

A photograph of a two-story yellow house with a white porch and columns. The house has a dark roof with a chimney and a dormer window. The porch is decorated with string lights. The house is surrounded by trees and a lawn.

AQUINAS COLLEGE

ADVANTAGE CENTER CAREER GUIDE

DISCOVER | DEVELOP | DEFINE



Aquinas College is an inclusive educational community rooted in the Catholic and Dominican tradition that provides a liberal arts education with a global perspective. Emphasizing career preparation focused on leadership and service to others, our community fosters a commitment to lifelong learning dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the common good.

We have built a close-knit and highly integrated student experiential learning center called The Advantage Center that supports academic service learning, student research, and career-related activities such as internships, under one umbrella. These departments fit under the strategic goal of the institution to align advising, career services, and academic affairs to effectively address holistic student development and learning.

The uconnect platform (called The Advantage) brings valuable opportunities to the forefront and to make available a wealth of resources that previously may have been inaccessible or hard to find. Tools such as the vault, Big Interview, what can I do with a major, etc. are all right at your fingertips.

Our team empowers you to discover and develop your talents to find your next stage of life while helping you define your unique experiences to future employers. An important part of our work is ensuring that the resources and opportunities will guide you along your pathway as we walk alongside you.

Dana Hebreard, Ph.D.
Director, Career Services and Advantage Center



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CAREER RESOURCES

aqadvantage.aquinas.edu contains all the latest resources



**An online
career program**

AQUINAS.PATHWAYU.COM



**Explore career
options, find jobs and
internships, and
connect with
employers**

AQUINAS.JOINHANDSHAKE.COM



**Learn and practice
interview skills to
prepare you ready for
your first big
interview**

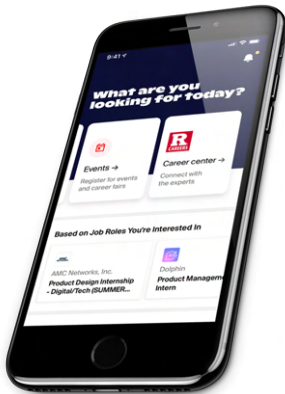
AQUINAS.BIGINTERVIEW.COM



@AQADVANTAGE

HANDSHAKE: WHY YOU NEED IT

Handshake is THE career platform for students. Over 200K employers use it to find candidates. Explore careers curated by your interests, major(s), and skills. Take the first steps now.



Get hired.

Discover and land jobs and internships.

Get discovered.

Get messaged by employers that want to hire you.

Get connected.

Connect with your peers for tips and advice.

Get it all in one place.

From career-building resources to events on your campus.

Handshake connects students on college campuses with open positions, mainly internships and entry level jobs.

Go to aquinas.joinhandshake.com to get started.

DOWNLOAD THE APP:

Search for “Handshake” on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

PRO TIP:

Complete your profile. Students with a full profile are 5x as likely to be messaged by employers. Log into the Handshake app today and kick off your college-to-career journey. **Each year**, update your class status and preferences to get noticed by potential employers.



Talent, meet opportunity.

Helping **all students** find meaningful careers.

Request Help From a Librarian

Need help with a paper, citations, or a research project? The librarians are always happy to help students find what they need. To make an appointment, go to <https://www.aquinaslibrary.com> and click the “Request Help from a Librarian” button.

Databases and Subject Guides

The databases and subject guides make the library a great tool for research for classes and personal projects. The databases provide a wide range of academic journals, books, and other media available to Aquinas students, and the subject guides provide an easy way to narrow down one’s search, in order to find the best results.

How to Use the Databases and Subject Guides

- Go to the library home page:
<https://www.aquinaslibrary.com/>
- Either use the “search everything” bar or click on the “Subject Guides and Databases” button under “Find.”
- When looking for a specific database, there is an option to look it up alphabetically. When searching for sources related to a specific class subject, it may be helpful to search by the subject first. From there, a list of featured databases will pop up.
- Once a database has been chosen, the researcher can type in keywords and look through the information that pops up.

Tips for Research

- Use specific keywords, and don’t be afraid to change them to get different results.
- Use filters in order to find good quality sources, especially “peer reviewed” and the source type.
- If there are specific requirements for the sources, the filters can help with this too.
- Many databases will automatically generate citations, but it’s good practice to make sure these are in the correct format and not missing any information.

UCONNECT AND THE ADVANTAGE

The Advantage Center provides students with a wealth of digital resources such as PathwayU, Handshake, and Big Interview. The uConnect platform allows individuals to find clearly organized resources and opportunities all in one highly accessible location. The platform – The Advantage – also has new enhanced career communities and landing pages for various community members. All members of the Advantage Center are now listed in the “Meet the Team” section as well. Ease of accessibility and virtual connection for students - now more than ever - is the end goal. Our team helps to empower students to discover, develop, and explore their talents in order to help them find their next stage of life. An important part of our work is ensuring that the resources and opportunities that will help them along their pathways are highly accessible and visible.

Find out more about on-campus employment, career opportunities, job fairs, and other opportunities at:
aqadvantage.aquinas.edu

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Aquinas provides several resources to help students succeed through Student Support Services (GSS), The Writing Center, and Peer Tutoring Services.



Peer Coaching and Study Tables

Peer Coaches are available to assist with getting organized, test taking tips, academic accountability partner and short /long term academic goal setting.

First-year and transfer student-athletes are required to participate in study tables, but the tables are available to any interested student-athlete. Tables are subject specific, and include, at minimum, a peer coach, a subject-based tutor, and a writing center consultant. Study table hours are flexible to fit students' schedules, and take place at the library.

<https://www.aquinas.edu/peer-coaching>

Writing Center

“At the AQ Writing Center, our mission is to support members of the Aquinas community in their personal, academic, and professional writing. In one-on-one consulting sessions, we engage writers in dialogue that not only provides immediate feedback and strategies for their particular writing projects, but also contributes to their ongoing development as writers.”

[aquinas.edu/writing-center](https://www.aquinas.edu/writing-center)



Peer Tutoring Services

Peer Tutoring Services provide individual or small-group tutoring for most courses. Tutors meet with students to:

Examine student learning strategies

Review information

Discuss content of reading assignments

Work through examples of homework problems

[aquinas.edu/peer-tutoring](https://www.aquinas.edu/peer-tutoring)



INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

GLOBAL STUDENTS

“Global Student Services is here to help you make the most of your Aquinas College experience from orientation to graduation! While you are here, we will be your first stop for academic assistance, immigration questions, international social events, and campus resources. We are happy to answer any questions you may have whether they be about academics, college life, Grand Rapids, or anything else you are curious about.”



Identify your competitive advantage

Think about what you have to offer that other candidates might not possess. This could be language ability or knowledge of a particular country's business culture for example. Use this as a basis to identify employers you could contact who would value these skills. As a global student, are there companies from your home country with locations in the United States that might benefit from your unique skill set?

Know the law

VISA and working regulations can be complicated. Knowing as much as you can about your visa options and what the hiring process entails is strongly recommended early on, so you can start planning your next steps sooner rather than later.

Familiarize yourself with basic recruitment practices

Get help from the AQ Advantage Center with resumes (CVs) and interviews, so you make the best impression when you apply for roles. It is important to understand recruitment methods and timelines for the sector you are interested in, so you can plan your approach and make the most effective use of your time. Be aware that resume or CV styles vary from country to country so it is important to make sure your documents are tailored to the global market that you are interested in. Although you might have your heart set on a certain type of work in a particular country, keeping an open mind will increase the options.

