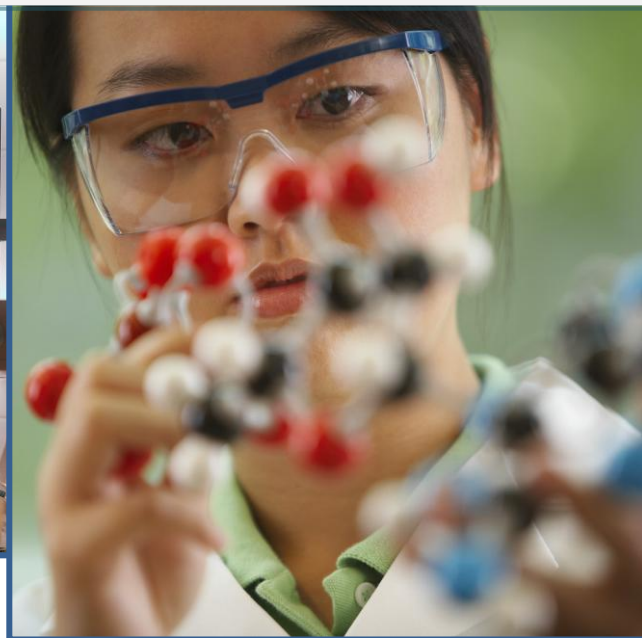


# The Job Search for Science Majors: Biology, Chemistry, & Physics



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

## **OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES**

**DIVISION FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS**

**SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY  
SLU 10492 HAMMOND, LA 70402  
STUDENT UNION ANNEX ROOM 241  
985-549-2121**

**[www.selu.edu/career](http://www.selu.edu/career)**

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# OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

The Department of Biological Sciences at Southeastern Louisiana University is comprised of 36 full-time faculty, approximately 900 undergraduate majors, and 30 graduate students. The Biology Building contains more than \$4 million dollars in **teaching and research equipment, including molecular biology laboratories, a roof-top greenhouse, plant and animal collections, a vivarium, and a comprehensive electron microscopy center.** The Department also maintains a separate Horticulture Center and actively utilizes the Turtle Cove Environmental Research Station located on an island in Pass Manchac between Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain.

The Department offers programs leading to a **Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences** and in **Horticulture Science. Concentrations** within the B.S. in Biological Sciences include:

- \* Ecology/Environmental/Evolutionary Biology
- \* Microbiology/Molecular Biology
- \* Organismal/Integrative Biology
- \* Science Education

Within these concentrations, pre-professional degree plans for those interested in medicine, dentistry, physical therapy, veterinary medicine, and other health-related fields can be designed, and preparation for entry into competitive graduate programs in Biological Sciences is offered.

The **Master of Science in Biological Sciences** has thesis and non-thesis options, and offers emphases in Ecology and Environmental Biology, Evolutionary Biology, Genetics, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Microbiology, Anatomy and Physiology.

## CAREER PATHS FOR BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES MAJORS

A Bachelor's degree will qualify one for work as a laboratory assistant, technician, technologist, or research assistant in education, industry, government, museums, parks, and gardens.

- The biological sciences prepare students for careers in healthcare such as medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science, but professional degrees and licenses are also necessary to practice in these fields.
- An undergraduate degree can also be used for nontechnical work in writing, illustration, sales, photography, and legislation.
- **Master's degrees** allow for more opportunities in research and administration. Some community colleges will hire Master's level teachers.
- **Doctoral degrees** are necessary for advanced research and administrative positions, university teaching, and independent research.
- An advanced degree provides the opportunity to specialize in fields of interest.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CAREERS, JOBS OUTLOOK, AND SALARIES IN THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES:

<http://www.aibs.org/careers/>

<http://www.sicb.org/careers/index.php3>

<http://biocareers.com/resource/getting-started-environmental-sciences>

# OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY & PHYSICS

The **Bachelor of Science in Chemistry** prepares students for **industrial careers or post-baccalaureate education, including graduate school (where students pursue a Ph.D.) and medical school.** The program offers a general curriculum with several concentrates, including the American Chemical Society (ACS) certified degree, a **Biochemistry concentration**, a **Business and Industry concentration**, and a **Political Science/Pre-Law concentration**.

