

School of Informatics and Computing
Career Services

Job Search Guide



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**SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS
AND COMPUTING**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Bloomington

Schedule of Career Events

Fall Semester

September 8-11: Resume Week

September 15: Fall IT Career Fair

September 16: Next Day Interviews

September 21-25: Interview Prep Week

September 17-October 30: On-Campus Interviews

Spring Semester

January 22: HCI CONNECT

February 16: Spring IT Career Fair

February 17: Next Day Interviews

February 18- March 12: On-Campus Interviews

Career Services Staff

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See Jeremy for: Career Advising

Career Link FAQ for Students

Career Link is the online job posting system for the School of Informatics and Computing. All of the jobs are technology related and all are posted by employers looking to specifically recruit Indiana University School of Informatics and Computing students.

What can I do with Career Link?

- Search open positions and apply online.
- Research employers and perform geographic and job category specific searches.
- Find out who is coming to the next IT Career Fair.
- Request interviews with employers interviewing on-campus.

How do I get access to Career Link?

- Every student in the School of Informatics and Computing automatically has access.
- Go to www.iuinformaticscareers.com and click on Students (in red font).
- Make sure to keep your profile updated with your current information.
- Problems logging in? Contact Staci McFall at sgmcfall@indiana.edu.

How do I upload my resume?

- From the home page, hover over My Account, click on My Documents.
- Follow the directions on-screen.
- Once one resume is uploaded, you must always have at least one default resume in Career Link. However, you may upload up to 6 resume versions and select which one you'd like to use when you apply to a position.
- When a resume is uploaded, it goes to "Pending" waiting for approval by one of the Career Advisors. You will receive an automatically generated email when it is approved. Until it is approved, you will not be able to apply for a job or an interview schedule.
- Each time you upload a new resume, you will repeat this process. Resumes are typically approved Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.

How do I search for an open position on Career Link?

- From the home page, hover over Job Search. Click on Job Search.
- Input your search criteria and hit search. For a listing of ALL OPEN POSITIONS, just hit search.

How do I apply for an open position?

- Follow the instructions in number 4. Click on an open position.
- If you qualify, "Submit Resume" will be in red font on the left hand margin. Click on it and follow instructions.
- If you do not qualify for the position, a reason why you do not qualify for it will be listed in red font at the top of the screen.
- Please note: If your resume is "Pending" you will not be able to apply for an open position.
- Questions about applying for a position? Contact Staci McFall at sgmcfall@indiana.edu.

How do I sign up for an on-campus interview?

- From the home page, hover over On-Campus Interview Schedules. Click on Sign up for Interviews I qualify For
- Select the appropriate interview schedule and click Request Interview.
- After the recruiter has made his or her selections, you will receive an email telling you if you have been selected. If selected, you will be instructed when to log into Career Link and sign up for an interview time-slot.
- You will also be notified if you are not selected. Please note: employers do not share their reasons for selecting one candidate over the other with Career Services staff members.
- Questions about signing up for an interview? Contact Staci McFall at sgmcfall@indiana.edu.

Preparing for a Career Fair

Reasons to Attend

- Investigate open positions and career possibilities.
- Discover skills and qualifications you need to develop to be a more competitive candidate in the future.
- Get more information about specific companies and organizations.
- Meet representatives from organizations for whom you are interested in working.
- Increase your chances of interviewing with an employer.
- Sign up for next-day interviews with companies who attended the career fair.

What to Expect

- Most career fairs are held in one large room. Rows of tables are staffed by representatives from participating organizations and decorated with table displays.
- Be prepared for a line at check-in. Come in the morning to ensure that you get to meet with your desired employers. Some employers will leave in the early afternoon if traffic is slow.
- Student registration tables are usually located at the entrance to the career fair. There is typically a coat rack for your belongings. You will be asked to wear a name badge to identify yourself.
- Lists of attending organizations and maps identifying their locations may also be available.
- Depending on the time of day you come, it is likely to be very noisy and crowded. If you lose focus easily, try to come when classes meet or toward the end of the day.

How to Prepare

If you are attending a career fair in search of job opportunities, you should prepare for the experience as you would for an interview.