STUDY AWAY

Studying abroad gives you a global perspective that is valuable to employers. Aquinas College has semester long and short term trips. Check website for specific details.

There are 8 different semester long destinations: Argentina, England, France, Italy, Ireland, German, Japan, and Spain.



SUCCESS CHECKLIST

First and Second Year

Discover who you are, what really interests you, and what your life's purpose is by connecting with the career services team during each year at Aquinas College.

FIRST YEAR: SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CAREER AWARENESS

- **Enroll in CD-100 (Career and Self-Awareness):** Review career assessment tools (values, interests, and skills) and begin the process of learning more about yourself.
- **Develop a resume:** Start compiling content for your resume that showcases your education and skills through this important document.
- Join a student organization, volunteer, and/or get a job on campus. You may find a list of on-campus jobs on Handshake at aquinas.joinhandshake.com.
- Implement a **personalized graduation plan:** Meet early with a career coach and your faculty advisor to help gain a clear direction of your goals as well as aid in choosing majors, minors, courses, potential study away, and internship opportunities.
- Choose your courses wisely: **Use core requirements and elective classes** to investigate academic majors of interest. The gift of a liberal arts education in the Catholic Dominican heritage is the interdisciplinary nature of the four pillars of prayer, study, community, and service.
- Read the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) Career Competencies included in this packet.

SOPHOMORE YEAR: EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP

- **Complete Your Handshake Profile:** Handshake is where all internships and jobs are posted, on-campus interviews are scheduled, and where you will upload your resume.
- **Secure a long-term volunteer opportunity, on-campus job, or summer internship.** Use every opportunity to build your experiences and connections on Handshake.
- Take an active role in student organizations. Build on your involvement from your first year. **Leadership positions in student organizations** will develop your communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.
- Conduct informational interviews! Identify professionals within your area of interest to learn more about career fields, gain exposure, and build networks.
- Participate in **Take a Saint to Work** during the fall and spring semesters to learn about career opportunities.
- Discuss career goals and plans with your faculty advisor. **Learning is a process.** Staying in touch with academic departments and the AQ Advantage Center will assist you with developing valuable connections.
- **Declare your major and continue to explore your academic interests.** Now is the time to officially declare your major to make sure that you stay on track to graduate in four years.
- **Study away or participate in an off-campus program.** There are many opportunities for you to go off-campus for a semester or a short-term experience to learn about the world around you.

**The more details you include on your profile,
the more personalized your job search results
will be on Handshake.**

SUCCESS CHECKLIST

Third and Fourth Year

Continue to explore your career and life goals with the AQ Advantage Center during your junior and senior years.

JUNIOR YEAR: SET CLEAR GOALS

- **Solidify relationships with faculty members.** Faculty members are a vital resource for your learning. They also provide letters of recommendation to graduate and/or professional schools as well as a network in your career field.
- **Meet with a Career Services staff member.** Formulate your job or graduate school search timeline and plans.
- **Take on leadership roles on and off campus.** Get professional experience through on-campus research, an internship, on campus employment, volunteer work, or a summer job. Remember to check Handshake at aquinas.joinhandshake.com.
- **Join student chapters of professional organizations.** This can provide access to career information and begin the important task of networking. Speak with your faculty advisor or a career coach about recommended organizations for your major.
- **Research graduate/professional school options.** Learn about the application procedures and deadlines so you can optimally prepare.
- **Participate in career fairs and career-related events.** The GVSU Fall and Spring Career Fair in downtown Grand Rapids and other events will help you to explore your options and network with potential employers.
- **Network with Alumni.** Participate in alumni networking events such as the Aquinas Alumni Mentorship Program. Information available at <https://www.aquinas.edu/alumni/>.
- **Develop your LinkedIn profile.** LinkedIn is the platform for professional networking and is essential for internship and job seekers. Assistance with completing your profile will be available in CD-401.
- **Request internship** for credit on Handshake (Go to Experiences).

SENIOR YEAR: MAKE IT REAL

- **Enroll in CD-401.** Use this 8-week course as a job/graduate school boot camp to kick your plan for life after Aquinas into high gear.
- **Design a timeline.** Meet with the Director of Career Services to draft a cover letter, revise/update your resume, and complete your personal statement for graduate/professional school.
- **Identify references.** Ask faculty, staff, and/or employers to be references for you. Provide current resume.
- **Complete a mock interview.** This will help you prepare for your graduate school and/or job interview.
- **Continue to gain experience.** Use every opportunity to get an internship, work-related experience, or volunteer opportunity.
- **Formulate a "Parallel Plan."** If life throws you a curve ball, being prepared will make a big difference. Anticipate the unexpected, so you can have a plan for bouncing back from a set-back while preparing for the future.
- **Network!** Participate in career fairs, workshops, and alumni events to build your network of contacts in your areas of interest. Alumni, young professional groups, and LinkedIn are just a few resources to utilize. Follow up and send a note after meetings.
- **Apply** for the Advantage Center Honor Cord if you have completed one of the three experiences (internship, research, or semester-long study away).

ON-CAMPUS JOBS

Student workers are an important part of the Aquinas College community.

Students work all over campus and contribute to the function and beauty of the campus as well as provide services that benefit all Saints.

Working on campus can be an excellent way to gain experience for future work, internships and other professional opportunities.

All student employment opportunities can be found at aquinas.joinhandshake.com

1. Click on **Jobs**
2. Search "**AQ On-Campus Employment**" or select the **On-Campus** button
3. The job description will include the hourly rate, application process, and job requirements.
4. If you meet the requirements and are interested in applying, you will **apply directly through Handshake**. Submit the application and any required additional requirements (resume, cover letter)
5. If you are selected for an interview, the hiring supervisor for the position will reach out to you. At that point, you may be asked to interview.

For local babysitting, pet sitting, lawncare or other local household positions, enter "AQ Private Household Positions" in the search bar.



FINDING AN INTERNSHIP OR PART TIME JOB

Whether searching for an **internship, part-time opportunity off-campus or the next step in your career**, Handshake (<https://aquinas.joinhandshake.com>) is the place to start. To set up an account, you'll just need your .edu email address. If you've taken CD100, you already have an account.

1. Click on **Jobs**
2. Select "Internship", "Part-time" or "Full-time"
3. Click "**Location**" and set your geographic parameters
4. Check out the options before filtering any further, but if there are too many options, try using keywords in the search ("Marketing" or "Community").
5. PRO TIP: If you **complete your Handshake profile**, you will receive more tailored results.
6. You can filter by paid only positions, industry, or job role, but be careful in filtering too heavily, you may eliminate some great options!

Need help sorting through the opportunities? Not sure what might be a good fit? Like Handshake.com, PathwayU is another great place to get started. Complete your profile by taking personality quizzes to find what kind of job is the best for you. Be sure to also fill in the four profile sections, About Me, Education, Career Planning, and My Future, in order to help potential employers find information about you.

- Get help with cover letters, resumes, personal statements, networking, and interviews
- Take quizzes to find the language you need to articulate your personality, values, workplace preferences, and interests
- Find jobs that match your profile

Visit: <https://aquinas.pathwayu.com>

Please use your best judgment when applying, interviewing, or accepting positions.