The **Bachelor of Science in Physics** is a general curriculum for students interested in **graduate study or a career in industry or engineering.** The program offers comprehensive training in all four major fields of physics: **mechanics, electricity and magnetism, thermodynamics, and quantum mechanics.** The department offers research opportunities, and provides **two years of preparation** for students in **pre-engineering and pharmacy.**

## CAREER PATHS FOR CHEMISTRY MAJORS

- Agricultural Chemistry
- Analytical Chemistry
- Biochemistry
- Biotechnology
- Catalysis
- Chemical Education
- Chemical Engineering
- Chemical Information Specialists
- Chemical Sales
- Chemical Technology
- Colloid and Surface Chemistry
- Consulting
- Consumer Product Chemistry
- Environmental Chemistry
- Food and Flavor Chemistry
- Forensic Chemistry
- Chemical Information Specialists
- Geochemistry
- Hazardous Waste Management
- Inorganic Chemistry
- Materials Science
- Medicinal Chemistry
- Organic Chemistry
- Oil and Petroleum
- Physical Chemistry
- Polymer Chemistry
- Pulp and Paper Chemistry
- R&D Management
- Science Education
- Science Writing
- Textile Chemistry
- Water Chemistry

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CAREERS, JOBS OUTLOOK, AND SALARIES IN PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY:**

<http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/careers.html>  
<http://www.aip.org/career-resources>

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS TARGETED BY THE LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE:**

Digital Media (physics and data analysis) / Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing (physics) / Energy Efficiency

**LOUISIANA COMPANIES WHO HAVE HIRED CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS GRADUATES:**

Albemarle Corporation, Dow Chemical, Entergy, Halliburton Energy Services, John Deere, NM Designs, Schlumberger

# RESUME FORMAT GUIDELINES AND RESUME CONTENT FAQ's

## RESUME FORMAT GUIDELINES

### **AVOID ERRORS IN SPELLING, GRAMMAR, AND PUNCTUATION.**

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

### **KEEP RESUME ONE PAGE; AVOID TEMPLATES.**

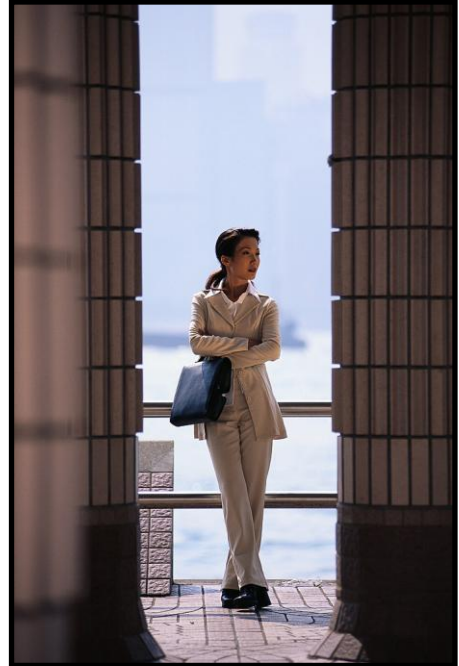
Adjust margins to .7 or .6 inches and font size to 10 or 11 point. Headings can be 11 or 12 point; your name, 14 - 20. Times Roman, Arial, or Tahoma fonts are recommended. **NOTE:** Resume templates can make the resume two pages unnecessarily. Instead, type it as a regular document in Word.

**CREATE A HEADER.** It should include your name, address, phone, and email address. Do not include the word “resume,” or personal info such as age, ethnicity, etc. Email address should be professional.

**RESUMES THAT MUST BE TWO PAGES.** If you have a lot of work experience, and/or involvement in student organizations, you may need a two page resume. On the second page put name and phone number in upper left corner, and “Page 2” in upper right corner. Paper-clip; don't staple. DO NOT put header from first page on second.

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

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



## RESUME CONTENT FAQ's

### **OBJECTIVE**

#### **Do I need an OBJECTIVE? What should it say?**

Although it is optional, an objective can demonstrate “focus” in terms of your career goal and emphasize key skills:

- A career in the field of environmental chemistry in which analytical, team work, and organizational skills will assist the organization in achieving its goals.
- To contribute strong leadership, analytical, and research skills in a biochemistry career, with opportunity for professional growth and advancement.
- A challenging position in environmental research in which strong interest and knowledge base in ecology and environmental biology will make a valuable contribution to an organization's research goals.

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Is it important that my degree information is correct?**

Yes – if an employer knows the correct title of your degree, and you don't, this is a negative reflection on you. Check degree information on the academic program's web site, your transcript, or the online university catalog. Also, list your concentration and/or any minors.

## Sample Degree Information Formats:

### **Bachelor of Science, Chemistry; concentration in Biochemistry**

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA Graduation Date: December 2013 GPA: 3.4

Or:

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

### **Bachelor of Science, Biological Sciences – Microbiology and Molecular Biology concentration**

Graduation Date: May 2014 Major GPA: 3.1

## Should I list courses completed? Class projects?

Yes, list 6 – 10 course titles, not numbers, that support your career goals. List class or research projects if they support your career goals, and/or highlight knowledge/skills developed.