- As an IU Informatics and/or Computer Science student, you are unique! Sell it! Be ready to explain your degree, your course projects, your technology skills and your strengths.
- Review the list of organizations that will be attending the fair, then research those employers of interest to you by visiting their websites. Come prepared with questions!
- Print an adequate supply of your resume on quality resume paper (usually 15 copies is sufficient).
- Practice answering some general interview questions and prepare questions you would like to ask the employers.
- Plan to dress in professional business attire. This means a full suit or suit alternative. Jeans, sweats, tennis shoes, flip flops, etc are not appropriate and will not be allowed in.
- Prepare a strategy for working the fair. Prioritize the employers with whom you would like to speak, identify the information you want to get from them, and specify goals you hope to achieve by attending the fair.
- Don't speak to your favorite employers first. Take some time to get used to navigating the fair before you talk with them.
- Bring mints to keep in your pocket just in case. No gum chewing!

At the Fair

- You may have to wait in line to talk with an employer. Don't eavesdrop on the conversation in front you.
- Employers respond positively to a direct approach, so tell them what you are looking for. It is okay to share 2 or 3 possible interest areas.
- You may want to meet with many employers, and employers will want to meet with as many students as possible.

- Write down information on the back of business cards to reference in your thank you notes to employers. Don't be shy about asking for a business card- employers typically won't volunteer to give them out.
- Prioritize your time to meet with all the employers on your list. Be sure to give your resume to each employer. More companies than ever are now instructing students to apply directly to their website because of Human Resource policies.
- Speak up. Make sure you speak clearly and confidently so you can be heard over the crowd.
- Do not eat the food/drink you see out- this is for employers!
- Know your schedule for the next day, just in case an employer asks if you are available to participate in next-day interviews.
- If you are interested in interviewing with an employer, ask if they will be participating in on-campus interviews during the fall.
- Don't get frustrated if you are directed to apply on the company website. This is standard policy for many employers.

Recruiters share the ingredients of a great first impression:

"A firm handshake and introducing yourself."

"Let me know what your major is and what type of position is interesting to you."

"Good eye contact and speaking clearly."

"The time with each student at a career fair is brief, so a student who can get his or her point across in about 1 minute is way ahead of others."

Sample Questions You May Ask

- After you describe your academic and work experience: What are typical entry-level positions for someone with my major, skills and experience?
- What type of previous work experiences do you look for in candidates?
- Do you have a formal internship program?
- What skills do you look for in candidates?
- What's the best way to apply to your organization, and how long does the process usually take?
- Will you be on campus to interview?
- What qualities do you think make your company stand out from the competition?

*****Don't ask about Salary. They will bring it up if they wish to discuss it.***

Sample Questions They May Ask You

- What kind of a position are you looking for?
- When are you available to begin working?
- Are you interested in full-time or internship opportunities?
- Why are you interested in working in the field you described?

After the Fair

Follow-up - Within one week of the fair, make follow-up contact with the representatives you spoke to, unless you have discussed an alternative arrangement like an interview. Employers may leave a fair with hundreds of resumes, and they report that **less than 5% of students follow up after a fair. This simple step can give you a big advantage.**

****Note:** If the employer indicated that they would be hosting next-day interviews, make sure you have your phone with you that evening/next day and check your voicemail promptly. Return all calls immediately.

Resume Standards

for using *Informatics Career Link*

<http://informatics.indiana.edu/careers/careerlink/>

1. Please make sure you meet all the following guidelines before submitting your resume for approval on Career Link.
2. Please see the sample resumes on the Informatics Careers website and in this packet.
3. If you have questions or need assistance, please make an appointment to meet with a career services staff member.

PLEASE CONSIDER

- Are your most important relevant technical and non-technical skills being portrayed?
- Are your most relevant experiences inside and outside the classroom being displayed?
- To the best of your ability and knowledge, does your resume relate to the type of jobs/internships for which you wish to apply?

