcos, CA 92078 • owe5598@cougars.csusm.edu • 760.456.3333

REFERENCE LIST

Dr. Ariana Cruz, Professor
College of Business Administration
California State University San Marcos
San Marcos, CA 92096
(760) 725-3340
acruz@csusm.edu

Mason Samuels, Colleague
San Diego Association of Governments
405 A Street, Suite 500
San Diego, California 92101
(619) 699-1901
msamuels@sandag.org

Dr. Tony Trent, Professor
College of Business Administration
California State University San Marcos
San Marcos, CA 92096
(760) 725-3340
ttrent@csusm.edu

Penny Williams, Supervisor
San Diego Association of Governments
405 A Street, Suite 500
San Diego, California 92101
(619) 699-1900
pwilliams@sandag.org

Typically it’s appropriate to include 3-5 references. Include contact information such as address, phone and email, as well as your relationship to the reference. Be sure to ask the person in advance whether they would be willing to serve as a positive reference!
THANK YOU NOTE TIPS

- Send thank you notes in the following instances: to an employer after the interview, to a professor or supervisor who has served as a reference, to a contact who has provided an informational interview, etc.
- It’s best practice to send a thank you note as soon as possible (within 24 hours after an interview)
- Obtain business cards during the interview so you can send thank you notes, ideally to each interviewer
- An email thank you note is appropriate; however, to set yourself apart consider sending a handwritten note
- Keep the note concise, and ensure you review for grammatical errors/typos

June 10, 2019

David McCarthy
Director of Business Development
Prolific Applications
453 W. D Street
Encinitas, CA 92024

Dear Mr. McCarthy:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me yesterday for the position of Account Executive at Prolific Applications. I enjoyed our discussion and truly resonate with the company’s emphasis on people-focused operations. I would be thrilled to continue exercising my relationship-building capacity in the position of Account Executive at Prolific Applications.

Having worked in a commission-based retail role throughout my time as an undergraduate Communication student, I am familiar with the challenge of winning sales and clients. I have enjoyed applying my Communication coursework to real world experiences, and I thrive on competition. Learning more about the sales process at Prolific Applications was very interesting, and I appreciated your outline of the three call phases of onboarding a new client.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of my application for the Account Executive role. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future based on the timeframe that you highlighted during our discussion. If there is any additional information you need from me in support of my application for the position, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Samantha Sales
Most Human Resources (HR) departments use a hiring technology known as an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to screen candidates. The ATS helps HR identify candidates to interview based on specified parameters. According to Glassdoor, the average job posting receives approximately 250 applicants. Of these 250 applicants, 4 to 6 will be called in to interview, and one candidate will be offered the job. Jobscan indicates that more than 98.2% of Fortune 500 organizations use ATS. Understanding the basics of how an ATS functions may be helpful in optimizing your chances of being interviewed for a certain role; however, being intentional about networking may provide the most help for your job search compared to constant resume revising. Often, even if your resume is first screened by an ATS, a human recruiter or hiring manager will make the final determination about whom to interview.

ATS Basics:

- An ATS is a company’s centralized database for candidates, job openings, interview tools, placements, and analytics. It may at times be referred to as hiring software, human capital management, talent lifecycle management, or recruiting software.
- ATS systems parse information from application materials based on criteria determined by the employer.
- Some companies (Amazon, LinkedIn, Google) use their own internal ATS.
- ATS may rely on different techniques to screen candidates. Some may use “knockout questions” such as “Do you have a valid Commercial Driver’s License?” whereas others may rely on frequency of included keywords to screen candidates.

How to Optimize Your Resume for the ATS:

- Identify industry-specific key words from the company and the job description to incorporate into your resume while also providing context about your achievements. It’s also wise to conduct additional research on key skills typical of the functional role.
- Be specific and avoid overused buzz words such as “results-driven” and “dynamic”.
- Keep formatting simple and easy to read (avoid fancy graphics, charts, and text boxes).
- Do not use a ready-made template, as the content may not be screened correctly. If you’re in need of a resume sample, please refer to the existing examples available in this Guide and in the Resources section of Handshake.
- Develop and submit your resume in a Word document, since this format is generally scanned correctly by an ATS. Consider saving your resume in a PDF if emailing to a recruiter or networking contact.
- Avoid placing information such as your contact information into the header or footer on the first page of your resume, as some ATS may not be able to read the content. If your resume is longer than one page, you can include a header with your name and page number on subsequent pages.
- The bottom line is that it’s important to be aware of the constantly changing technological landscape of HR. Creating a resume that stands out for content and not for design will be advantageous in complying with most ATS. Please visit the Career Center for additional help in updating your resume and conducting a targeted job search.
Questions to Ask Yourself When Considering Graduate School

