

THE JOB SEARCH GUIDE FOR NURSING MAJORS



**Market yourself in the job search by
developing professional correspondence
and effective interviewing skills
that highlight what you have to offer.**

**OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES
A Division of Student Affairs
Southeastern Louisiana University
SLU 10492 HAMMOND, LA 70402
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985-549-21**

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PART I: GENERAL OVERVIEW

SCHOOL OF NURSING

The School of Nursing at Southeastern Louisiana University prepares graduates for a professional career in nursing. Established in 1963, the program has over 1800 majors and annually graduates approximately 140 undergraduates and 15 to 20 masters' level nurses in functional areas such as nurse educator, administrator and nurse practitioner. The graduate program is offered as part of an intercollegiate consortium. The School of Nursing received the Nightingale Award for Outstanding Nursing School of the Year three times in the last 7 years.



The School of Nursing offers nursing courses on the Hammond campus as well as the Baton Rouge Center (BRC) located at 4849 Essen Lane. Theory courses are based primarily on the Hammond campus for the first two semesters and at the Baton Rouge Center for the remaining three semesters. Clinical opportunities are offered on the Northshore as well as in the Baton Rouge area.

MISSION

The mission of the School of Nursing is to prepare professional nurses as caregivers and managers who provide leadership to enhance the health of individuals, families, groups, communities and populations - by providing education which incorporates essential elements of baccalaureate nursing education, professional standards of care and performance, by promoting research and evidence-based nursing, by advocating for an improved health care delivery system to meet the needs of clients across the lifespan in diverse healthcare environments, and by promoting the advancement of the profession.

The role of the School of Nursing is to provide undergraduate nursing students courses in the professional field of nursing enhanced by support courses in arts, sciences, and humanities. The scope of the School of Nursing encompasses providing nursing education, research, and health care services to clients across the lifespan in diverse healthcare environments within the southeastern region of Louisiana.



FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT

Resumes and cover letters create the first impression a potential employer will have of you. Both of these documents are marketing tools designed to sell an impressive product—you! With that in mind, demonstrate self-motivation, critical thinking, attention to detail and creativity when preparing your resume and cover letter. When reviewing a resume, a prospective employer will evaluate your qualifications, but they will also assess how much time and effort you have devoted to your resume.

Typos and grammatical errors on a resume or cover letter suggest you do not care about the quality of your work. Both documents should be free of mistakes. An employer wants someone who produces exemplary work.

Show employers why you are the perfect candidate for the job. Describe, in the resume and cover letter, your skills and experience that relate to that job. A skills summary on a resume is an excellent category for highlighting your qualifications.

The cover letter is your chance to give employers a sense of who you are based on the experiences and attributes you will bring to the company. It should be tailored to the job and the company. A cover letter should leave an impression which inspires the potential employer to read your resume and then schedule an interview.



KEY POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN BEGINNING A JOB SEARCH

The first step to job search success is understanding that your resume and cover letter are the first impressions you will make on an employer. Learn to think of them as marketing tools designed to sell an impressive product: you.

Demonstrating self-motivation, critical thinking, attention to detail, and creativity in preparing your resume and cover letter, conducting your job search, and interviewing, can be an indicator of your performance as a future employee!

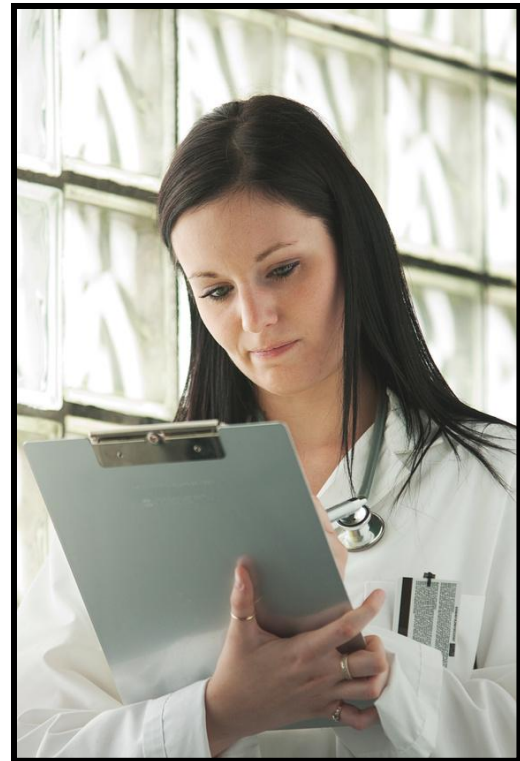
Before you begin developing your resume, take time to read the information in this document. It is designed to assist you in understanding and appreciating all you have learned through your educational preparation – and other experiences. Remember, being able to communicate your qualifications on your resume is preparing you to communicate your qualifications during the interview!



KEY AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR RESUME, COVER LETTER, AND JOB INTERVIEW:

Develop a Skills Summary for your resume, and include some of these key areas of knowledge and skill below. You may also discuss them in your cover letter and on the interview.

- Knowledge of nursing care principles, practices, and procedures
- Knowledge of medications, their proper dosage, effects and contraindications
- Knowledge of dietetics, sanitation, personal hygiene, safety principles, and infection control
- Ability to assess patients' needs and coordinate appropriate nursing care plan
- Ability to communicate orally to report information
- Ability to compose written reports and documentation, records and charts
- Ability to prepare and maintain reports of shift activities and patients' progress
- Knowledge of rehabilitative nursing, pre- and post-operative care
- Ability to plan, organize and implement assigned work
- Ability to gain the confidence of the staff team and supervisors
- Ability to work effectively with patients and families
- Knowledge and skill in CPR.