BASIC RESUME STANDARDS

- Do not include personal information (pictures, date of birth, ethnicity, etc.) unless specifically and ethically asked by an appropriate employer.
- No misspellings or grammatical errors.
- Use consistent font, spacing and formatting.
- Avoid personal pronouns (my, me, I).
- Keep resume to one page (graduate students and/or individuals with extensive full-time work experience may have two pages, but the 2nd page must be full; no half pages).
- Avoid use of abbreviations, slang or jargon not commonly known in the field.
- Too much white space is a bad thing, but enough for the employer to jot a note or too is needed.

SECTION STANDARDS

CONTACT INFORMATION

- You must include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address.
- Include your website address only if the web page reflects your professional ambitions. Personal websites with unprofessional content should not be referenced, and may need to be removed entirely.

OBJECTIVE

- Objectives are not always needed.
- Use one or two succinct phrases to express your employment goal.
- If you need sponsorship for an H1B visa you may also include that here.
- Do not state what you want to learn, but what skills you can contribute.
- Your objective must be specific.
 - (Too general) – “To gain experience in the field of Informatics.”
 - (Better, but not good enough) – “Seeking a full-time position in a technology-focused business environment.”
 - (Specific) – Seeking a full-time web-developer position utilizing proven skills with HTML, JavaScript, database implementation, and content development.

SUGGESTION - Tailor your objective to each employer and every job you seek.

EDUCATION

- Include school name, city, state, date of graduation, degree, major, cognate, minor, GPA.

- Cumulative GPA should be listed if above 3.0. List major GPA as well if higher than cumulative.
- If you have more than one degree, list most recent education information first.
- Do not include your high school.

SUGGESTIONS

- Describe your capstone project (informatics undergrads) in a few short phrases.
- You may want an additional section of your resume where you list titles and descriptions of relevant coursework. It can go under education or as its own category.

EXPERIENCE

- Experiences must be in reverse chronological order, most recent first.
- Must include title of position, name of company/organization, location (town, state), dates of employment, and bullet points that describe your job.
- Do not include: reason for leaving, salary history, exaggerations, names/ phone numbers of supervisors, things you plan to do in the future

BULLET POINTS

- Begin each point with an action verb.
- Use the appropriate verb tense (present tense for current employment and past tense for past employment).
- Bullet points should include Skill + Duty + Accomplishment.
 - Skill = Action verb, i.e. Developed.
 - Duty = responsibility: i.e. - Developed Company A's first website.
 - Accomplishment = Developed Company A's first website using Java and HTML, and generated approximately 10,000 potential customer hits weekly.

SUGGESTION - If all your experience is technology related or related to the job you seek, you may want to title the section "Relevant Experience."

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- You want to separate skills into categories. Vertically place the category that most relates to the job and/or that you are most proficient in, at the top. Horizontally, place skills in order of importance to job.

Example:

Languages: Java, Visual Basic, Scheme, C/C++

Platforms: UNIX, Microsoft Windows, Mac-OS, and DOS

Databases: Structured Query Language, MS Access, FoxPro, Oracle

Web development: Front page, Java Script, Cold Fusion, HTML, XML

Miscellaneous: Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Page Maker, Quark Express

REFERENCES

- Do not include names of your references on your resume (References are a separate page not to be turned in with a resume unless requested by the employer).

ADDITIONAL SECTIONS - You might need additional sections. Some suggestions include:

- Relevant Projects
- Volunteer/Clubs/Organizations
- Activities/Interests
- Honors/Awards
- Relevant Coursework
- Publications
- Presentations
- Professional Memberships / Conferences