### Example:

#### **Bachelor of Science, Chemistry**

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA May 2012 Overall GPA: 3.4

**Course Work Includes:** Biochemistry, Organic Chemistry, ... *(list 6 – 10 others)*

**Special Projects:** Participated in research project in which ... *(state purpose of project)*

## Could I list my Special Course Projects in another section of my resume?

Yes, you may list the Special Course Projects statement as bulleted statements in your **SKILLS SUMMARY** (see section on this below). This would, in fact, be a more appropriate location if you're listing a "Coursework Included" section under **EDUCATION** - listing both under **EDUCATION** may be too much information for that section.

## Should I list my GPA?

Only if 3.0 or above. However, if your Overall GPA is less than 3.0, but the GPA in your major is above 3.0, you can list Major GPA only: **Major GPA: 3.0**. If both GPA's are above 3.0, you can list both: **Overall GPA: 3.0 Major GPA: 3.2**

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

If you attended at least a year, you may or may not choose to list this information; if you earned an Associate of Science (or Arts) Degree, then list this (and state what major/program of study the degree is in).

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

List most recent educational experience first, and other colleges attended in reverse chronological order (only list courses from other colleges if they support or enhance your career goals). **Example:**

#### **Bachelor of Science, Physics**

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA May 2013

#### **Associate of Science, Computer Science**

Delgado Community College, New Orleans, LA December 2011

**Should I list high school information?** Only if you have accomplishments such as honors or officer positions in organizations, then, put this info in **ACTIVITIES & HONORS**, and indicate they were in high school.

## SKILLS SUMMARY

### Why include a SKILLS SUMMARY? What is the best format?

It directs the employer's attention to **KEY SKILLS** – that is, personality characteristics, knowledge and experience acquired through courses, class team projects, work experiences, and student organizations that pertain to the type of work you are seeking.

Create bulleted statements, and begin each with an **ACTION VERB** – or a phrase such as "Knowledge of...", "Experienced in...", or "Responsible for..." Include technical, scientific, and computer skills. Or, create a separate category called **COMPUTER SKILLS** or **TECHNICAL SKILLS** if you have numerous skills in these areas.



## EXPERIENCE

### Should I list every job held on my resume? In what order should I list jobs?

List only jobs held in college, unless you have professional experience. In that case, if you have experience from the 1990's or prior, you may want to omit those jobs as they could reflect your age; age discrimination is illegal, but can occur. List jobs in reverse chronological order, starting with most recent first. **Example:**

**Server, 2012 - present**  
**Kirin Japanese Cuisine, Hammond, LA**  
(Put job description here)

**Student Assistant, 2010 - 2012**  
**Office of Career Services, Southeastern Louisiana University**  
(Put job description here)

### What type of information should I include in my job descriptions?

Use present tense verbs for current jobs and past tense verbs for former positions. Include statement describing type of business or organization (its services, purpose, etc.) if organization name is not descriptive. List tasks performed, purpose, and results achieved. Include accomplishments, and numbers if possible (e.g., of employees supervised).

AVOID "I" – start with [ACTION VERB](#) or phrase such as "Responsible for...", "Experienced in...", "Acquired knowledge of...", etc. Also, you may access [O\\*Net](#) and click on Find Occupations, then type in the job titles of your past or current jobs, to see detailed job descriptions, which you can refer to for ideas on writing your own job descriptions.

You may want to create two **EXPERIENCE** categories: **RELATED EXPERIENCE**, in which you list work, internship, volunteer, and even leadership experience in student organizations that directly relates to your career goals, and **ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**, in which you list other experience not directly related to your career goals.

### **ACTIVITIES & HONORS (can be called Accomplishments, Community Service, or Professional Activities)**

List extracurricular activities in which you participated while in college. These experiences allow you to develop key skills employers look for, such as team work, communication, organization, and leadership skills. List office held, and your responsibilities as an officer, written as a brief "job description."

#### Example:

- Society of Chemistry Undergraduate Majors (SCUMS), 2011- 2013  
Offices Held: Vice President, 2011-2012
- President's List, Spring and Fall 2012; Dean's List, multiple semesters
- Volunteer, North Oaks Hospital, Hammond, LA, 2011 – present

### **REFERENCES UPON REQUEST – Should I list this statement?**

This is optional since employers will expect you to have a page listing your references. See [Sample References](#) and page 8 in this Guide for more information.

# JOB SEARCH PREPARATION

## CAREER EXPLORATION & ASSESSMENT IN THE JOB SEARCH

Knowing what options are available to you prepares you to change directions if you aren't finding your ideal job.