Job Board

☐ HANDSHAKE ☒ INDEED JOB BOARD

Job Title, Keywords, or Company

Q marketing

Location

📍 49525

SEARCH JOBS

VERY STRONG MATCH

Sr Brand Marketing Specialist-Bates

Wolverine Worldwide - Rockford, MI

POSTED 4 DAYS AGO

Oversee inventory management of marketing communications assets. Generates, with the brand marketing manager, seasonal in-line product marketing efforts...

LEARN MORE

VERY STRONG MATCH

Marketing Brand Manager

The Urban You- Beauty Bar & Medical Spa - Grand Rapids, MI

POSTED 2 DAYS AGO

LEARN MORE

Filters

Sort Jobs By

☒ Relevancy ☐ Date Added

JOB MATCH STRENGTH

☐ Very Strong ☐ Strong ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Weak

RESUMES - WRITING ABOUT YOUR SKILLS

Your resume provides an overview of your experience and is often an employer's first impression of you. The purpose of the resume is to introduce you to the employer and help you obtain an interview. It is more of a **sales brochure**. Recruiters spend just a few seconds on average looking at a resume, so it is crucial to use a format that makes relevant information immediately visible. A good resume can help you land an interview, but even minor errors can take you out of the running.

BASIC FACTS:

Limited to 1 to 2 pages
Be specific and concise
Use either a chronological or functional format
Proofread
Put the most important items first
Be honest and professional
List accomplishments
Include college experiences that show leadership
Omit personal pronouns ("I")

For each experience on your resume, write a PAR statement:

P: Describe the PROJECT, the context, task or job.

A: What ACTIVITY did you do?

R: What were the RESULTS, outcomes, benefits?

Samples of how to best represent your experiences:

Before:

Performing Arts Center, Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI

Theater Marketing Intern, 2021 - 2022

Responsibilities included coordinating artist press releases, compiling tracking sheets based on information from reservations and box office attendants, handling photo and press release mailing to media, assisting in radio copy writing, and performing various other duties as assigned.

After:

Performing Arts Center, Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI

Theater Marketing Intern, 2021 - 2022

- Coordinated press releases that contributed to an increase in annual sales by 10%
- Compiled and maintained a mailing list of 10,000 customers, Aquinas College's largest ever
- Organized photo and press releases to WoodTV8 and other local news organizations
- Contributed to the copy writing of promotional radio commercials events and podcasts

Your resume is your passport to job interviews. It is an important tool in your effort to find a job. You should use as many action words (such as administer, analyze, conduct, develop, evaluate, lead, manage, organize, provide, reinforce, structure, support, etc.) as possible in order to bring life to your resume.

Words Create Images: Remember that high-impact adverbs can enhance accomplishments.

RESUME CHECKLIST

GENERAL FORMAT

- Have you used Microsoft Word? Do not use a template; applicant tracking systems (ATS) have trouble reading them. If you DO use a template, make sure to send as a PDF in an ATS.
- Are the margins consistent and > 0.5 inches and < 1 inch?
- Have you kept it to one page? You may use two pages if you have an advanced degree or extensive experience (10+ years).
- Have you left enough white space to make it easy to read?
- Have you used boldface and italics appropriately (headers or positions) and avoided underlining?
- Are dates clear and consistent? Is format and punctuation consistent?
- Are sections listed in order of importance to the employer?
- Are heading names descriptive (e.g. Research Experience, Leadership & Service, etc.?)

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Is your legal name clear and bold at the top? (also on the second page if applicable)
- Is your phone number included? Do you have a professional voicemail recorded?
- Is your email address included? Does it sound professional?
- Current trends include only listing the city and state (no street address) and your LinkedIn address.

EDUCATION

- Are college/university names spelled out?
- Did you list the official name of your degree? (i.e., Bachelor of Art/Science NOT Bachelors Degree in...)
- Did you list the month and year you earned or expect to earn your degree?
- Did you consider listing your GPA if strong? (include scale if you list the GPA)
- Did you list coursework that aligns with your job search?

Experience

- Did you clearly list the organization/company name and your job title?
- Did you include the city and state in which you worked?
- Are the dates of employment listed for each? You can simply list month and year.
- Did you list the project, activity, and results for each experience?
- Did you start each phrase with an action verb? (tenses: Past for past work, present for ongoing work)
- Did you give evidence and quantify relevant information (e.g. size, scale, budget, staff) for impact?
- Have you used key words that apply to your industry and/or the job listings?
- Have you avoided the use of "I"?
- Have you considered and included all aspects of your experiences related to the job opening(s)?

Skills

- Have you included all relevant skill types (programming languages, world languages, lab skills, etc.)?
- Did you list all relevant skills within each skill type?

Activities/Honors/Leadership

- Did you list the activities, honors, and/or leadership experiences that are relevant?

RESUME INFORMATION

Once you have a draft of your resume, go back through and look at how you explained your experience. Employers want to know what you have accomplished in the experiences you have included on your resume. It is also very important to state any outcomes that are the result of your work. Employers want to know what you can do for them.

The most effective method for describing is to use strong action verbs. Do not use personal pronouns such as I, etc. Be sure to include all full or part-time experience, volunteering, and/or community service, as well as internships.

Following are some key word suggestions:

accomplished	counseled	implemented	projected
acquired	defined	improved	promoted
adjusted	delivered	investigated	purchased
administered	determined	led	researched
advised	directed	managed	self-motivated
analyzed	ensured	ordered	spoke
applied	established	participated	suggested
brought	evaluated	performed	supervised
changed	facilitated	planned	targeted
concluded	forecasted	prepared	taught
controlled	guided	presented	trained

Framing Your Extra-Curriculars

Extra-curricular activities are great to include on your resume. You can include any extracurriculars you have participated in at Aquinas, from Registered Student Organization, experiences as a student-athlete, time spent in various performing arts, or more. Framing these experiences can help you show the transferable skills you have gained. Time-management skills, leadership capabilities, the ability to be coached, thriving when receiving constructive criticism, and learning to deal with difficult situations are all worthwhile and valued to employers.

Articulating NACE Competencies

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has identified eight competencies that express the necessary career skills that make candidates more likely to be hired. Often, a demonstration of skills, abilities, knowledge, and experience is required to effectively transition into the workforce and successfully perform a job because many employers evaluate applicants on holistic measures. These eight core competencies from NACE may bring to mind one's participation in a community service project, student organization, or internship experience. Any Aquinas graduate will benefit from an awareness of how to articulate these events within the frame of NACE's eight competencies, in order to successfully transition into the working world. (Visit: nacweb.org/career-readiness-competencies)

Resume Example

Chronological Format

Pat T. Meback

1607 Robinson Road SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
616.632.2905
Ptm005@aquinas.edu

SUMMARY Passionate leader who advocates for underrepresented individuals and makes connections to community organizations utilizing strong communication skills, work ethic, and cultural competency.