Resume Tips

1. Your objective should be succinct & employer focused.
2. Use a “Relevant Projects” section to help employers understand your project experience- the world of work is all about projects.
3. Use bullet points beginning with action verbs to describe experiences.
4. Quantify & describe outcomes or accomplishments.
5. Experiences should be in reverse chronological order.
6. Include a Computer or Technology Skills section.
7. Extra-curricular involvements are important to employers.
8. References are on a separate page. Only give out when asked.
9. Layout & formatting should be clear, balanced, & consistent.
10. No spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.
11. One page! (Grad Students may go beyond on occasion).
12. Hardcopies printed on quality resume paper.
13. Have 1-2 people edit/review your resume.
14. 12 seconds is an avg. glance of your resume – be clear and concise!
15. No High School Involvement – if you don’t have enough activities now, get involved!
16. Make sure you include Name of Activity, location, Date, and Title for everything you list on your resume.
17. Don’t switch between date types- pick one! (i.e. 9/09 and Sept. 09). It is ok to switch between numerical dates and seasons.
18. Do not include “References available upon request” on the resume. They will ask for them if they want them.
19. Avoid using the same verb repeatedly in multiple bullet points.
20. Do not use a resume template from Microsoft Word. They are very restrictive and employers can spot them easily- they give the impression that you didn’t care enough to put more work into your resume.

Remember

- ⊕ Follow-up with the employer within one week of sending your resume
- ⊕ Your resume gets you an interview; your interview gets you the job.
- ⊕ Bring extra copies to an interview.

Resume: sample action words

Use action words to begin the bullet points that describe your experience and accomplishments. Here are some actions words to use:

- accelerated
- accommodated
- accomplished
- accounted for
- achieved
- acquainted
- acquired
- adapted
- added
- adjusted
- addressed
- administered
- advertised
- advocated
- aided
- analyzed
- anticipated
- applied
- appraised
- approved
- assembled
- assisted
- assessed
- attained
- audited
- budgeted
- calculated
- centralized
- changed
- collaborated
- composed
- condensed
- conducted
- constructed
- contracted
- converted
- coordinated
- created
- cultivated
- demonstrated
- decided
- defined
- delegated
- demonstrated
- designed
- developed
- drafted
- earned
- edited
- eliminated
- employed
- enforced
- ensured
- established
- evaluated
- executed
- expanded
- explained
- forecasted
- formed
- founded
- generated
- guided
- hired
- implemented
- improved
- informed
- insured
- interpreted
- interviewed
- launched
- maintained
- managed
- marketed
- minimized
- motivated
- negotiated
- obtained
- operated
- organized
- originated
- oversaw
- performed
- persuaded
- planned
- prepared
- presented
- prevented
- produced
- programmed
- promoted
- provided
- publicized
- published
- received
- recruited
- reorganized
- reported
- researched
- resolved
- reviewed
- revised
- served
- selected
- separated
- set up
- simplified
- solved
- streamlined
- studied
- surveyed
- staffed
- supervise
- taught
- tested
- trained
- updated
- upgraded
- utilized
- used

(Sample Resume)

Johnny Matics

500 Tech Avenue Bloomington, IN 47408

matics@indiana.edu | (555) 555 – 5555

OBJECTIVE

Seeking a full time position in the field of information technology, utilizing my business and technical knowledge along with my leadership, communication, and team collaboration skills.

EDUCATION

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Bachelor of Science in Informatics

May 2010

Minor: Business, Cumulative GPA: 3.45/4.00

Senior Capstone Project: Implementing RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology into the Indiana University Little 500 for race data analysis.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

John Deere, Moline IL

Summer 2009

Systems Analyst Intern

- Acquired navigational and functional overview of SAP and its capabilities.
- Developed SAP solution from conceptualization to full production utilizing ABAP programming.
- Increased awareness of Access and Visual Basic through the analysis and development of a user friendly tool aiding in the data migration process from legacy system to SAP.
- Gained insight into roles of a business and technical analyst through hands on experience.
- Enhanced time management skills by both creating and adhering to timeline for project completion.

University Information Technology Services, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Summer 2008

Computer Consultant

- Acquired communication skills by helping over 1900 students, faculty, and staff both on the phone and in person.
- Tracked university network problems and solved a wide range of computer based problems.
- Utilized team collaboration skills by pooling together knowledge from a team of consultants to answer the more difficult questions.
- Built technical knowledge by troubleshooting problems spanning across different operating systems, various types of software, and miscellaneous hardware issues.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages: Java, Visual Basic, Scheme, C/C++

Platforms: UNIX, Microsoft Windows, Mac-OS, and DOS

Databases: Structured Query Language, MS Access, FoxPro, Oracle

Web development: Front page, Java Script, Cold Fusion, HTML, XML

Miscellaneous: Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Page Maker, Quark Express

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Access/Excel Peer Tutor Program, Bloomington, IN

Summer 2008- Present

Peer Tutor

- Increase problem solving abilities by developing examples and answering questions that re-enforce teaching of MS Access and Excel.
- Strengthen knowledge of MS Access and Excel.