Career Services offers online resources and career assessments, to assist you in:

**Exploring career options, developing a resume, developing a cover letter, and preparing for an interview**

[SIGI 3](#), [O\\*Net](#), [OOH](#), and [What Can I Do With This Major?](#) Information on 100's of careers by job titles or search by your college major. See job descriptions, education/skills required, salaries, job outlook, etc.

**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Assessment** - Learn how your personality type contributes to the work organization, your communication, leadership, and team work styles, and see careers that are a good fit for your type.

### JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

Upload your resume into Career Services' [eRECRUITING](#) online job search system and FREQUENTLY CHECK for:

<b>ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS:</b>	Sign up in eRecruiting – OCI's held each Fall & Spring semester
<b>JOB VACANCY POSTINGS:</b>	Year-round, for full-time and part-time jobs and internships
<b>RESUME REFERRALS:</b>	Sent to employers - occurs automatically - there's nothing to check

Access [JOB BOARD LINKS](#) to view job vacancy postings - full-time, part-time and internships - or post your resume.

## THE COVER LETTER

It is recommended that you accompany your resume with a cover letter tailored to the position and the organization. A **Sample Cover Letter** is provided on Page 12 below.

- Use same header (contact information) for resume, cover letter, and references page.
- Use business letter format of: left margins, no indents, and the date, company address, and salutation.
- Keep to one page - margins .7 and font 10 or 11 point - same as for resume, references page.
- Salutation should be: "Dear Human Resources Director," "Dear Hiring Manager," or "Dear Search Committee Chair" if no contact name is listed in the job ad.

<b>1st paragraph</b>	State how you learned of position, position title, and name of organization.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph</b>	Describe degree - mention what you learned in courses, team projects.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph</b>	State knowledge/skills acquired in work and extracurricular experiences.
<b>4<sup>th</sup> paragraph</b>	Indicate knowledge of organization and why you want to work for them.
<b>Final paragraph</b>	Suggest desire for an interview, and where and how you can be reached.

## THE REFERENCES PAGE

A reference is a statement in support for your application by someone who can comment on your work or academic performance - a current or former supervisor, professor, or student organization advisor. **Reference information goes on a page separate from your resume, with the same header, and the word REFERENCES underneath.**

- Do not include a references page with your resume unless a job ad requests it. Bring copies of references page in a portfolio to the interview.
- Three to five references is an appropriate number to list. Always ask permission to list someone as a reference, and give them a copy of your resume to illustrate your qualifications.
- List each reference's name, current job title, place of employment (include city, state, and zip code – mailing address not necessary - and work phone number (not personal number unless given permission)
- If a reference no longer works at the organization, you may still list them – with their current job title and place of employment. In parentheses, state, "former Manager of XYZ, Inc." to illustrate former relationship.



# THE ART OF NETWORKING

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

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

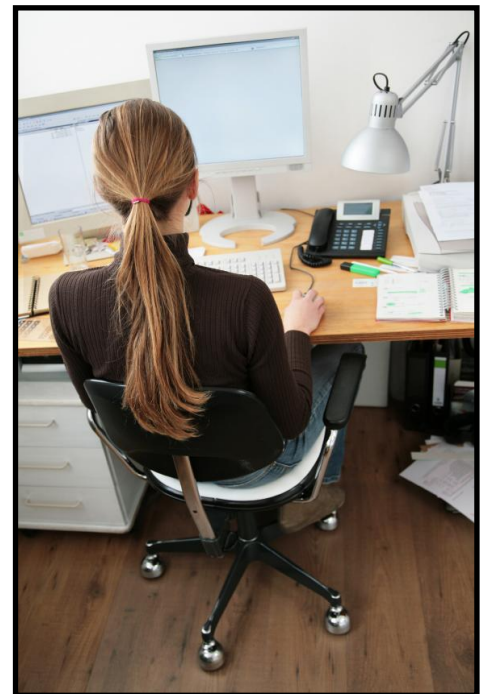
Provide networking contacts and references with a copy of your resume. They can refer to it when they discuss your hiring potential with an employer, and it enables them to speak more informatively about you.

**Have you spoken to these contacts about your job search?** lawyers, ministers.

- Friends, acquaintances, neighbors; family and extended relatives.
- Former employers, current employers, customers. Most college seniors have part-time jobs, and employers expect you to look for a degree-required position as you near graduation; it’s acceptable to network with them.

**Have you explored these resources for job opportunities?**

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



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

### Do's

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

### Don'ts

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

# SAMPLE RESUME

## Sarah Mitchell

10000 Ecology Lane, Clearwater, LA 70000

504-222-5555

sarah\_mitch143@hotmail.com

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### OBJECTIVE

A career in the field of biological sciences in which knowledge base in biology and chemistry, along with analytical, team work, and organizational skills, will assist the organization in achieving its goals.