-
- List and be able to discuss courses completed that best describe your knowledge base – include course titles, but not numbers.
 - List nursing clinical experiences – include the name of the organization, city, state, dates, and areas/units in which you worked, along with a brief job description (optional).
 - List experiences, in addition to your nursing clinicals, in which you have worked with others in a service role, such as part-time job or volunteer experiences.
 - Describe how you establish rapport, offer emotional support, and respond to the needs of patients on an individual basis; refer to your ability to work effectively with patients with differing physical and psychological needs.
 - Think about your style as a medical team member, interacting with other medical staff and supervisors – and be able to discuss in an interview.
 - Describe your approach for managing your time and establishing goals, and how you monitor your progress.
 - Describe your ability to multitask and work under pressure of multiple responsibilities and timelines/deadlines, with attention to detail.
 - Describe instances where you have been able to improve certain skills regarding patient care, social skills, team work, leadership skills, and time management.

PART II: RESUME AND COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

RESUME FORMAT GUIDELINES

AVOID ERRORS IN SPELLING, GRAMMAR, AND PUNCTUATION.

Errors are viewed by an employer as an indicator of your future work performance – i.e., that you will be careless or not attentive to detail.

ONE- PAGE RESUME RECOMMENDED. Adjust the margins to .7 inches, and the font size to 10 or 11 point. Major headings can be 12 point; your name, 14 - 20 point. Times Roman or Arial fonts are recommended.

AVOID RESUME TEMPLATES. Resume templates force the resume onto two pages, containing spacing that can't be adjusted to make the resume one page. Instead, type your resume as a regular document in Word. Also, the employer may not be able to open an attached emailed resume in other programs.

CREATE A HEADER FOR YOUR RESUME. The header should include your name, address, phone, and email address. Do not include the word "resume" as part of your header. Do not include personal information, such as age, marital status, health status, ethnicity, etc. Make sure your email address is professional.

RESUMES THAT MUST BE TWO PAGES. If you have a lot of work experience, and/or involvement in student organizations, or volunteer work, your resume may need to be two pages in length. In this case, on the second page, put your name and phone number in the upper left corner, and "Page 2" in the upper right corner. Paper-clip rather than staple the resume. Do not include your header from the first page on the second page.

MAKE SURE YOUR RESUME IS "SCANNABLE." If the resume is handed to employers at a career fair, the employer may scan it to store it in a computer database. A "scannable resume" avoids italics, underlining, shading, borders, and graphics. Acceptable formatting includes: Bold type, "all caps," bullets, and black ink.

DO NOT FOLD RESUME, COVER LETTER, OR OTHER APPLICATION MATERIALS. If mailing, use a Manila envelope. Use labels rather than typing, printing, or hand-writing addresses directly on the envelope.

RESUME CONTENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

OBJECTIVE

Do I need an Objective? What should it say?

An **Objective** can demonstrate "focus" in terms of your career goal, and is an excellent opportunity for you to emphasize your top skills.

Examples of Objectives:

- A career in the field of nursing that offers opportunity to contribute strong organizational and communication skills along with my desire to provide the highest level of medical care and support to my patients



- To apply knowledge and skills gained from nursing academic preparation and work experience, to a professionally rewarding healthcare environment
- A career in pediatric nursing in which knowledge and skills will have a positive and motivational impact on the treatment and recovery of patients.

EDUCATION

Is it important that my degree information is correct?

Yes - check for the correct title of your degree on your academic program's departmental web site, your transcript, the Southeastern catalog, or with your faculty advisor. Also, list your concentration and/or any minors.

Should I list my GPA? List only if 3.0 or above. However, if your Overall GPA is less than 3.0, but the GPA in your major is above 3.0, you can list your Major GPA only, for example: **Major GPA: 3.2**. If both GPA's are above 3.0, you can list both: **Overall GPA: 3.2 / Major GPA: 3.6**, or just the overall.

Should I list courses I completed?

Yes, listing courses facilitates an employer's understanding of your knowledge base. List 6-10 courses that support your career goal. List course titles, not abbreviations and numbers.

Should I list every college/university attended, and the courses completed if I didn't get a degree?

If you attended at least a year, or if you earned an Associate's degree, then list the additional college or university (and degree, if earned). List courses titles (not numbers), but only if they support your career goals.

In what order should I list my Education info, if I've attended more than one college?

List most recent educational experience first and other colleges attended in reverse chronological order.

Should I list high school information?

This isn't necessary once you're a college graduate, unless you have major accomplishments such as honors or officer positions in organizations. Put this info in ACTIVITIES & HONORS, and indicate they were in high school.

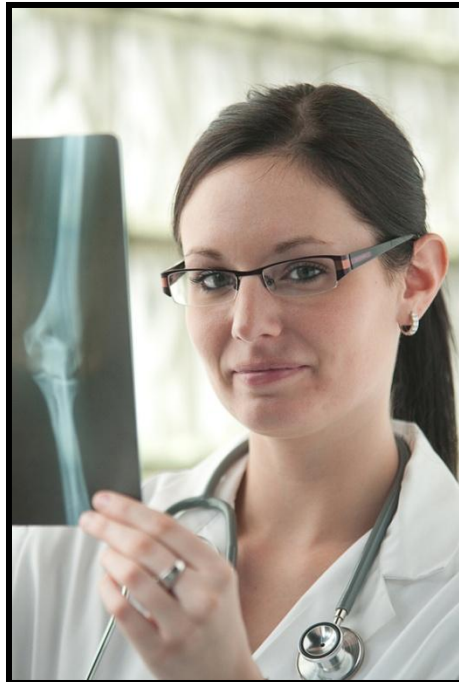
SKILLS SUMMARY

What is the purpose of a SKILLS SUMMARY? Is it optional?

A SKILLS SUMMARY may also be called: PROFESSIONAL SKILLS, KEY QUALIFICATIONS, QUALIFICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS, or SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS. This category directs the employer's attention to your **transferable skills** – i.e., abilities, personality characteristics, and knowledge and experience acquired through courses, team projects, intern and work experiences, organizations, and volunteer work, which can contribute to your success on the job.