Informatics Student Association, Bloomington, IN

Fall 2008-Present

Director of Career Development

- Enhance leadership skills by attending weekly team building exercises.
- Chosen to attend summer field training session to develop leadership and team building skills.

(Sample Resume)

Jane Kim

jakim@email.com

Current Address**Until May 2009**

1457 Hoosier Lane
 Bloomington, IN 47405
 812-555-1234

Permanent Address

1687 N. Leafy Lane
 Lexington, KY 78544
 798-555-4468

OBJECTIVE

Motivated, enthusiastic individual seeking a software development position requiring strong Java programming and database skills.

EDUCATION**Indiana University, Bloomington, IN**

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Minor in Mathematics

May 2010

Cumulative GPA: 3.1/4.0

WORK EXPERIENCE**Cerner** Kansas City, MO

Software Engineering Intern

Summer 2009

- Gained knowledge of user requirements associated with software systems.
- Provided input to functional design, developed applications, tested systems, and performed troubleshooting across Cerner's entire family of solutions.
- Used a variety of languages, including Visual Basic, Java, C and C++, Visual C++, and SQL, using Oracle or Access databases.

University Information Technology Services Bloomington, IN

Residential Computing Consultant

August 2008-Present

- Provide technical service to on-campus residents in residential computer labs and residence halls with connections to the Indiana University network.
- Consult about 20 general computing inquiries daily.
- Handled problems dealing with hardware, software, and websites.

Family Student Council Bloomington, IN

Webmaster

August 2007 – June 2007

Updated weekly and monthly newsletters and added to web.

- Maintained website on a weekly basis.

Yesarang Area Youth Services Bloomington, IN

Webmaster

February 2005-June 2006

- Created website using HTML, PHP, Java Script, and SQL skills.
- Maintained the website (backed up databases) every week.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Knowledge of C, Java, SQL, Scheme, HTML, PHP, Java Script

- Windows (9x, 2000, XP),Linux
- Microsoft Applications including Office
- Computer networking including Local Area Networking and Wide Area Networking
- Hardware installation, maintenance & analysis
- Language Fluency: **Korean**-Native, **English**-Fluent

RELEVANT COURSE WORK

- Computer Networking
- Database Concepts

Cover Letter Writing

Types of Cover Letters

- A “letter of inquiry” is written to inquire about opportunities or request general information about a company. A resume is attached.
 - A “letter of application” is written to apply for a specific position within the company. A resume is attached.
- Regardless of type, the following guidelines can help make your cover letter effective.

Cover Letter Tips

- Use block or modified block business letter format; keep the wording professional.
- Try to send each letter to a specific person; make it personal.
If you do not have a contact name: Investigate the company website and other online resources for contacts and addresses or call the company and request the name of the person responsible for hiring college graduates in your career area.
- Individualize the letter by incorporating information you have acquired through researching the company.
- Proofread your letter to ensure it is error-free.
- Laser print the letter on high quality paper that matches your resume.
- Read it out loud to yourself to catch mistakes. Then, have 2 or 3 people edit/proofread before you send it
- Do multiple drafts of your letter. Do NOT: sit down, write it, and send it. Come back to it after a while and make sure you’re happy with it.
- Strive for perfection! Grammatical errors and misspellings will hurt you!
- Your cover letter should not be a repetition of the wording on your resume.
- When sending a resume via email, you may follow the cover letter format to introduce the attached resume, or create a brief email and attach both documents.

Parts of a Cover Letter

This simple outline can help you write winning cover letters every time! For examples, see the next page of this packet.

Top of Page

- Be sure to include your return address, the current date, their address, and a salutation. If you do not know their company address- look it up. Details matter.