EDUCATION Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI
Bachelor of Arts, Anticipated May 2022
Dual major in Community Leadership and Political Science
GPA: 3.29
Semester in Salamanca Program Fall 2019

EXPERIENCE Home and Builders Association of Greater Grand Rapids — Grand Rapids, MI
Policy and Advocacy Intern (January-August 2021)

- Interacted daily with elected officials, administrators, and community representatives to foster relationships and promote legislation and policy
- Utilized social media and web-based applications to reach and inform consumers and industry professionals, as well as to promote the beliefs and ideals of the Association of Planned and coordinated events including a gubernatorial endorsement, state legislative candidate forum, and liaisons with county employees.
- Conducted candidate questionnaires and analyses while working with the Building a Better West Michigan PAC to secure endorsements and donations while following 501C3 regulations

City of Grand Rapids Community Development Office — Grand Rapids, MI
Public Policy Analyst Intern (September-December 2020)

- Developed a web-based program for the City to disseminate information to local businesses and entrepreneurs as well as maintained databases of personal information and documents
- Assisted with outreach to donors and nonprofits supporting the neighborhood stabilization programs
- Analyzed the implications of existing and proposed legislation, policies, and program decisions on current programs and project performance for future programs and services
- Assisted with coordination between the City and the Federal Housing and Urban Development department

Honey Creek Inn — Canonsburg, MI
Line Cook (February 2018- August 2018)

- Supervised a four-person work crew and performed duties in a fast-paced environment
- Served as the designated trainer for both new hires and existing personnel
- Provided excellent customer service by anticipating customer desires
- Coordinated with local growers and suppliers for new products and product information

ACTIVITIES Member of Community Action Volunteers of Aquinas (CAVA), Grand Rapids, MI
Member and Committee Chair of Aquinas College Student Senate, Grand Rapids, MI
Volunteer at God's Kitchen, Grand Rapids, MI

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CV AND A RESUME

A curriculum vitae (CV) is a summary of your experiences and educational background. While it can resemble a resume, a CV is most often used when applying for teaching or research opportunities, applying for grants, or for further academic training. CVs are frequently longer and include more detailed information:

- Identifying information (name, address, phone, email, LinkedIn)
- Education (reverse chronological order)
- Dissertation or thesis paper (Add title and short description)
- Areas of research interest, specialization, or competence
- Experience
- Fellowships/Awards/Honors
- Memberships or Professional Affiliations
- Languages and Skills
- Publications and Presentations

Curriculum Vitae

Resume

What is it?	A full list of your professional education and history.	A selection of your experience and skills that are most pertinent to the advertised position.
How long is it?	May be many pages; length is not important.	One page for entry-level positions. Multiple pages permitted for more advanced or research-oriented positions.
When do you use it?	For academic and research positions in government or industry.	For any type of position outside of academia and research science.
Should you include publications?	A full and complete list of publications is essential.	A partial list, or highlights, may be included, but are not required.
How important is style and layout?	Content is what matters most. As long as the materials are clearly presented, style does not matter much.	Style and content are both important. Bad style is a liability.
Are references listed?	Typically, references are listed at the end of a CV.	References not listed. If requested, submit them on a separate document.

COVER LETTER

Good letters can enhance your employability, but they first must be connected to your most important job search tool – your brain! The purposes and impact of every letter should be considered carefully. It is important that you craft your letters to reflect what is appropriate for your audience, our objectives, and the requirement of the situation.

Your cover letters should be linked to the following career development tasks:

- Assessing your abilities, skills, knowledge, interests, preference, values, and motivations.
- Researching and evaluating occupations, jobs, and employers.
- Defining your work objectives and career goals.
- Writing a professional-level resume.
- Planning and implementing your job-search campaign.
- Interviewing for job opportunities and choosing appropriate work.

Ten Basic Principles to Effective Cover Letter Writing:

- Decide your purpose in writing, then plan accordingly.
- Place the most important items first and support them with facts.
- Group similar items together in a paragraph, then organize the paragraphs in logical relationship to one another. Do the work of organizing your information for the reader.
- Keep your letters personal, warm, and professional. Avoid being either overly familiar or overly officious in tone. However, do remember that business letters are formal, not informal, documents.
- Say what you mean directly without a lot of verbiage. Demonstrate that you understand the value of the reader's time by being as brief as possible.
- Write clearly and simply. Avoid jargon and overly complex sentences.
- Be positive in content, tone, word choice, and expectations. Suggest that you are an optimistic, responsible, productive, and reasonable person.
- Use active voice and action verbs in your writing.
- Keep the reader's interest by varying sentence structure and length.
- Reduce uncertainty and abstraction for the reader by including specific facts.
- Provide information that reflects the reader's interest. Stress benefits for the reader.



**Check out this article by
Brigid Avery!**

**“A Love Letter to Cover
Letters: Advice From a
Professional Career Educator”**



COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

123 Main Street, Anytown, CA 12345 • 555-212-1234 • josephq@email.com

August 17, 2020

Jane Smith
Director, Human Resources
Acme Company
123 Business Rd.
Business City, CA 54321

Dear Ms. Smith,

Please accept this letter as application for the author's assistant position at Acme Company, as advertised on LinkedIn. I am currently employed as legislative director for Assemblywoman Nora Kiel, Chairperson of the NYS Assembly, and believe that the skills and experiences I have gained at this position make me an ideal candidate for the job of author's assistant.

As legislative director, I have developed strong writing and editing skills. For example, one of my main duties is to prepare Assemblywoman Nora Kiel's personal correspondence, which deals with issues related to her position as Senior member of the NYS Assembly Standing Committee.

This duty requires meticulous writing and editing skills, and an ability to convey complex legal ideas clearly. I have prepared dozens of pieces of legislation and received praise for the clarity of my writing.

I have also gained extensive experience in legal and policy research—fields that you state the author's assistant must be familiar with. My experience in the NYS Assembly has afforded me the opportunity to become familiar with the consolidated and unconsolidated laws of the State of New York. In particular, through my work with Assemblywoman Nora Kiel, I have become heavily involved in the current welfare and Medicaid reform movement. I am always eager to learn more about state legislation, reading up on these topics on my own time to become more knowledgeable. I would love to bring this passion for policy and law to your company.

I am confident that my experience in the Legislature and my research and writing skills qualify me for consideration. If you would like, I can provide you with current samples of my work. I have also enclosed my resume. I look forward to meeting with you and discussing my qualifications in more detail.

Sincerely,
Joseph Q. Applicant

NACE CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES



Career and Self Development

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.

Communication

Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.

Critical Thinking

Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

Equity and Inclusion

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

Leadership

Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.

Professionalism

Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.

Teamwork

Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

Technology

Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiency, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

What is Career Readiness?

Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management. These are the skills employers are looking for in candidates.

Information from:

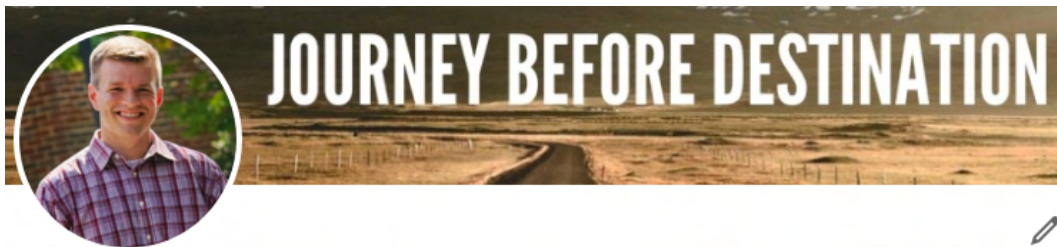
naceweb.org/career-readiness-competencies

LinkedIn Basics

LinkedIn is one of the worlds largest professional network on the internet! It is a perfect place to find an internship, make some new connections, and find the right job for YOU! On LinkedIn you can create a profile and add your newly vamped resume to other job seekers and employers.

Tips and Ideas


1. Write an informative profile headline (ex. Collegiate athlete seeking supply chain management position)
2. Pick a photo of yourself, individual with professional attire.
3. Show off your experiential education
 - a. Study Away
 - b. Research
 - c. Internship
4. Develop a professional summary
5. Fill "Skills and Expertise" with key words
6. Update your work status regularly ("like" posts and/or post some of your own comments)
7. Show off your connectedness (join the Aquinas College Alumni Community)
8. Set up a job alert via LinkedIn
9. Collect diverse recommendations to help highlight your skills and abilities
10. Claim your unique LinkedIn URL to make it easier for to include links on your resumes and portfolios




Joseph Fox, M.Ed.