What is the best format for a SKILLS SUMMARY?

Create bulleted statements which describe your transferable skills as described above. Don't forget to include computer skills as your last statement. Begin each statement with an Action Verb - see **ACTION VERBS & ADVERBS** page on the Career Services web site - or phrases such as, "Experienced in...", "Knowledge of ...," "Responsible for...", "Successfully..." etc.



EXPERIENCE

Should I list every job held on my resume? What about jobs in high school?

List only those jobs held in college. If you had seasonal employment or other short-term jobs that didn't allow you to develop skills related to your career goal, you may omit these. Don't list high school jobs unless the job relates to your career goal, or illustrates an achievement. **NOTE: Non-traditional students** with experience from the 1990's or prior may omit these jobs as they may imply your age; age discrimination is illegal but can occur.

In what order should I list my jobs and what is the proper format?

Begin with the most recent job first; list others in reverse chronological order. **EXAMPLES OF PROPER FORMAT:**

Sales Associate, May 2013 - present.

JC Penney, Lakeside Mall, New Orleans, LA

(Put job description here)

Office of Career Services, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Student Assistant, January 2012 – May 2013

(Put job description here)

How can I highlight my clinical, volunteer, and other experiences directly related to my major?

Use two categories: **CLINICAL EXPERIENCE** (and list experience that is related to, and supports, your Objective) and **ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE** (list experience not directly related to your Objective but that shows consistent work history as well as illustrates your transferable skills).

What type of information should I include in my job descriptions? NOTE: Use present tense verbs for current jobs; past tense verbs for former positions. Include statement describing type of business or organization - its services, purpose, etc., if the organization name is not descriptive of this. Describe tasks performed, but also skills/knowledge acquired, and if possible, results of your efforts, and accomplishments. Include numbers if possible (e.g., of staff for whom you worked). Avoid using "I" – rather, begin statements with an action verb – see **ACTION VERBS & ADVERBS**. Be prepared to expand on this experience in the interview.

ACTIVITIES & HONORS

What type of information should go in this category?

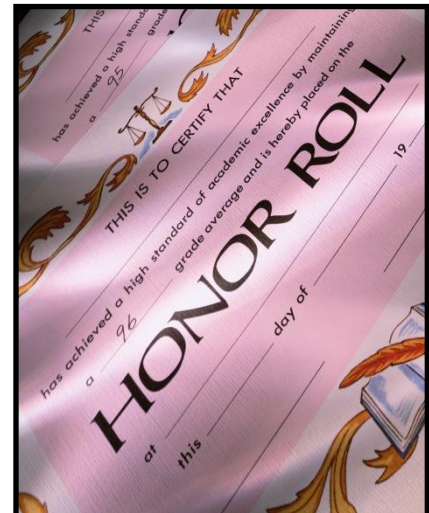
List extracurricular activities in which you participated while in college and that allowed you to develop key skills related to your career goal, such as: teamwork, communication, organizational, and leadership skills. List student organizations, volunteer activities, and honors/awards received.

Listing dates is optional; if you choose to list dates, list years only. You can have one category for all called **HONORS & ACTIVITIES**, or **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**, or **ACHIEVEMENTS**, or, just **COMMUNITY SERVICE** if you have no honors or awards to list.

REFERENCES UPON REQUEST

Should I include the statement: "References Available Upon Request"? This statement is optional, as it is understood by employers that you should be able to produce either a page listing your references, or possibly letters of recommendation at some point during the interview process.

Do not include your list of references on the actual resume. The references page is a separate document from the resume, but with the same header as the resume, and the word **"References"** underneath.



THE COVER LETTER OR LETTER OF APPLICATION

When initially contacting a specific employer, it is recommended that you accompany your resume with a cover letter (also known as a "letter of application") tailored to the position and to the organization.

COVER LETTER FORMAT

- Use the same header (contact information) for your resume, cover letter, and references page.
- Use business letter format of left margins with no indents, the date, company address, salutation.
- Limit to one page; font 10 point to 11 point looks best; three to five paragraphs.
- Use white or off-white resume paper; use same for resume, cover letter, and references page.

COVER LETTER CONTENT

- Address letter to contact person listed in job ad if possible, or if not, to "Dear Human Resources Director," "Dear Hiring Manager," "Dear Recruiter," or "Dear Search Committee Chair."
- Do not start every sentence with "I" – instead, vary the sentence structure.
- Describe highlights of educational and work experiences; don't repeat all information from resume.

- 1st paragraph:** State how you learned of position, position title, and name of organization.
- 2nd paragraph:** Describe your degree, possibly some courses, and what you learned.
- 3rd paragraph:** State knowledge/skills acquired in internships/work experiences, student organizations or volunteer activities, that relate to the position.
- 4th paragraph:** Indicate why you want to work for organization, knowledge of the organization gained through online research, personal or others' experiences, and/or publicity.
- Final paragraph:** Suggest your desire for an interview, and where and how you can be reached.



THE REFERENCES PAGE

A reference/recommendation is a verbal or written statement of support for your application for a job, by someone who has known you in a professional capacity and can comment on your work or academic performance. **Reference information should be on a page separate from your resume, and should contain the same header as your resume, with the word REFERENCES underneath.**

- Three to five references is an appropriate number to list. Always ask permission to list someone as a reference, and give them a copy of your resume to illustrate your qualifications.
- List each reference's name, current job title, place of employment (include city, state, and zip code - mailing address not necessary), and work telephone number (not personal unless given permission).
- If a reference no longer works at the organization, you may still list them - with their current job title and employer. In parentheses, state, "former Manager of XYZ Co." to illustrate former relationship.
- Do not include a separate references page when submitting your resume unless a job ad requests it. Instead, bring copies of references page in a portfolio to the interview.
- Character references (e.g., a friend, minister of your church, relative, etc.) should be avoided.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Many employers are only interested in a references page rather than letters of reference or recommendation. However, if a job ad asks for letters of reference/recommendation:

- Letters of reference should be current - i.e., dated within the current year.
- If possible, without causing inconvenience to the person recommending you, letters should be addressed to the contact person listed in the job ad. If this is not possible, the letters may be addressed: "Dear Human Resources Director," "Dear Hiring Manager," etc.
- Giving your references a copy of your resume and mentioning key points you would like for them to emphasize in their letter is appropriate, and can be helpful to the reference in writing the letter. A copy of the job ad or description of the job can be helpful as well.