### EDUCATION

#### **Bachelor of Science, Biological Sciences with Minor in Chemistry**

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Graduation Date: December 2014 GPA: 3.45

**Coursework Includes:** General Microbiology, Advanced Microbiology, Food and Dairy Microbiology, Applied Biostatistics, Environmental Awareness, Organic Chemistry, and Biochemistry

### KEY QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience in performing biological and chemical analysis using Gas Chromatography, Mass Spectrum, Column Chromatography, Titrations, pH testing, Gram Staining, Spore Staining, Acid-fast Staining, Methyl Red Testing, Urea Hydrolysis, Starch Hydrolysis, Citrate Testing and Citrate Agar Slant, Tryptophan Hydrolysis, and Voges-Proskauer Testing
- Knowledge of laboratory techniques such as Oxidase Production, Catalase Production, Nitrate Reduction, Nuclear Magnetic Resonance, Thin Layer Chromatography, Recrystallization, wet chemistry lab techniques
- Demonstrate high level of detail and accuracy in working with procedures and documentation.
- Quickly learn processes, techniques and skills to thoroughly understand responsibilities.
- Effectively manage multiple tasks by applying time management and prioritization skills.
- Strong computer skills in Microsoft Office.

### EXPERIENCE

#### **Laboratory Technician, Department of Biology**

##### **Southeastern Louisiana University, January 2014 - present**

Conduct routine checks of autoclave and other large equipment. Operate specialized equipment, i.e. Oxymax, Gas Chromatograph. Prepare media for classes and for faculty research projects. Assist in faculty research projects as needed.

#### **Student Assistant, Office of Admissions**

##### **Southeastern Louisiana University, June 2012 – December 2013**

Performed office administration functions including assisting students with application to the university, organizing and updating student files, and corresponding with prospective students. Utilized PeopleSoft software to perform office activities. Assisted professional staff with freshmen orientations to the university.

### ACTIVITIES & HONORS

Biology Undergraduate Society (BUGS); Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society; Dean's List: Multiple semesters  
President's List: Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013

# SAMPLE RESUME

## Ben Casey

111 Floss St., Hammond, LA 70403

985-555-5555

Benjamin.Casey@selu.edu

### Objective

To attend and graduate from dental school in the state of Louisiana, as part of preparation for a successful career in the field of dental science, with the goal of improving patients' dental health and overall physical and emotional wellness.

### Education

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Anticipated Graduation: December 2015

**Bachelor of Science, Biological Sciences: concentration in Integrative Biology**

Current GPA: 3.8

- General Biology I and II with labs
- General Chemistry I and II with labs
- Organic Chemistry I and II with labs
- General Microbiology with lab
- General Ecology with lab
- Physics I and II with labs
- Comparative Anatomy with lab
- Cell Biology
- Calculus I
- Genetics

### Summary of Qualifications

- Strong communication, interpersonal, and relationship-building skills
- Enjoy working collaboratively with team members to accomplish goals
- Highly motivated in the application of acquired knowledge to accomplish tasks
- Detail-oriented, organized, and efficient in carrying out responsibilities
- Ability to conduct independent or group research and gather information
- Familiar with fundamental lab procedures including pipetting, stains, and smears
- Experience and training in medical and pharmaceutical terminology
- Computer skills include: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher
- Knowledge of the Spanish language – intermediate level

### Related Experience

Pharmacy Technician, January 2014 - present

CVS Pharmacy, Covington, LA

- Greet and assist customers by receiving and delivering prescription orders, gathering clinical information for pharmacists, and addressing non-medical questions or concerns
- Prepare medications by understanding and interpreting orders, measuring, labeling and packaging prescriptions
- Perform data entry to accurately maintain files and computer records with attention to detail and timeliness
- Provide administrative support: answer phones, manage insurance billing, and draft pharmacy reports
- Conduct inventory management and control: check expirations, properly store, label, stock new drugs and supplies

### Additional Experience

Tutor, January 2013 – December 2013

Southeastern Louisiana University, Center for Student Excellence, Hammond, LA

Assisted students in university academic advising center in learning material presented in courses such as mathematics, from remedial math to single-variable calculus, as well as general inorganic chemistry, biology, and microbiology. Applied strong listening and communication skills to understand each student's specific challenges. Demonstrated ability to present information from various perspectives and in various contexts to facilitate learning.