Introductory Paragraph

- State why you are writing. “I am writing to apply for...”
- State the specific job title of the position for which you are applying.
- Mention how you heard about the job opening.
- Indicate some knowledge of and/or interest in the organization.

Body Paragraph(s) 1-2

- Mention how your skills, education and/or experience are relevant to the position and/or how they coincide with the organization’s needs.
- Highlight your strengths and qualifications without repeating your resume. Use specific examples to provide evidence of skills, experiences, and accomplishments.
- Check the job description for key words to add to your letter and tie in with your experience.

Closing Paragraph

- Indicate what actions you would like to have happen next.
- Ask for an interview; state that you will follow up in the next two weeks but be careful not to use language that “assumes” anything (i.e. “I look forward to serving as the _____ position for X company.”)
- Express your appreciation for the employer’s time and consideration.
- Provide your phone number and email address to make it easy for them to contact you.
- Be sure to sign your letter if sending in the mail!

(Sample Cover Letter)

523 Sandstone Drive
Bloomington, IN 47404

September 19, 2009

Ms. Hillary Hirer
Director of Human Resources
Technology Job Corporation
1 Paycheck Avenue
Chicago, IL 60111

Dear Ms. Hirer:

I am submitting my application for the web developer position for Technology Job Corporation's Indianapolis offices. I became aware of this opportunity through Career Link, the Indiana University School of Informatics and Computing online job posting system. I am especially interested in a position documenting web-based applications or in a position that involves the use of XML, technical writing, web development, and knowledge management.

Last summer I interned as a technical writer and process manager for Acme Solutions, the global venture between Dot Inc. and Com Inc. At Acme, I worked on a team that developed, managed, and documented provisioning processes for the launching of a global IP network called Acme IP Select, which offers class of service-to-application mapping and traffic shaping on high-capacity connections for virtual private networks. This experience has provided me the necessary tools to collaborate on large web development projects, a skill that would serve me well as your web developer.

Also, throughout my time as an informatics student at Indiana University, I have worked at John Doe Company on intranet development for their Managed Internet Service. I was responsible for much of the building of its Knowledge Management System, or KMS, an intranet with thousands of files. In this position I wrote extensive process documentation, documented proprietary applications, organized a huge site with a JavaScript table of contents to simplify navigation, developed and maintained indexes for hundreds of documents, and managed a large-scale, book-length documentation project.

I believe my internship and work experiences, combined with my Informatics degree are a great fit for your organization. Enclosed you will find my resume which further outlines my educational background and experiences. I would like the opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss the web developer position. I will contact you on October 3rd to ensure the arrival of my materials and inquire about scheduling an interview. You may reach me at 812/555-5555 or chasekappel@indiana.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration and I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

(Chase would sign here)

Chase B. Kappel

Enclosure

Preparing for an Interview

Basic Tips

- As an IU Informatics or Computer Science student, you are unique! Sell it! Be ready to explain your degree, your course projects, your technology skills and your strengths.
- Arrive 10 minutes early for your interview (no earlier). Make a stop at the restroom before introducing yourself.
- Dress in your interview-best; aim for conservative and professional. Do your homework. Employers expect you to thoroughly research the company before you meet with them.
- Greet the employer with a firm handshake, make good eye contact, maintain good posture, and smile. Don't make excuses or evade questions.
- Be ready to answer common and specific interview questions, and to ask strong questions.
- Avoid negative comments about former employers or coworkers, and demonstrate that you aren't simply interested in the best dollar offer.
- When an invitation is extended for an office visit, the company will typically cover travel expenses and may assist with travel arrangements- however, do not assume that this is the case. If you are uncertain about your travel arrangements, be sure to clarify with the employer prior to leaving for the interview.

Organizing your Interview Answers: A Technique

The STAR Technique allows you to organize your interview answers effectively.

ST – Situation or Task – Describe a situation or task from an internship, part-time job or classroom project that will speak to the question at hand.

A – Action – Describe the action steps you took in that situation or task.

R – Result – What was accomplished because of your actions.