Career Coach at Aquinas College - Grand Rapids
Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area · [Contact info](#)

453 connections

 Grand Rapids Community College

 Grand Valley State University

DID YOU KNOW?

Employers are 7X more likely to see your profile in searches if you have an HD profile picture!

LinkedIn

Building a Profile

- Attend a Personal Branding and/or LinkedIn Workshop (Get started or get pointers to improve your LinkedIn account).
- Create a Profile Heading (Your heading is one of the most highly weighted elements in the LinkedIn Search).
- Get a professional-looking photo (Avoid distracting backgrounds and use a headshot with shoulders on up).
- Education (Make your education stand out by having the Education section towards the top of your profile - include your majors/minors, study away, internships).
- Create a Professional Summary (Most users will see only the first 220 characters in the new LinkedIn version, so choose wisely).
- Skills and Endorsements (Your top 3 skills will be highlighted, so put them in order of importance).
- Join Groups (Connect: build your network with quality contacts; join groups of professional interest).
- Optimize your profile for search engines (Recruiters may find you through keywords).

Benefits

Each month over 187 million users visit LinkedIn.

- Provides an online professional presence.
- Contains content from your resume, cover letter, and references for others to see.
- Is a networking site that allows you to make new professional connections.
- Contains access to job listings.
- Contains information for research on companies or people you are going to meet.
- Has a student job portal: <http://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs>.



Check out These Student Resources



**LinkedIn With
Amy Marshall**



**Leadership Development
Program LinkedIn Workshop**



**Showcase Research
on LinkedIn**



**How to Use LinkedIn
as a College Student**

SOCIAL MEDIA

Did you know that social media influences the hiring process?

- 93% of recruiters are likely to look at social profiles.
- 87% of recruiters find LinkedIn the most effective internet site when vetting candidates during the hiring process.
- 72% of recruiters view typos negatively on social media.
- 87% of recruiters have a negative impression of oversharing on social media.

Statistic Source: Jobvite Social Recruiting Survey Results 2020

CONSIDERATIONS

Control Your Image

Review your online presence... How do you appear on Instagram? Tik Tok? YouTube? Remove anything that could potentially damage your reputation. And for future posts, remember that anything you post might be accessed by others in the future.

Use Twitter

Employers post job opportunities on Twitter, so investigate whether your ideal employers have Twitter handles to follow. Also, consider searching for handles dedicated to internships postings such as @USA_Internship.

Communicate in a Professional Manner

Each interaction with your network or potential employers is a demonstration and potential evaluation of your communication skills. Maintain professional language at all times. Respond promptly to emails. Be careful not to communicate too frequently with minutiae, as this can be perceived as needy.

Be Active on LinkedIn

LinkedIn has become the preferred professional networking site for employers and employees. Create an account and keep it updated. Employers use LinkedIn frequently to vet candidates further so make it look professional.

PROFESSIONAL DRESS

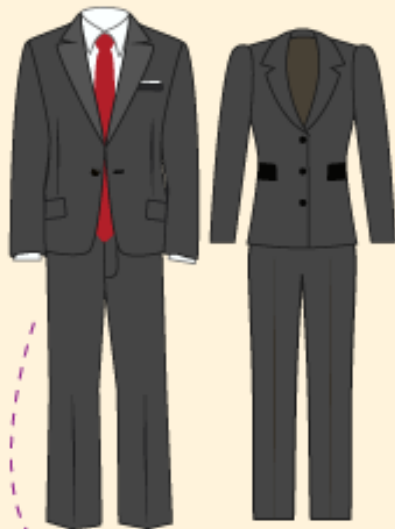
Did you know that human beings will judge, or at least begin to form an opinion of, one another based on appearance in the first 5 seconds? And, we can never make a first impression again. While in everyday life we tend to have the time to correct or add onto the feelings we develop during first impressions, the other person's opinion becomes more relevant in situations where two people only interact for a short amount of time. This is why we want you to look your best whether it is a classroom presentation, job shadow, career fair, or interview.

Dress for Success!

A GUIDE ON HOW TO DRESS FOR
YOUR NEXT JOB INTERVIEW

Business Professional

JOB INTERVIEWING ATTIRE



CLOTHES SHOULD BE:

- ☒ SOLID, DARK OR NEUTRAL COLORS
- ☒ LIGHT COLORS CAN BE WORN UNDERNEATH
- ☒ NO STRIPES OR BRIGHT PRINTS/COLORS

SHOES SHOULD BE:

- ☒ CLOSED-TOE HEEL OR DRESS SHOES

SUIT JACKET & PANTS/SKIRT
SHOULD BE MATCHING COLORS

PERSONAL ITEMS & CELL PHONES

Keep cellphones turned off and out of sight with personal items



Carry a portfolio, professional bag or simple purse

BRING ESSENTIALS ONLY!

A FEW TIPS AND BENEFITS OF "DRESSING FOR SUCCESS"

Although there isn't an absolute right or wrong way to dress, there are general expectations that you may want to follow, in order to find success.

- Know what type of dress is expected and go one level above what others do. This will help you to stand out in a positive way.
- Dressing accordingly demonstrates that you take pride in your appearance and understand the professional world of work.
- Employers don't want to see someone who looks like they have potential; they want to see someone who dresses like they have already found success. This will help you feel and act more confident.

Are you career ready? See [Big Interview](#) Module 5 "Interview Prep" for more tips on Dressing for Success!

aquinas.biginterview.com



Infographic courtesy of NACE

<https://community.nacweb.org/blogs/melena-postolowski/2017/10/10/gender-inclusive-professional-dress-guidelines>

DECODING THE DRESS CODE

“Dressing appropriately helps others to recognize you as a professional who cares about your success. Not sure what to wear when? Don’t know where to find professional clothing? Below you can learn about how to dress to impress and help land the job you want!” (Professional Dress 101).

Check out this resource about the levels of professionalism in dress:
<https://www.suu.edu/careercenter/professional-closet/professional-dress-101.html>

OTHER ITEMS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Practice good hygiene. The easiest way to make a bad first impression is to smell bad to an employer. Do not use heavy perfumes, colognes, or strongly scented deodorant.
- Piercings and tattoos in the workplace have been a point of discussion for some time now. In more casual environments, these are acceptable; however, they should not be overly distracting. Studs are acceptable, and facial piercings are generally fine in moderation. (keep in mind that some piercings, especially nose studs/rings, have cultural significance). Don’t be afraid of checking with HR to see what the policies are.
- Makeup should enhance and not distract from a candidate's qualifications. It is better to blend in naturally than yo overdo it and wear too much. Makeup can help you present a polished appearance and give you an extra boost of confidence if you apply it correctly and appropriately to the situation.

AQ ADVANTAGE CLOSET

Need to find professional attire for that interview, career fair, or class presentation? Come visit us in Flannery!

The AQ Advantage Closet is open every Wednesday from 11-12! If you are looking for options for professional business attire, feel free to drop by the Advantage Center to check out our selection of items, free for AQ students!