### Organizations and Honors

- Delta Omega Alpha Pre-Professional Society, Fall 2013-present
- Beta Beta Beta Biological Sciences Honor Society, Fall 2013-present
- President's List, Fall 2013, Spring 2014, and Fall 2014
- Dean's List, Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2014

# SAMPLE RESUME

## Jacob Johnson

1000 47<sup>th</sup> St., Apt. 19, New Orleans, LA 70000 504-000-0000 [JJJohnson@gamil.com](mailto:JJJohnson@gamil.com)

### OBJECTIVE

To apply strong knowledge base in principles and applications of physics and mathematics, for the purpose of advancing the research goals of an organization that is committed to technological and scientific advancement.

### EDUCATION

#### **Bachelor of Science, Physics - Minor in Mathematics**

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

GPA: 3.7 Graduation Date: May 2014

#### **Coursework Included:**

Modern Physics, Mathematical Physics, Astrophysics, Thermodynamics, Quantum Mechanics, Classical Mechanics, Wave Theory, Optics, Electricity and Magnetism

### SKILLS SUMMARY

- Experienced in statistical data analysis
- Oral and written presentation of experimental results
- Demonstrated ability to follow experimental protocols
- Electrically and mechanically troubleshooting and repairing custom laboratory equipment
- Use of testing equipment: multimeters and oscilloscopes

### COMPUTER SKILLS

- LabView
- VPython
- Java
- MatLab
- Mathematica

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

#### **Research Assistant, Dept. of Chemistry and Physics, Southeastern Louisiana University, January 2013 – December 2013**

Performed statistical analysis using Mathematica of data from NASA's WIND spacecraft to identify precursors of magnetospheric substorms at Earth under supervision of Professor McWilliams. Prepared written final report. Prepared oral presentation and presented at regional conference.

### PRESENTATIONS

Johnson, J., M. McWilliams, Solar wind precursors of magnetospheric substorms, Regional Physics Conference, Memphis, Tenn., March 2014.

### ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### **Lab Attendant and Student Help Desk Student Assistant, December 2011 – December 2012**

Office of Technology - Client Services, Southeastern Louisiana University

Assisted students in campus computer labs with computer operations and other technical difficulties, and assisted student callers by phone with technical difficulties. Provided courteous service in educating and assisting students.

### HONORS AND AWARDS

Sigma Pi Sigma, Physics Honor Society - Member - 2013 – 2014; Thirteen Club - academic honors - 2012-2014; Martin Scholarship in Physics - Recipient, 2012 - 2013; Society of Physics Students Service Award - 2013; President's List and Dean's List, multiple semesters.

# SAMPLE COVER LETTER

---

**SARAH MITCHELL**

**10000 Ecology Lane, Clearwater, LA 70000**

**504-222-5555**

**sarah\_mitch143@hotmail.com**

March 5, 2014

Johnson Nielsen  
Acme Environmental.  
2234 Marsh Avenue  
Baton Rouge, LA 70714

Dear Mr. Nielsen:

I am writing regarding the Research Assistant position advertised through Southeastern Louisiana University's Career Services office. I believe my qualifications match those you are seeking for this position, and I am confident that I would make a valuable contribution to the position and to Acme Environmental.

I will graduate in May 2014 with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from Southeastern Louisiana University. As you can see from my resume, My Biology coursework has centered around environmental awareness, wetlands ecology, and conservation, as highlighted on my resume. This academic background has also provided me with an excellent foundation for field research. I have taken numerous Biology and Chemistry classes which have enabled me to improve my research skills as well as my analytical abilities. Courses such as (put names of courses) have introduced me to (state some things you learned that relate to the position). Also, as a result of knowledge gained through my rewarding field research, and through assisting a Biology Department professor with a wetlands restoration project involving cypress trees, I am confident that I can make a strong contribution to your environmental research department.

Additionally, through my work experiences I have enhanced my skills in communication, working as part of a team, and my planning and organizing abilities – skills that will also contribute to my performance in the role of Research Assistant for Acme Environmental.

Thank you for your consideration of my application. If additional information is needed, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Sarah Mitchell

# SAMPLE REFERENCES PAGE

## Jacob Johnson

1000 47<sup>th</sup> St., Apt. 19, New Orleans, LA 70000

504-000-0000 [JJJohnson@gamil.com](mailto:JJJohnson@gamil.com)

## REFERENCES

Dr. Martin McWilliams, Professor  
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985-555-1111  
[mmcwilliams@selu.edu](mailto:mmcwilliams@selu.edu)

Dr. John Xeng, Associate Professor  
Dept. of Chemistry & Physics  
Southeastern Louisiana University  
985-555-2222  
[John.Xeng@selu.edu](mailto:John.Xeng@selu.edu)

Ms. Belinda Gates, Assistant Director  
Office of Technology  
Southeastern Louisiana University  
985-555-3333  
[Belinda.Gates-2@selu.edu](mailto:Belinda.Gates-2@selu.edu)



# THE JOB INTERVIEW

## TOP TEN INTERVIEW TIPS

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

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

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

**Bring necessary documentation.** Bring extra copies of your resume, a references page, and a portfolio of samples of relevant professional work, in a nice "padfolio." Recent college graduates should also bring a copy of their transcripts.