Possible Interview Questions

- Tell me about your experiences and why you want this job?
- What is Informatics?
- What do you know about us?
- What technical skills do you have that fit our position?
- Tell us about your most relevant experience.
- What strengths do you offer?
- What is your greatest weakness?
- What idea have you developed and implemented that was particularly creative or innovative?
- Tell me about a team project of which you are particularly proud and your contribution.
- Describe a leadership role you have held, and tell me why you committed your time to it.
- What three trends do you see in the future of our industry?
- What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What has been one of your greatest disappointments, and how did you respond to it?
- What challenges are you looking for in a position?
- What types of situations put you under pressure, and how do you deal with the pressure?
- What work experience has been the most valuable to you and why?
- Tell me about a situation when you had to persuade another person to your point of view
- Why should I hire you?
- What has been the biggest accomplishment in your life?
- Describe a time when you added value to an existing work process.
- Describe your ideal supervisor.

Sample Questions to Ask Employers

The more specific the better! Ask about:

- Specific projects.
- Why this position is open now.
- How job performance is evaluated.
- The culture of the organization.
- What the potential for growth within the company is.
- Your possible supervisor and team environment.
- Some of the organization's short-term goals. Long-term goals.
- Integrating certain technology skills you have into the position.
- Other departments that the position will work closely with.
- Describe 3 things the organization does well and 3 things in need of improvement.
- The supervisor's style of management.
- What a typical work week for the position is like within the company.
- If there are any options for pursuing additional education within the company.
- What is the skill set that the company is looking for in the person who fills the position.
- What challenges the organization is currently facing.
- What certain individuals like about working for the organization.
- What the next step is in the hiring process.
- Benefits (only if they bring it up during the interview process or an offer is extended to you verbally).

The Psychology behind Common Interview Questions

It is important to know that some employers ask questions that seem very simple; however, the meaning behind the questions may not be simple at all. Adapted from the book Money Jobs.

When Interviewers Ask You:

1. Describe yourself. How does your background qualify you for this job?
2. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
3. Where do you want to be in five years?
4. Why this job? Why this organization?
5. How would your peers describe you?
6. What makes you think you will succeed in this organization?
7. Why should we hire you? What do you bring to this job?

What They Really Want to Know Is:

1. Can you take an incredible amount of information, organize it quickly in your head, and present it in a concise and articulate fashion?
2. Are my perceptions of your strengths and weaknesses the same as yours? How mature are you in dealing with your weaknesses? Can you identify methods for self-improvement?
3. What motivates you and what do you want out of life? Is this job merely a stepping stone to something better?
4. Have you done your homework? Are you analytical?
5. How do you see yourself? Are you a leader or a follower? (A quiet confidence is needed here- not arrogance or egotism).
6. Have you accurately identified the skills and expertise needed to succeed? Can you prove you have them?
7. How are your promotion and persuasion skills? Are you believable? If you can't sell yourself, how will you be able to sell our products/company/ideas?

Post-Interview Follow-Up and Thank-You Letter

Many candidates overlook this thoughtful step in the job search process. A thank you letter should be sent after an interview for a job or internship.

- Send thank you letters within 24-48 hours of the interview.
 - Thank everyone that interviewed you
 - Sending by Mail - Use a block or modified block business letter format;
 - Sending by Email – Be professional and make sure there are no typographical errors.
 - Handwritten – Good way to personalize, but do not if you have poor handwriting.
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178 Green Street
Kingston, MA 02364

September 24, 2009

Mr. Pat Cummings
Senior IT Director
Acme Technologies
1140 Main Street
Boston, MA 02106

Dear Mr. Cummings:

Thank you for interviewing me for the software developer position yesterday at the School of Informatics. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about Acme Technologies.

This position offers an incredible opportunity to learn about the entire software development process in the context of a large company. I believe that my education at the School of Informatics as well as my software development internship experiences with Dot Inc. and IT Inc. fit ideally with the job requirements outlined. Above all, I am very eager to work in your team environment, and I know that I could make a significant contribution to the projects that you described.

I would like to express my strong interest in the position and in working with you and Daniel Connelly. This is the ideal opportunity I seek. Please feel free to call me at (617) 555-5555 or contact me at chris_smith@someuniversity.edu if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Chris Smith
Chris Smith