SAMPLE RESUME

Cayla Curet

1212 Bylion Dr., Hammond, LA 70401
(985) 555-2000 Cayla.Curet@selu.edu

OBJECTIVE

To apply knowledge and skills in nursing as a highly motivated and compassionate member of a health care team dedicated to providing the highest level of patient care.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA
Graduation Date: December 2014

SKILLS SUMMARY

- Demonstrate excellent communication skills in relating to patients, co-workers, and supervisors
- Ability to effectively plan, prioritize, and complete activities within timelines and deadlines
- Strong attention to detail and accuracy in analyzing situations and implementing solutions
- Experience in assessment and charting of patient vital signs, intake and output, daily weights
- Reviewed labs and MD orders, patient and family education, notification of patient status
- Medication administration: PO, IV, IM, SQ, topical, optic in the adult and pediatric populations
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Ochsner Medical Center, Baton Rouge, LA: Medical-Surgical Rotation
North Oaks Medical Center, Hammond, LA: Medical-Surgical, Labor and Delivery, Same Day Surgery, Pediatrics
Lakeview Regional Medical Center, Covington, LA: Psychiatric Nursing
Baton Rouge General Mid City, Baton Rouge, LA: Telemetry, Same Day Surgery, and Rehabilitation

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Server, August 2013-Present

Applebee's, Hammond, LA

Courteously and efficiently provide high level of service to customers. Demonstrate effective time management and multitasking skills and ensure satisfaction by proactively attending to customer needs and requests. Process orders with attention to detail and accuracy. Responsibly manage monetary transactions.

Resident Assistant, October 2012-May 2013

University Housing, Southeastern Louisiana University

Oversaw residence hall of 80+ university students. Interacted with residents to address their needs and concerns and to apply effective problem-solving skills to resolve issues and conflicts. Composed detailed reports and maintained accurate records. Enhanced sense of community and the college experience among residents through coordinating social and educational programs.

Rehabilitation Technician, September 2010-October 2012

St. Tammany Parish Hospital, Covington, LA

Assisted patients with exercises to enhance gait, range of motion, and strength. Worked with physical, occupational, speech, and recreational therapists and their patients.

ORGANIZATIONS

Student Nurses Association (SNA), Southeastern Louisiana University

CERTIFICATIONS

Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers (CPR & AED), American Heart Association: Certified January 2011 - January 2012; Lifeguard/First Aid, American Red Cross: Certified January 2011 - January 2014

SAMPLE RESUME

Alicia Nightingale

10000 Procedure Rd., Covington, LA 70433 985-555-4321 AliciaGale123@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE

A challenging career in health care which exemplifies the highest level of quality in patient care, and which will benefit from my strong knowledge base and skills set in nursing.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Graduation Date: December 2012

Course Work Includes: Pathophysiology and Pharmacology; Medical Terminology; Healthcare Informatics; Human Diseases; Death, Dying, and the Grieving Process; Health Assessment; Health Assessment of Families/Groups/Communities; Cultural Competence in Nursing Care

KEY QUALIFICATIONS

- Registered Nurse Licensure, State of Louisiana
- Observant and compassionate in interacting with patients and their families.
- Effectively assess patient conditions and implement appropriate interventions.
- Detailed and accurate in recording documentation and compiling reports.
- Demonstrate calm and professional demeanor in managing critical incidents.
- Work cooperatively with medical team of physicians, nurses, and staff.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

North Oaks Medical Center, Hammond, LA

Registered Nurse, January 2012 - present

Implement patient care for up to 12 patients per section. Act as patient advocate, assess patient status and notify physicians of clinical changes. Interact with various departments regarding patient care. Educate patients and families on medical conditions and corresponding . Maintain patient charts and confidential documentation. Coordinate services, treatments, and consultations. Provide assistance to Nursing Manager in the supervision of staff nurses.

Sunny Brook Retirement Home, New Orleans, LA

Certified Nursing Assistant, March 2010 - April 2011

Assisted nursing staff in providing care to all patients including bathing, changing and feeding. Administered insulin shots and local anesthetic. Provided quality patient care including fulfilling requests and offering encouragement and support. Managed confidential patient files.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sales Associate, World Market, Covington, LA, 2009 – 2010

Provided courteous service to customers. Assisted customers in selecting merchandise and answered questions about various products and sales/promotions. Conducted cash register transactions and closed and balanced register. Assisted with inventory and visual displays.

ACTIVITIES

Volunteer, Habitat for Humanity, 2010-present; Student Nurses Association, 2008-2009

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Cayla Curet

**1212 Syringe Dr., Hammond, LA 70401
(985) 555-2000 Cayla.Curet@selu.edu**

November 1, 2014

North Oaks Medical Center
15790 Paul Vega MD Drive
Hammond, LA 70403

Dear Human Resources Director:

I am submitting my resume in application for a Registered Nurse position for North Oaks Health System, as advertised on your web site. I am confident that my education and experience will allow me to make a valuable contribution to your organization and its patients, and I am eager to begin my nursing career in a dynamic, visionary, and expanding health care organization such as yours.