#AQWorldReady

Infographic courtesy of NACE
<https://community.naceweb.org/blogs/melena-postolowski/2017/10/10/gender-inclusive-professional-dress-guidelines>

Business Casual

DAILY WORK ATTIRE

BUSINESS CASUAL COLORS & STYLES

- ☒ NICE PANTS/SLACKS
- ☒ DRESSES
- ☒ NO SHORTS, SUNDRESSES OR ATHLETIC WEAR

SKIRTS & DRESSES
should be knee length when standing and thighs covered while seated

TIES
OPTIONAL

JACKETS & SHOES
Blazers & cardigans with flats, boots, closed-toe shoes, or comfortable shoes for walking in

General Recommendations

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FIRST IMPRESSION

CLOTHES SHOULD BE:

- ☒ TAILORED
- ☒ IN GOOD CONDITION
- ☒ WRINKLE & LINT FREE

HAIR
Well groomed hairstyle

NAILS & MAKEUP
Natural in style

JEWELRY & FRAGRANCE
Wear moderate jewelry with mild fragrance

PIERCINGS & TATTOOS
Align to company culture or standards

NEAT & CLEAN DRESS SHOES

Belts
Belts should match the color of your shoes and attire.

ELEVATOR PITCH

The 60 Second Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or “commercial” about you. It communicates who you are, what you’re looking for and how you can benefit a company or organization. It’s typically about 60 seconds, the time it takes people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. (The idea behind having an elevator speech is that you are prepared to share this information with anyone, at anytime, even in an elevator.) Rehearse your 60 second elevator speech with a friend or in front of a mirror. The important thing is to practice it OUT LOUD. You want it to sound natural. Get comfortable with what you have to say so you can breeze through it when the time comes.

A Sample Elevator Speech Outline

1. Smile to your counterpart, and open with a statement or question that grabs attention: a hook that prompt your listener to ask questions.
2. Tell who you are: describe you and your company.
3. Tell what you do and show enthusiasm.
4. Tell what problems you have solved or contributions you have made, offer a vivid example, tell why you are interested in your listener, tell what very special service, product or solutions you can offer him or her, or explain what the advantages are of working with you.
5. Give a concrete example or tell a short story, show your uniqueness and provide illustrations on how you work.
6. What is the most wanted response after your elevator speech? Do you want a business card, a referral or an appointment for a presentation after your elevator speech?

Identify the
goal of the
pitch

Clearly
describe what
you do

Focus on
Strengths

Credit and/or
compliment

Engage listener
with a question

ELEVATOR PITCH BASIC OUTLINE

Greeting (Hello, my name is...)

Year in School (I am a sophomore, junior, etc.)

Major (majoring in...)

Experience (I have done (research, projects, etc.)

Accomplishments (I have (produced, written, etc.)

Seeking (I am seeking an...)

Question (I know your organization has a program on X, can you tell me a little bit about upcoming projects?)

EXAMPLE

Hi, my name is Samantha Atcheson, and I am a senior Environmental Sciences major. I’m looking for a position that will allow me to use my research and analysis skills. Over the past few years, I’ve been strengthening these skills through my work with a local watershed council on conservation strategies to support water quality and habitats. Eventually, I’d like develop education programs on water conservation awareness. I read that your organization is involved in water quality projects. Can you tell me how someone with my experience may fit into your organization?

NETWORKING BASICS

THE ACTION OR PROCESS OF INTERACTING WITH OTHERS TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL OR SOCIAL CONTACTS.

Building your social capital

Your social capital is basically your social network. And no, I don't mean your Facebook or Instagram handle. It is the people you know, the relationships you form, and the actions you do with and for each other.

Why is it important?

In today's world, business and otherwise, networking has become extremely important. It might even be *essential*. Professional networks can lead to more business opportunities and might even further professional statuses. Networking often includes forming relationships with other people in your field or doing similar things as you. This means that you might even find out about job opportunities through your networking contacts.

How does networking work?

You are always networking – whether you know it or not! You probably have contacts through your family, your friends, and your classmates. Even staff, lecturers and alumni are important sources of contact. Good places to network include internship or job sites, professional associations, alumni associations, etc.

Do...

- Report Back
- Send Thank-You Notes
- Be Businesslike
- Organize
- Keep in touch with all your connections

Don't...

- Be afraid to ask for help
- Ask someone to get you a job
- Expect an instant answer
- Give out another person's contact information
- Be upset if someone brushes you off

Online Advice

- Update your profile often
- Don't badmouth your current employer
- Check grammar
- Get rid of your digital dirt

Remember that
75-95% of all positions
are unadvertised!

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

An informational interview is an informal conversation you can have with someone working in an area of interest to you. It is an effective research tool and is best done after preliminary online research. It is not a job interview, and the objective is not to find job openings.

Identify professionals to interview: Start by asking people you already know (family, friends, neighbors, professors, or past coworkers) for referrals. Utilize other resources such as the Aquinas Alumni Directory, LinkedIn, and Professional Associations to find people who are working in your field of interest.

Connect with contacts: You can request to set up meetings by email, in person, on the phone, or via Zoom. Introduce yourself and explain how you got their name. Tell them you are researching X field and seeking advice. Request a 20-30 minute meeting at their work site if possible. Meeting at a local coffee shop, phone, or Zoom is a good alternative. Be clear, concise, and courteous in your communication.

Prepare for your meeting: Now it's time to prepare for your meeting just as you would for an actual job interview. Conduct preliminary research on the organization. Knowing some specifics about the occupation and the company will help you to create targeted questions, and show your enthusiasm and professionalism. Develop and bring a list of open-ended questions that will help you evaluate if the career is a fit for you. It's important to clarify your objectives before the meeting to determine what information you are seeking. Your goals will change along a continuum from general career research to specific job research advice.

Conduct the Interview: Informational interviews are more casual than job interviews, but you should still make a positive professional impression. On the day of the interview: arrive early, especially if you are meeting in a public place such as a coffee shop. This will ensure you are able to find a place to sit. You are leading the interview. Start by thanking the individual for their time. Monitor the time and end the interview within the specified time. Show gratitude after the interview by sending a thank you email or note within 24 hours.

Evaluate the Information Gathered: Take the time to reflect on the responses. What did you like? What positive impressions do you now have about this area of work? Did you discover any new concerns about or advantages of the occupation? How does this information help you to clarify your own career objectives? Did you discover another occupation you might want to learn about? What are your next steps? With whom else do you plan to talk? Beware of relying too heavily on the advice or views of only one or two people.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS CONT.

An informational interview is a low-pressure way to gather career information from people who are already working in occupations, organizations, or geographic locations you are interested in. Both the content of the information, and the process of gathering it will help you to refine your career goals and possibly discover new ones.

Suggested Questions

Job Description

- What are your major job responsibilities?
- If possible, describe a typical day at work OR what your day was like yesterday.
- What aspects of your job do you enjoy the most/least?
- How is your time divided between working with people, data, or things?

Career Path

- How did you get into this field? Would you describe your career path?
- What are the typical entry-level jobs in this field? What are some possible career paths?
- How do most people enter this field?

Work Environment

- How would you describe your work environment?
- How much flexibility are you permitted in your job? How much autonomy do you have?
- Who do you meet with?
- What are the biggest challenges or problems that you have encountered?

Industry

- Who do you consider to be the leaders in this industry? How do you view the current state of your industry?
- Are there professional groups in the field that you recommend I join?
- Where might I find job descriptions and other specifications for some of the positions in this field? Do you have any suggestions on my job search strategy?

Organization/Company

- How does the work of your group/division fit into the work of the overall organization? What is the average length of time employees stay with the organization?
- What type of formal on the job training is provided?