**Arrive early.** Arrive at least 15 minutes before the interview. Visit the restroom and check your appearance in the mirror. Introduce yourself to the receptionist to let them know you have arrived and that you have an appointment. *Turn your cell phone off so it doesn't ring during your meeting.* DO NOT text/look at cell phone while waiting for the interviewer.

**Allow for handshake.** Pause a moment upon greeting the interviewer to allow them to initiate the handshake. If they do not, you may initiate it.

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

**Exhibit positive body language.** Make and maintain eye contact. Show enthusiasm for the job, the company, and the information you are learning and sharing. Be a good listener, also, and be alert to cues you've talked enough.

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

## Follow Up

ALWAYS return calls/answer emails from prospective employers. Even if you're not interested in the position, such a professional courtesy can leave the door open for other opportunities with the organization in the future. The message on your voicemail should be professional, and always answer the phone in a professional and positive tone of voice. **Send a Thank You note or email – see Page 18 below.**

## RESEARCH THE COMPANY, THE JOB, and THE FIELD or INDUSTRY BEFORE THE INTERVIEW!

Research the company web site and be able to discuss their mission statement, their products, services, clients, locations, and other facts. Study the job ad and research the job on [SIGI 3](#), [O\\*Net](#), and [OOH](#), to articulate why you are the best candidate.

**Also, research the field or industry – many applicants neglect to do this crucial research, and doing so can give you a competitive edge!**

# SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Responses should be one to three minutes in length – practice aloud to time yourself.**

## **Tell me about yourself.**

Focus on highlights of your educational and work experiences. Start with recent accomplishments such as getting your degree and describe what you learned in your course work that pertains to the job. Discuss related work, internship, and student organization experiences. Describe knowledge and skills acquired in these experiences, and how they will contribute to your success on the job. Develop a “closing statement” - state how excited you were to learn of this career opportunity and that you believe your qualifications are an excellent fit. Do not disclose personal information such as age, marital status, number of children - these factors are not related to your ability to perform the job.

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

For courses liked the most, discuss those that allowed you to develop knowledge/skills that fit the job. Or, choose courses that allowed you to grow, e.g., to develop critical thinking skills or to view things from different perspectives. For courses liked the least, choose one that **does not** pertain to the job. Explain why you disliked it but end on a positive note: “Although I didn’t have an interest in English Literature, the course allowed me to improve my critical thinking.” “While I didn’t have an interest in the course, I viewed it as a challenge, applied myself, and made a good grade.”

## **Name your three greatest strengths.**

Don’t hesitate in responding to this question. Name your strengths, and go ahead and elaborate by providing examples of how you use these strengths in your college or work life. The interviewer may ask another form of this question: “Name **three words** your co-workers would use to describe you.” Choose characteristics that relate to work.



## **What is your greatest weakness?**

Design your response so that your weakness is really a “positive” in disguise. For example, you may say you take pride in the quality of your work, so you tend to want to do it all yourself but then find you are not managing your time or delegating effectively. Describe what you have done to correct this. Or, address this question from a personal or professional growth perspective, such as stating that public speaking was an area in which you did not have confidence, but that you decided to improve through class presentations. Describe techniques you used to improve. **NEVER** choose a weakness that is a requirement of the job!

## **What have you learned from extracurricular activities?**

If you were an officer, or served on committees in student organizations, discuss these experiences and what they taught you (team work, leadership, communication, ability to plan, etc.): “I worked as part of a team, and learned about the management and budgeting processes for coordinating a fundraising event for our organization....”

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

Again, relate work experiences to the requirements of the job. You may say that your **internship** was the most rewarding, because you gained knowledge and skills directly related to this job, then elaborate. For the “least rewarding,” **NEVER** say anything negative about an employer, and indicate you learned skills in each job you held.

**In what ways do you best contribute to a team?** Research the definition of team work so you can answer this question by describing the elements required for a successful team effort. For example, your belief that all team members have something to contribute could be part of your “philosophy of successful teamwork,” and so you try to make sure each team member’s ideas are heard. Describe a team project in which your contribution made a positive impact. Take the **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** in Career Services and learn about your teamwork abilities.