I will graduate with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Southeastern Louisiana University in December of 2014. My course work and clinical experiences have provided me with a strong foundation in the principles and practices of patient care. Through this academic preparation I gained extensive knowledge not only of the physical, biological aspects of nursing, but also the psychological and spiritual aspects of caring for the individual patient, including the importance of family education and involvement in the patient's recovery and well-being. My clinical experiences in a range of nursing roles allowed me to apply the knowledge I acquired in the classroom to real-world situations, and to gain a better understanding of the operations and functioning of different health care units. I also have experience as a Rehabilitation Technician, in which I worked closely with patients as well as other medical staff.

My strengths include strong communication skills, the ability to plan, organize, and implement work tasks efficiently and effectively, and the energy and focus needed for working in a fast-paced environment requiring adaptability to the ever-changing demands of patient care. I am detail-oriented and accurate in assessing patient conditions and needs, and in maintaining documentation of medications administered and services provided. I also possess a genuine desire to contribute to the health care needs of my patients by fostering a relationship of trust and confidence, which will allow me to excel in the field of nursing as well as truly enjoy the experience of providing patient care.

My resume further details my education and experience. If additional information is needed, please contact me. I look forward to the opportunity to interview and elaborate on how I can meet your needs. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Cayla Curet

SAMPLE REFERENCES

Cayla Curet

1212 Syringe Dr., Hammond, LA 70401
(985) 555-2000 Cayla.Curet@selu.edu

REFERENCES

Dr. Joan Smith, Professor
Department of Nursing
Southeastern Louisiana University
Hammond, LA 70402
985-555-5555

Ms. Jane Doe, R.N.
St. Tammany Parish Hospital
Covington, LA 70433
985-555-1111

Mr. John Williams, Manager
Applebee's Restaurant
Hammond, LA 70401
985-555-2222

PART III: THE JOB SEARCH

Career Exploration & Assessment in the Job Search

Conducting a successful job search requires an exploration of all of your career options. Knowing what options are available to you is preparing you to change career directions if you aren't finding your ideal job. You may also discover an exciting career you did not know existed. There are thousands of types of jobs – don't limit yourself to just the few that you may be aware of. Career Services offers online resources, and career assessments, to increase your awareness of the many types of work you may find to be a great fit for your interests, personality, knowledge and skills.

Career Exploration Online Resources

The resources below can assist you in:

- **Exploring options** - Make informed choices about careers to target in your job search.
- **Developing a resume** - Research current/past jobs for writing accurate, detailed descriptions.
- **Developing a cover letter** - Research job you're targeting and tailor cover letter.
- **Preparing for an interview** - Learn job requirements and prepare to discuss how your knowledge and skills fit the employer's needs.

SIGI 3

Information on 300+ careers by alphabetized job titles, or by college major. See job descriptions, education/skills required, salaries, job outlook, etc.

O*NET

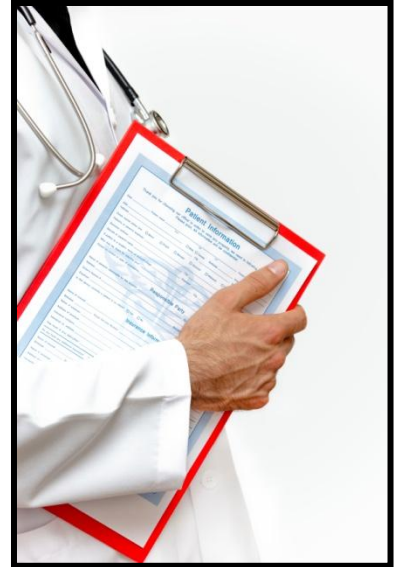
Click on *Find Occupations*, enter a job title, and see a job description and transferable skills on this US Dept. of Labor site. A Skills Search matches your skills with careers. See salary information by state.

OOH

The US Dept. of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook provides job descriptions, required education and training, salary, and job outlook information for 100's of careers.

What Can I Do With This Major?

For each major/field of interest, an Information link takes you to common career areas, types of organizations that employ that major, and strategies for gaining employment.



Career Assessments

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) - Learn how your personality type contributes to the work organization, your communication, leadership, and team work styles, and careers that best fit your type.

COPS Interest Inventory - Expand awareness of types of careers that will match your interests.

Job Search Assistance

Upload your resume into Career Services' **LIONHIRE** online job search system and FREQUENTLY CHECK for:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS: | Sign up in LIONHIRE - held each Fall & Spring semester |
| JOB VACANCY POSTINGS: | Year-round, for full-time and part-time jobs and internships |

Access **JOB BOARD LINKS** on CS web site to view job vacancy postings (full-time, part-time and internships) or to post your resume (these links are not part of **LIONHIRE**, but are a valuable resource of dozens of online job boards).

For assistance with building a resume or cover letter, participating in a mock interview, or for a career assessment, schedule an appointment by calling Career Services at 985-549-2121 or by emailing at careerservices@selu.edu.

THE ART OF NETWORKING

Are You Networking?

To be successful in your job search, you will need to master the “art of networking.” Many job openings are discovered by interacting or networking with others to let them know you are looking for a job. Networking can range from a casual, unexpected encounter to a planned, organized meeting – so always be prepared. Remember that you are always “on” when job searching, so always conduct yourself in a mature, polished manner.

Think creatively when developing your network of contacts, and organize your list. If your contacts are not aware of any job opportunities within their employing organization, ask them if they can refer you to contacts they have – either within their organization, or employed in others. It’s not only who *you* know, but who *they* know!

Provide networking contacts and references with a copy of your resume. They can refer to it when they discuss your hiring potential with an employer, and it enables them to speak more informatively about you.

Have you spoken to these contacts about your job search?

- Professors and clinical supervisors, and advisors to student organizations.
- Fellow members of student or other organizations - college, volunteer, etc.
- “Personal professional contacts” - bankers, accountants, lawyers, ministers.
- Friends, acquaintances, neighbors; family and extended relatives.
- Former employers, current employers and customers. Most college seniors have part-time jobs, and their employers expect them to search for a degree-required position at some point, so it is appropriate to ask for their assistance with your networking/job search - and if you may list them as a reference.