General

- Do you mind if I stay in touch with you regarding my career search?
- Is there anyone else in the field with whom you suggest I speak?

Keep a document with a record of the people whom you have interviewed, the dates of the meetings, what was discussed, and names of additional contacts. The people you meet are potential members of your professional network.

JOB SHADOWING

This is a career exploration activity that offers an opportunity to spend time with a professional currently working in your field of interest. Job shadowing offers a chance to see what it is actually like to work in a specific job. Not only do job shadows get to observe the day-to-day activities of someone in the current workforce, they also get a chance to have their questions answered.

Preparing

You will also want to make a good impression at the job site so be sure to check out the dress code before arriving. If you have been corresponding with your job shadow sponsor, don't hesitate to ask about the appropriate dress code for your visit. Since job shadowing is similar to informational interviewing, preparing a list of questions beforehand is essential to getting the most you can out of the experience. Once the shadowing experience is over, be sure to immediately send out a thank you note that highlights what you enjoyed most and that expresses your gratitude for the time and effort the job shadow sponsor took out of his or her busy day.

Conduct yourself professionally

This means showing up on time and turning off your cell phone while at the organization. Treat this experience as you would an interview. This is an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge about a career field which can't be matched by written and/or web-based information. This is also a much less stressful situation than the typical interview. Therefore, it is important to be clear about what you are hoping to accomplish with your faculty advisor prior to the experience. Sketch out a brief outline of the topics to be covered as well as the information gained as soon as possible after the experience.

Questions to Ask

- How did you become interested in this type of work?
- Why did you choose this career?
- How did you get your job with this company?
- What personality traits are important for this position?
- What kind of technical knowledge is required for this position?
- Are certain times of the year busier than other times?
- What classes in college prepared you for your position?
- What is the opportunity for advancement in this area?
- What do you like best about your position?
- What are the challenges of this position?
- How has your organization kept up with technology and progressive business trends?
- What advice would you give a student interested in this field?
- What changes do you see in this area within the next 5-10 years?

Take a Saint to Work Day: The Ultimate Job Shadow Opportunity

Offered one day during fall and spring break annually. Students are matched with an alumni or friend of AQ in their field of interest to spend half of a day exposed to various careers. The goal of the program is to give students a "real world snapshot" of various workplaces, both in physical space, culture, and mission. The program also gives alumni an opportunity to give back. Interested? Schedule an appointment with a career coach at the AQ Advantage Center.

CAREER FAIRS

A career fair is an event that gives students and employers a chance to meet one another, establish professional relationships, and discuss potential job and/or internship opportunities. Many employers from a variety of industries attend, and there are both general and specialized career fair events.

PREPARE

Research companies in advance;
identify career fair location of ideal employers and make a map/plan, especially at the large fairs.

WHAT TO WEAR

Dress according to your profession; overdressed is better than underdressed.

WHAT TO BRING

2 resumes per employer you want to meet
Pens and paper
Portfolio as writing surface and to hold your resumes
DON'T BRING
Backpack or multiple bags

WHAT TO SAY

Have a 60-second elevator pitch ready and rehearsed .
Ask questions that demonstrate your research.
DON'T SAY: "So what do you do?"

WHAT TO ASK

Prepare a list of questions in advance that demonstrate your knowledge of the company.

FOLLOW UP

Be sure to get names and business cards of individuals you speak with so that you can write a thank you email (or handwritten note).

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS AT A CAREER FAIR

- How long have you worked at your company?
- What are the most important qualifications your company looks for in an employee?
- What kinds of entry-level positions exist within your organization that would be open to someone with my background? (If not posted currently)
- What are your organization's major goals in the next few years?
- What is the training process like at your company?
- Cite something from their website. (I was on your website, and I noticed that the company just won the...award)



THE JOB SEARCH

CREATE AN ACTION PLAN FOR AN EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH

- Choose the type of work you want to pursue and apply.
- Get organized and set a timeline (consider recruiting cycles - they vary by industry).
- Research and develop a list of companies and positions.
- Get your resume in prime shape, write a strong cover letter, and interview.
- Create a Google Sheet with positions you have applied for (see below) to evaluate opportunities.
- Get offers and think about proper negotiations (if applicable).

Keep track of your records with a Google Sheet or Excel file. These are a few different column headings to consider.

Name of Company	Position Title	Description	Date Applied	Follow Up	Notes	Website
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TOOLS FOR THE JOB SEARCH

Handshake is a platform where employers list jobs targeted towards AQ students and actively search to fill these slots. While not every industry or job field is represented, the onsite interviewing is a convenient place to start. Go to: <https://aquinas.joinhandshake.com/>

Career Fairs provide an opportunity to talk to many employers in one event, and several options are offered during the year. The largest one, where most summer interns are hired, is offered in the fall, but it is important to go early and have a plan in advance because large fairs can be overwhelming and employers tend to become exhausted toward the end of the fair. Virtual Career Fairs are also an option.

Social Media (LinkedIn, etc.) is a great way to let others know more about yourself. These platforms provide a more detailed image of one's merits than a resume. This being the case, it is important to make sure your online presence is professional and reflects well on your brand, as many employers will check this before hiring.

Alumni Directory provides great informational interviews; alumni are willing to share their experiences and offer advice about career paths, interviewing, and specific companies. The network should be used primarily for gathering information. Don't expect alumni to hire you.

Company Websites target particular employers, and openings are generally kept current. It can be time consuming to search one-by-one, so pick your top 20 and create alerts to send you emails when new positions are posted.

Networking is one of the TOP ways to get a job. Personal connections give you the advantage. This being the case, networking can be difficult for some people, so it's important to practice beforehand.

Job Posting Sites (Indeed, etc.) contain many listed openings. Do a targeted search and set up email alerts for new posts. One important note is that there are many irrelevant lists here that might not be targeted towards AQ students.

Portfolio Sites (GitHub, Google Sites, etc.) are a valuable way to showcase your talents, and some employers ask to see your work this way. Only put clean, polished work here, and make sure it reflects well on you and your skills. Take CD-401: Decision Making and Implementation to learn more.

APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Research

Talk with your faculty advisor about your career goals and preparation for graduate school. Self-reflect about why you want to attend and what you hope to accomplish. Research programs of interest and evaluate the following:

- Curriculum and degree requirements
- Research, teaching, and internship opportunities
- Financial support
- Location and size of the institution
- Career opportunities upon graduation
- Connect with faculty at the school you are applying to, citing research

Apply

Determine application deadlines and required materials and make a list and timeline. Below are typical requirements but check with each program well ahead of the deadline.

- Application form
- Statement of Purpose and/or Personal Statement
- Letters of Recommendation (typically 2-3 depending on program)
- Official transcripts from all higher education institutions attended
- Official score reports from standardized exams
- Do College interviews (and informational interviews to refine your interests)
- Resume and Cover Letter
- Supplemental Materials Requested
- Application Fee

Graduate School Prep Timeline

Freshman/Sophomore Years

- o Focus on your studies
- o Participate in research
- o Begin developing relationships with faculty members who may write recommendations in the future (Go to office hours, Talk to faculty about their research)

Junior Year

- o Prepare for and take the GRE
- o Focus on your studies
- o Participate in research
- o Identify graduate fellowships in your field
- o Start exploring graduate schools
- o Identify faculty members who can potentially write recommendations. Do you have at least 4?