### **Describe your leadership style.**

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

### **Do you work well under pressure?**

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

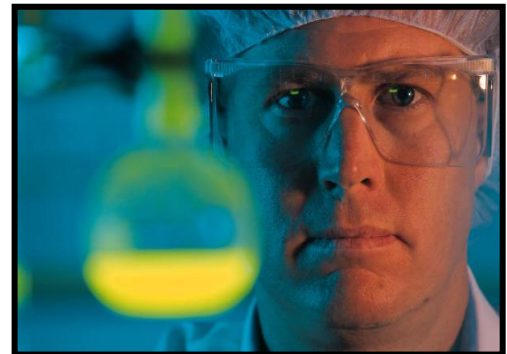
### **Describe the ideal relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate.**

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

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

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

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



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

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

### **What do you know about our company/organization? Why do you want to work here?**

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

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

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

### APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

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

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

### INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ❑ DO NOT ask about salary or benefits during the first interview. However, be prepared to voice a range you're looking for if they ask – see [SIGI 3](#), [O\\*Net](#), [OOH](#) for salary info on 100's of careers.
- ❑ DO NOT push for an early decision by mentioning the other opportunities you have awaiting you.
- ❑ DO NOT ask for feedback on your interview performance.

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

“Behavioral” questions probe applicants’ past behavior, on the premise that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. Think of three or four challenging or problem **situations**, how you **assessed** them (perspectives considered), **actions** you took to resolve or improve them, and the positive **results** of your efforts.

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

## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT, AND BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS FOR EACH SKILL:

### Communication

- Give an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with a customer/client.
- Have you ever had to “sell” an idea to your co-workers or a group? How did you do it? Did they “buy” it?

### Decision Making & Problem Solving

- Give an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.
- How did you make the decision to come to Southeastern and to major in \_\_\_\_\_?

### Motivation/Leadership (of yourself and others)

- Give an example of how you motivated your co-workers or classmates, as for a team project.
- Tell me about an important goal that you set in the past, that you successfully reached.

### Interpersonal Skills

- What have you done in past situations to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
- Tell me about the most difficult or frustrating individual you've worked with, and how you worked with them.

### Planning and Organization

- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
- What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.

## Other Possible Interview Questions

- How did you become interested in the field of \_\_\_\_\_?
- Do you consider yourself a natural leader or a born follower?
- Do you prefer working with others or alone?
- What energizes you on the job? What stresses you?
- How do you stay current in your field?
- What are some things you've learned in college that could help you do this job?
- Give an example of a challenging problem you faced and how you handled it.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

### Thank You Note:

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

### Self Evaluation:

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

### Follow-up Calls:

You may call if you haven't heard from the employer within the time frame you were given to expect a response. Always return calls/answer emails from prospective employers. Even if you're not interested in the position, such a professional courtesy leaves a positive impression for future opportunities with the company.



## SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE

July 9, 2014

Dear Mr. Harris:

Thank you for the interview for the Research Assistant position. This position strongly matches my interests and career goals. The interview confirmed my initial positive impressions of Xavier University, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for you and in making a valuable contribution to your research initiatives.

Sincerely,

Alan Jones

# DRESS FOR SUCCESS

**Always dress professionally for a job interview, even if the work environment is casual.** It is appropriate to ask, when you are called for an interview, how you should dress. If you are told “casual,” women should still wear a minimum of a jacket and slacks, and men should wear a minimum of a long-sleeved shirt and tie, with dress slacks or khaki pants.

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

## DRESS FOR SUCCESS - FOR WOMEN

### The Suit

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

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

### The Purse:

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

### The Make-up/Hair - “Less is More”:

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

### The Shoes and Hosiery:

- Closed toe shoes only. No sandals – even those with heels. No “spiked” heels. Should be comfortable for walking.
- Neutral colored hosiery: taupe, beige, off black – avoid textures.

## DRESS FOR SUCCESS - FOR MEN

### The Suit

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

### The Shoes & Socks & Jewelry

Dressy lace-up or slip-on – no boots! Socks - dark, with solid or small pattern.

Wedding band; dress watch, not sports – “less is more” with men’s jewelry.

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

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



# EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS

## WHAT DO THEY REALLY EXPECT?

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

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

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

## CHARACTERISTICS ALL EMPLOYERS WILL VALUE

### Appearance

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

### Interpersonal/Communication Skills

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

### Dependability

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

### Self-knowledge

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

### Skills

- Do you possess the knowledge and skills to learn and perform the job?
- Do you have experience or related experience in this field?
- Are you willing to learn new skills? Are you coachable? An ideal candidate should be able to think for themselves, but also be able to accept feedback and advice. Remember the old adage: “Give someone a fish and they will survive today, but teach someone how to fish and they will survive forever.”