Have you explored these resources for job opportunities?

- **LIONHIRE** system, & Job Board Links page, of Career Services’ web site: www.selu.edu/career.
- Company web sites.
- Career fairs – company representatives and /recruiters.
- Newspaper classifieds (“Want Ads”).
- Temporary employment agencies.
- Professional associations: Their web site job boards.
- Professional associations: Their conferences - local, regional, national - may have job fairs or job networking events.
- Send a thank you note to all in your network who have assisted you!
- Keep networking even after you land a job. You never know when you may need your contacts again.

Using Social Media in the Job Search: Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, etc.

Do’s

- Do update your profile regularly
- Do join groups...selectively
- Do get rid of digital dirt – indecent language, photographs, etc.

Don’ts

- Don't badmouth your current or previous employer
- Don't mention your job search if you're still employed
- Don't forget others can see your friends

PART IV: INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

DRESS FOR SUCCESS – FOR WOMEN

The Suit

- A business suit – a matching jacket and skirt - is most appropriate and preferable to a dress.
- Pant suits may be acceptable; however, if you are not sure, wear a skirt and jacket suit.
- Should be conservative color - black, gray, brown, navy, taupe – solid or with a small pattern.
- Should fit – not too tight or too loose; avoid fabrics that wrinkle easily, such as linen.
- Blouse of conservative to medium color – not bright color.
- No short skirts – hem should be longer than mid-thigh.

The Jewelry: Seven pieces of jewelry, maximum. One earring per ear – small size. Watch – dress, not sports.

The Hosiery: Neutral colors only: taupe, beige, off black – avoid textures.

The Purse

- Carry either a purse or briefcase – but not both – neutral color.
- A nice portfolio containing a note pad and extra copies of your resume may be carried with a purse.

The Make-up/Hair - “Less is More”

- If hair is longer than shoulder length, wear pulled back.
- Go easy on blush, eye shadow and lips – little, or preferably no, perfume.

Shoes: Closed toe only. No sandals – even those with heels. No “spiked” heels. Comfortable for walking.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS - FOR MEN

The Suit

- In business environments, a suit is more appropriate. However, research company/organization to determine most appropriate dress.
- Expensive is not necessarily better – should be proper fit, however.
- Medium to dark colors, solids or conservative stripes.
- Jacket length: should pass “finger curl test.”
- Tip of jacket sleeve should fall 5 inches above tip of thumb when thumb is extended down.
- Shirt: pastels, solids, and conservative stripes are acceptable.
- Shirt sleeve: should extend one half inch below jacket sleeve edge.

The Shoes & Socks & Jewelry

Dressy lace-up or slip-on – no boots! Socks - dark, with solid or small pattern. Wedding band; dress watch, not sports – “less is more” with men’s jewelry.

The Tie - Small, repetitive pattern or solid – no “theme” ties (e.g., “Tabasco”). End of tie should touch top of belt.

The Other - Carry nice portfolio with note pad and extra copies of your resume, and nice pen. Use aftershave sparingly – and no cologne.



TOP TEN INTERVIEW TIPS

Do your homework. Research the organization beforehand so that you can showcase that knowledge during the interview. This will boost your credibility with the interviewer and help you formulate intelligent questions to ask.

Know where you're going. Make sure to find out where the office is and how to get there. Do you know how long the trip will take? Do you have the name and phone number of the person you'll be meeting with? Do you know how easy it is to park? Save yourself time and unnecessary stress by preparing.

Look the part. Clothing should be neat, pressed, and professional. As it can be difficult to know the culture of the work environment beforehand, err on the side of conservative. Even if everyone's wearing jeans when you arrive, you're still better off wearing a suit. Still, inject some personality into your look, and don't neglect the details.

Bring necessary documentation. Make a list of documents you will need for the interview, and make sure you have them in your portfolio before leaving home. These include extra copies of your resume, a references page, and a portfolio of samples of relevant professional work. Recent college graduates should bring their transcripts.

Rehearse beforehand. Prior to your interview, prepare answers to common questions the interviewer is likely to ask, such as, *What are your strengths and weaknesses?* *Why do you want to work here?* and the ever popular *Tell me about yourself.* Conduct a mock interview with a Career Services career counselor to help you prepare.

Secure your references. Find three to five key people — current or former supervisors or professors — who are willing to serve as your professional references. Ask their permission to list them as a reference, and be certain they will speak highly of you if contacted by a potential employer.

Arrive early. Arrive at least 15 minutes before the interview. Visit the restroom and check your appearance in the mirror. Announce yourself to the receptionist to let them know you have arrived and that you have an appointment. *Turn your cell phone off so it doesn't ring during your meeting.*

Sell yourself. Develop a 30-second sales pitch that sings your praises. In business this is called an "elevator speech," a compelling overview of *why you?* that can be recited in the time it takes to ride the elevator. It should include your strengths and abilities, and what sets you apart from other applicants.

Don't neglect to ask questions. Based on your earlier research, ask how the responsibilities of the position relate to the company's goals and plans for the future. Ask what qualifications they are seeking in candidates.



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Thank You Note: Don't forget to send a handwritten note or email within two days thanking the interviewer for his or her time and consideration, as well as restating your interest in the position.

Self Evaluation: Conduct a self-evaluation, noting both positives and difficult questions encountered.

Follow-up Calls: You may call if you haven't heard from the employer within the time frame you were given to expect a response. Always return calls/answer emails from prospective employers. Even if you're not interested in the position, such a professional courtesy leaves a positive impression for future opportunities with the company. Make sure your voicemail message is professional, and answer the phone in an enthusiastic, positive voice.



SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE

November 10, 2014

Dear Ms. Jackson:

Thank you for the interview for the Registered Nurse position with North Oaks Health System. Your organization offers opportunities which strongly match my interests and career goals. The interview confirmed my initial positive impressions of North Oaks, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for you and in making a positive contribution to the care and recovery of your patients.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Responses should be two to three minutes in length – practice aloud to time yourself

Tell me about yourself.

Keep your response brief and focus on highlights of your educational and clinical experiences. Start with your most recent accomplishment, such as getting your college degree, why you chose your major, and what you learned in your course work that pertains to the job. Then, discuss your clinical experiences, other work experiences, and involvement in student organizations (if applicable). State specific knowledge and skills you've acquired in these experiences, and how they will contribute to your success in the position. Finally, develop a "closing statement" - state how excited you were to learn of this career opportunity and that you believe your qualifications are an excellent fit. Don't "trail off" as you finish – take charge of closing your response. Also, do not disclose personal information such as age, marital status, number of children, or health, as these factors are not related to your ability to perform the job.

Which college course or courses have you enjoyed the most, and why? The least? Why?

For the courses you liked the most, discuss those that allowed you to develop specific knowledge/skills the employer is seeking for the position. Or, choose courses that allowed you to grow intellectually and/or interpersonally – such as a course that allowed you to develop analytical thinking skills, the ability to view things from different perspectives, or the opportunity to collaborate in working as part of a team on a special project.

For courses you liked the least, choose a course that **does not** relate to the position - such as art history if you are interviewing for a nursing position. Explain why you disliked it – even if just to say it was a subject in which you have little interest - and end on a positive note: "Although I didn't have an interest in art history, the course allowed me to improve my critical thinking skills." Or, "While I didn't have an interest in the course, I chose to view it as a challenge; I applied myself, and made a good grade."

Name your three greatest strengths.

Remember to answer this question based on how it is asked. If the interviewer asks for three strengths, name them – for example: "Communication skills, the ability to plan and organize, and problem-solving skills." Go ahead and elaborate by providing general descriptions of how you use these strengths in your college or work life. The interviewer may ask another form of this question: "Name **three words** your co-workers would use to describe you." In this case, your response should consist of three words, such as: "Organized, detailed, and motivated." Also, be able to **provide examples** of how you've successfully applied these strengths to resolve a problem situation (see "Behavioral Interviewing" below).



What is your greatest weakness?

Design your response so that your weakness is really a “positive” in disguise. For example, you may refer to your tendency to take great pride in the quality of your work, so you tend to want to do it all yourself, but then you find you are not managing your time effectively or learning to delegate to others. Then, describe what you have done/do to be aware of this tendency, and to correct it. If possible, provide an example, and the positive results of your “new” approach.

Or, address this question from a personal or professional growth perspective. You may tell the interviewer that “public speaking” is an area in which you did not have a lot of confidence, but that you decided to meet this challenge and each time you were able to do a class presentation, you worked to improve your skills. Describe techniques you used to improve, and the successful outcome.

However, NEVER choose a characteristic or skill that is required for the job.



What have you learned from extracurricular activities?

Tailor your response to the knowledge and skills required for the job. If you were not an officer, but served on committees as part of memberships in student organizations, discuss these experiences and what they taught you (team work, leadership, communication skills, ability to plan, organize, and implement activities, etc.). Provide real-life examples, and describe the context or purpose of the committee: “I learned to work effectively as part of a team, and learned marketing techniques, in planning a fundraising event for our organization....”

Which of your work experiences has been most rewarding? Why? Least rewarding? Why?

Again, relate work experiences to the requirements of the job. You may want to say that your **clinical experience** was the most rewarding, because it provided you with knowledge and skills directly related to this job. Describe the knowledge/skills acquired in the job or clinical rotation and how they will allow you to be effective in this position. As for the “least rewarding” experience, NEVER say anything negative about a former employer, professor, etc. Indicate that you learned something from each job held, such as the opportunity to grow professionally.



Describe your leadership style.

This statement may be offered primarily for management or administrative positions; however, be prepared: Think about situations in which you have exercised leadership abilities, specific steps/actions you took to serve as a leader, and the positive results of those efforts – e.g., leading a class team project or student organization activity, training new employees at work, setting an example of professionalism, etc. Think in terms of guiding and motivating **people** AND managing **tasks** – both crucial elements of leadership. Even if the job does NOT require you to supervise others, you should still view your role as a leader of your area of responsibility.



Do you work well under pressure?

Answer in the positive, e.g.: “Yes, I work very well under pressure. In fact, pressure can generate a certain energy that can be a driving force for getting things done.” However, this question is also used to learn about your ability to manage your time effectively, to multitask, to organize and prioritize. Explain that you plan, organize, and complete your tasks so that if the unexpected occurs, you will not have a lot of unfinished business to prevent you from meeting the deadline.

Describe the ideal relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate.

Answer this question from both a supervisory perspective - with yourself in the role of supervisor, even if you have not had such an experience - and from that of a subordinate. Describe the approach you would take if placed in a supervisory position, and elaborate on your leadership and team work styles. DO NOT compare “good supervisors” you’ve had to “bad supervisors” or criticize the management or operations of an organization.

Why do you have a gap in employment from _____ to _____? College students can explain a gap in employment as a decision to spend time focusing on their studies.

Describe an accomplishment, and how you achieved it. What does “success” mean to you?

Choose something that illustrates setting a goal, and commitment to achieving that goal. Provide an example from college, work, or extracurricular activities. Describe the process and what you learned “along the way.” Or, describe an obstacle that you overcame, a challenge you addressed and met successfully. Regarding “your definition of success,” this question has more of a philosophical intent; let your response reflect your attitudes, beliefs, and values about life and work.