Senior Year

- o Summer
 - Check out applications and requirements for graduate schools AND fellowships
 - Begin work on your personal statement/research statement
- o August-September
 - Apply for application fee waivers
 - Contact faculty members for recommendations
- o October-January
 - Complete grad school applications
 - Complete fellowship applications
 - Prepare for and take the appropriate standardized tests based on your graduate school life of requirements (e.g. GRE, GMAT, LSAT, etc.).

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Communicate with your advisors, and give them a heads-up.
- If your advisors will be writing to more than one college, a spreadsheet is recommended.
- Include deadlines, and provide all the necessary information in order to make your advisor's job easy.
- Don't be afraid to communicate specific requirements.
- Either ask in person, or practice good email etiquette.
- Be proactive.

INTERVIEW SKILLS

PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

An interview is an opportunity to market yourself, demonstrate your personal traits, communicate information about yourself, your experience, and your abilities. In addition, it allows you to seek further information about the position, and the organization in order to determine if the position is an appropriate match.

An interview is also a time for employers to gather relevant information about the candidate:

- Communication skills
- Qualifications
- Leadership potential and teamwork
- Clear and realistic goals
- Self-Awareness
- Motivation and success potential
- Work Ethic
- Interest in the position

USE THE STAR FORMAT

Always attempt to answer a question with a brief assertion and an example that proves your assertion and tie your answer back to why it matters to the employer.

IMPORTANCE OF A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

- Incorporate these skills and characteristics you developed at Aquinas College:
- Communication skills (written and verbal)
- Teamwork
- Problem-Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Leadership
- Accountability
- Strong Work Ethic
- Interpersonal Skills
- Detail-Oriented
- Initiative
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Networking

REMEMBER TO:

- Arrive early and be respectful to everyone!
- Bring extra copies of your resume (on resume paper), transcripts, and a list of references.
- Offer a firm handshake, make eye contact, smile, and address recruiter properly using their last name.
- Send a thank you email within 24 hours. Stress your appreciation for the opportunity to meet and your interest in the position.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work at this company?
- What makes you the most qualified candidate for this position?
- Tell me about a time you failed.
- Sell me this pen.
- Do you work better independently or as part of a team?
- How would your friends describe you in three words?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses and how do you overcome them?
- What accomplishment are you most proud of?

THE STAR FORMAT

PURPOSE

Your objective is to get an offer of a job, and the employer's objective is to find out the following: What you have to offer (your skills, abilities, basic knowledge). Who you are (your personality, character, interests).

PREPARATION

- Step 1 - Know yourself
- Step 2 - Research the employer
- Step 3 - Develop questions

PRACTICE

- Step 1 - Analyze and improve your communication skills
- Step 2 - Become comfortable talking about yourself
- Step 3 - Practice interview techniques

STAR FORMAT

The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral-based interview question by discussing the specific situation, task, action, and result of the situation you are describing.

Situation: Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

Task: What goal were you working toward?

Action: Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Be careful that you don't describe what the team or group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word "I," not "we" when describing actions.

Result: Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure your answer contains multiple positive results.

SAMPLE STAR RESPONSE

Situation (S): Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper, The Saint, and large numbers of long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts. Task (T): My goal was to generate new ideas, materials and incentives that would result in at least a 15% increase in advertisers from the year before. Action (A): I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of The Saint circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set-up a special training session for the account executives with a Business Administration professor who discussed competitive selling strategies. Result (R): We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year.

DINNER DINING ETIQUETTE 101

The process of eating with poise and grace. Additional information available at: aqadvantage.aquinas.edu



WORK FROM THE OUTSIDE IN WHEN USING CUTLERY

The cutlery furthest from the plate is intended for the first course. If you're unsure, let the host eat first and follow their lead.



DRINK YOUR SOUP FROM THE EDGE OF THE SPOON

Never slurp your soup and don't put the whole spoon into your mouth. Scoop soup from the bowl with your spoon and drink only from the edge.



PLACE NAPKINS ON YOUR KNEES

It's considered vulgar to wear napkins around your neck. Simply put them on your knees. Dab the napkin on your mouth. Don't wipe your whole mouth with it!



REMAIN SEATED DURING A TOAST

Simply raise your glass in the direction of the other guests. If the toast is made in your honor, stay seated as well.

AMERICAN VS. CONTINENTAL

American style, the knife is in the right hand and the fork is in the left. The Continental style of eating, the fork (tines down) is held in the left hand (for eating) and the knife in the right (for cutting).

FINISHED A COURSE?

Always rest forks, knives, and spoons on the side of your plate in the 4:20 position. Don't place on the table.



PASSING FOOD

Offer to the left, take a piece for yourself, pass to the right



EXCUSE YOURSELF BEFORE LEAVING

Don't just leave the table! Ask the host to excuse you and make sure to leave your napkin on your chair. This is to signify to the server you'll be back.



NOW WHAT?

Make sure to get a business card or connect via LinkedIn. Don't forget to send a thank you note!

*Thank!
you!*

EVALUATE, NEGOTIATE, AND ACCEPT AN OFFER

You got the offer. Congrats! This is an exciting time for you. Before you jump into the position, it is helpful to take some time to evaluate the opportunity. Give yourself 1-2 days to consider the offer while being grateful. Begin by doing an assessment of yourself, your needs, and your desires. Think about your career goals. Does this offer meet your aspirations? Will it provide enough challenges to grow, learn, and develop new skills?

Do your research

Look at the average salary for that field and be as knowledgeable as possible

Websites to Research

There are a number of different web sites that offer general information on salaries (Ex: Salary.com; GlassDoor; Occupational Outlook Handbook; Indeed; Salary Expert; and Vault)

Prepare for Negotiations

Before you decide to negotiate, consider how realistic your negotiating is. Some of the things you may be able to negotiate include but are not limited to the following: salary, one-time bonuses, tuition assistance, stock options, relocation assistance, flex-time, telecommuting or working remotely, and even a birthday holiday. Take an assertive approach but don't be rude. Be persuasive in conveying your worth to your potential employer. Don't take it personally if they say no to your negotiation requests. Sometimes the representative you are negotiating with can't make decisions on the spot. Here are additional things to consider in the compensation package: Insurance Benefits, Flexibility of benefits ; Retirement planning ; Stock Options, and Total compensation

Strategies for Successful Negotiations

1. Wait until an offer has been made by an HR representative or a hiring manager before you negotiate. Only negotiate if you are seriously considering accepting the offer.
2. Be gracious and express your appreciation and enthusiasm for the job. Do not give the impression it is only about the salary.
3. Take the time to evaluate the job offer before accepting thoroughly; avoid accepting the position on the spot. If the date to accept is not on your offer letter, it is entirely acceptable to inquire about when your decision needs to be made.
4. Schedule a conversation by phone (rather than email) to discuss the job offer to avoid any room for misinterpretation over email.
5. Be informed and provide reasons why you are asking for a salary increase.
6. Make sure that you negotiate before you agree upon a salary with the HR representative or hiring manager. Once you agree, avoid backtracking.
7. Negotiation is standard in the job search process; it is expected. Make sure you negotiate professionally, respectfully, and are not overly aggressive or demanding.

The Final Decision

Once you have made a final decision, it is time to notify the employer. First, call to accept or decline the offer verbally. Make sure you have a letter in writing from the employer outlining the offer before you accept it. After verbally accepting, return a signed copy of the offer letter you were sent. If you decide to decline the offer, send a letter of declination to your potential employers. You are not required to provide any details about any other offer you accept.

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