- Is a graduate degree necessary or required for the career I am pursuing?
- How will I finance graduate school? Some graduate programs, particularly doctoral degrees in the sciences, may offer significant financial support while others will primarily offer loans.
- Do I need to take a gap year(s) to gain more experience or improve my academic record and become a stronger candidate?
- How much time will additional education require? A masters degree or accelerated bachelor program will take 2-3 years while a doctoral degree can take 5+ years.

Explore

- Research occupations with onetonline.org, Occupational Outlook Handbook or professional associations’ websites to learn about the education and experiences necessary for the jobs you are interested in.
- Research prerequisite courses that you need to take for graduate programs. Health careers, in particular, require certain courses be completed to apply.
- Do an informational interview with a professional or graduate student to learn about their experiences.
- Visit admissions representatives at Career Center events or attend campus open houses to learn about their programs.

Prepare

- Meet with a career counselor to discuss a timeline for applying to graduate school.
- Develop relationships with faculty members and supervisors who might write you letters of recommendation and start early to get to know them. Strong letters come from people who truly know you and your goals.
- Gain experience through volunteering, internships, or research. Try to shadow people in your field to learn about the profession and even their graduate school experience, if applicable.

Apply

- Sign up for standardized tests (GRE, GMAT, MCAT, etc.) if it is necessary for your program. Develop a study schedule to set yourself up for success.
- Start drafting your personal statement/statement of purpose a few months in advance to give time to edit.
- Request letters of recommendation from faculty and employers. Let them know early to give them as much time as possible (2 months or so) to write a strong letter.
- Conduct a mock interview with a career counselor. Some programs will require an interview and you will want to be prepared!

Testing

- GRE – General graduate program tests. There are some programs that require a GRE Subject test (ex: GRE Psychology Subject Test)
- LSAT – Law School
- GMAT – Business School
- MCAT – Medical School
- PCAT – Pharmacy School
- DAT – Dental School
- OAT – Optometry School

Visit the Career Center website for more information about researching Graduate and Professional School and information regarding personal statements, statement of purposes and CV’s: https://www.csusm.edu/careers/resource/gradschoolinfo.html
Congratulations! Now that you’ve secured a job after assessing your interests, articulating your strengths and experience through resumes and interviews, and networking to find opportunities…what comes next? In order to continue building your career and attaining success in the workplace, consider the following strategies for office culture/communications, goal setting, and continued professional development.

General Office Culture/Communications
- Observe your organizational and department culture, including appropriate attire; ask your supervisor if you are unsure.
- Show courtesy and consideration to all co-workers, not just your supervisors.
- Respect peoples’ time and keep email communications to the point. Target your emails to appropriate recipients; be mindful of emails you forward and reply all.
- Maintain professionalism through any phone or written communications.
- Express gratitude and give credit when appropriate.
- Know that a learning curve exists. Be willing to observe, learn, and contribute.

Networking & Professional Development
- Look within and beyond your immediate department/organization for opportunities to meet others. Set attainable networking goals such as one new contact per week/month.
- Join a relevant professional organization to continue your networking and development. Check with your organization for funding support.
- Reflect and re-evaluate your professional and personal goals on an ongoing basis. Think about what you hope to achieve, then set a measurable goal and timeframe.
- Keep an open mind and be willing to take risks and try new activities or challenges.
- If your goal is advancement, identify what skills and knowledge are required for your desired position. Then work backwards toward these skills.
CONNECT
with future employers

COUGAR CONNECT | CSUSM MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

JOB FAIRS & EVENTS
Our fairs and events offer employers the opportunity to interact with students. Along with our general job fair, we also host industry specific fairs and networking events. Check our website for details.

COUGAR CAREER CLOSET
Do you have an upcoming job interview but nothing to wear? Bring your student ID and come “shop” the Closet for free! Check our website for policies and hours.

Sign up for an appointment through Handshake
@csusmcc / #hirecougars

www.csusm.edu/careers
careers@csusm.edu
(760) 750-4900

Craven Hall 1400
333 S Twin Oaks Valley Rd
San Marcos, CA 92096