**Where do you see yourself five years from now?
What are your career goals?**

DO NOT describe career goals which will take time and energy from your new job with this organization, such as pursuing an advanced degree right away. And do not leave the employer with the impression that they are a “stepping stone” to your ultimate career goal with another organization or another type of work. Instead, emphasize your strong desire for a career path with this organization. If you are **not** certain you want to work for them, keep your response general, tailored to your “overall” professional growth: “I’m looking for the opportunity to continue to develop professionally and to advance based on my contribution to an organization’s goals.



What do you know about our organization? Why do you want to work here?

DO YOUR HOMEWORK in researching the organization THOROUGHLY before interviewing. Know something about their mission, services, history, future initiatives. This information can usually be found on the organization web site and additional online research.

What can you bring to this position that would “set you apart” from other applicants?

This question presents an opportunity for you to highlight what you have to offer as it relates to the position and the organization. Also prepare for this question by carefully listening to the interviewer describe the position, the organization/department, and the qualifications sought, which will likely occur during the interview.

In what ways do you uniquely contribute to a team effort?

Research the definition of team work so you can begin to answer this question by describing the elements required for a successful team effort. For example, stating that you believe all team members have something to contribute could be part of your “philosophy of successful teamwork.” If you have taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), there is online information on the teamwork abilities. Answer along the lines of the following options, and if possible, give a specific example to support your statements:

I’m a very organized person, and I usually assume the role of the person keeping the team on track. I write down everyone’s name and the tasks they are assigned for the project. I make sure everyone knows what their tasks are. I also develop a timeline of everyone’s tasks and even a breakdown of the steps for each member’s assigned tasks, and due dates for those. I also try not to come across as a drill sergeant, however! I let everyone know organization is my strength and that I’ll be happy to take on the role of timeline coordinator for the project.

Or

I tend to be the team member who tries to make everyone feel they are a part of something worthwhile, and that they each have something to contribute. I love hearing everyone’s thoughts and enjoy encouraging them to think out and voice their ideas. I like making all of the team members comfortable so no one feels intimidated. For those that are somewhat shy, I encourage them to speak up, or I’ll tactfully ask them if they would like to be in charge of a certain task.



APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

Refrain from asking questions until the interviewer asks if you have questions (usually done at the conclusion of the interview). However, if you do not understand a question you are asked during the interview, you may ask the interviewer to explain. DO ASK QUESTIONS to show interest and initiative!

- What qualifications do you think are necessary to be successful in this job?
- Can you describe the training period/program? How would I be supervised/my performance evaluated?
- Could you describe a typical day? Week? The organizational culture?
- What are the opportunities for advancement? (if you can’t determine from research)
- Does the organization encourage participation in professional organizations? Continuing education?
- When can I expect to hear from you regarding your hiring decision?

INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

- DO NOT initiate discussion of salary, vacation, or benefits during the first interview.
- However, be prepared to voice a range you’re looking for if they ask – see [Career Exploration & Assessment](#) for salary information on 100’s of careers.
- DO NOT push for an early decision by mentioning the other opportunities you have awaiting you.
- DO NOT ask for feedback on your interview performance.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

Expect to encounter this interview technique commonly utilized by employers. “Behavioral” questions are designed to probe applicants’ past behavior in work situations, on the premise that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. Think in terms of three or four challenging or problem situations, how you **assessed** the situation (perspectives you considered), **actions** you took to resolve or improve it, and the positive results that came from your efforts. Be specific when presenting this information to the employer.

Three types of behavioral questions:

- **Skill-specific:** “Give me an example of how you successfully applied your communication skills.”
- **General-situation:** “Describe a difficult situation and how you successfully handled it.”
- **Hypothetical:** “How would handle a resistant patient?”

To help you understand and respond to behavioral interview questions, make a list of your “three greatest strengths” and provide an example of how you successfully applied each strength in an academic, work, or extracurricular setting.

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS

WHAT DO THEY REALLY EXPECT?

Employers are people too, and when selecting a job candidate, they ask themselves the following questions: “How can this person contribute to the organization?” “Can they represent the organization in a professional manner?” “Are they showing genuine interest in the position through their preparation for this interview?”

Their decision to hire one person over another often hinges on these answers. Even though you may not be sure of their particular expectations, in general, most employers are looking for the same basic characteristics in an employee.

Now, place yourself in the employer’s shoes. Think about what you as the employer would want from an employee. Remember that this person will be working with you eight hours a day and will represent you/your company to the public, and to other businesses/organizations. So, what kind of an employee would you want?

CHARACTERISTICS ALL EMPLOYERS WILL VALUE

NOTE: Surveys indicate that a majority of employers prefer NOT to see body art – tattoos, piercings. So cover up! Once hired, you can ask about the company dress policy regarding clothing, body art, hair length, etc.

Appearance

- Does your appearance convey pride in yourself and your ability to do the job?
- Are you professionally dressed and do you present a professional image?
- Is your behavior/attitude courteous, respectful, mature, and confident?



Interpersonal/Communication Skills

- Can you interact effectively with others?
- Do you have strong verbal and written communication skills?
- Are you a team player?
- Are you enthusiastic about the job?

Dependability

- Can you be counted on to do the job? Are you accountable? Will you take initiative?
- Will you be at work regularly and report to work on time?
- Will you complete duties in a timely and accurate manner with minimal supervision?
- Will you accept responsibility, recognize what needs to be done, and are you willing to do it?

Self-knowledge

- Can you realistically assess your own abilities?
- Can you see yourself as others see you?
- Can you clearly recognize your own strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you set personal and professional goals, and work to achieve them?

Skills

- Do you possess the knowledge and skills to learn and perform the job?
- Are you willing to learn new skills? Are you coachable? The elements of coachability are intelligence, discipline, creativity and initiative. An ideal candidate should be able to think for themselves, but also be able to take and follow instructions. Remember the old adage: "Give someone a fish and they will survive today, but teach someone how to fish and they will survive forever."
- Do you have experience or related experience in this field?