

The Job Search for Student Athletes



**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
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FROM STUDENT ATHLETE TO PROFESSIONAL – TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING

Making the transition from college to career can be daunting for any student who is about to graduate or has recently graduated. Because of time constraints placed upon student athletes, many may not have time to devote to a job search, or have as much work experience as non-athletes. These factors may lead you to believe you are ill-prepared to explore career options and to search for a job, or to offer an employer as much as the typical college graduate.

However, this is definitely not the case! The skills and knowledge you have acquired as a student athlete have prepared you for the world of work in ways that you may not realize. You have learned dedication, perseverance, self-motivation, time management, and team work, among many other skills – all of which are sought by employers.

What exactly does the job search entail? The job search is a process that involves time, thought, and effort. Employers can quickly see, for example, how much care an applicant has put into developing a professional, well-written resume, or how much they have planned for and practiced for the interview.

The resume and cover letter are the first impression you will make on an employer, and errors are a good indicator, in the employer's mind, of the quality of work they can expect from you if hired. Additionally, the interview is your opportunity to conduct yourself in a professional manner, as well as to elaborate on the information on your resume. You need to convince the employer that you can do the job, and you can only do that if you've thoroughly prepared for the interview.

This Job Search for Student Athletes guide is designed to assist you in planning, organizing, and implementing an effective, and ultimately successful, job search. Looking for a job is a job in and of itself, so do take the time to read all of this information – it can get you to the place you want to be much sooner – on an exciting and rewarding career path!



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 campus involvement, 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 sport management in which leadership, team work, organizational and problem solving skills will assist the organization in achieving its goals.
- To contribute strong marketing, communication, and team work skills in a health promotions career, with opportunity for professional growth and advancement.
- A challenging position in Exercise Science in which strong interest and knowledge base in health and fitness will make a valuable contribution to an organization and the clients it serves.

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, Kinesiology / Minor in Health Promotion

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA Graduation Date: December 2013 GPA: 3.6

Or:

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Bachelor of Science, Exercise Science

Graduation Date: May 2014 Major GPA: 3.3

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, Sport Management

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA May 2013 Overall GPA: 3.4

Coursework Includes: History of Sport, PE, Fitness; Drugs and Society; Sport/Exercise Psychology; Facility & Event Management; Sport Information & Media; Legal/Ethical Issues; Sport Promotion & Fundraising; Governance in Sport; Sport Administration; First Aid & CPR. **Additional Coursework:** Management, Marketing, and Finance

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 General Studies; Concentration in Business

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 athletic achievements, honors, officer positions in organizations. If so, put this information in **ACTIVITIES & HONORS**, and indicate the activities 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, athletics and 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:**

Student Assistant, 2012 - present

Department of Athletics, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

(Put job description here)

Sales Associate, 2010 - 2012

Academy Sports, Hammond, LA

(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 if possible. 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, leadership experience as a student athlete or from student organization positions, or experience gained as a volunteer, 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:

- Sport Management Association, 2011- 2013. Offices Held: President, 2012-2013
- President’s List, Spring and Fall 2012; Dean’s List, multiple semesters
- Volunteer, North Oaks Hospital, Hammond, LA, 2012 – 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 for your type.

JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

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

JOB VACANCY POSTINGS:	Year-round, for full-time and part-time jobs and internships
ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS:	Sign up in eRecruiting – OCI's held each Fall & Spring semester
RESUME REFERRALS:	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 pages 12 and 13 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.

1st paragraph	State how you learned of position, position title, and name of organization.
2nd paragraph	Describe degree - mention what you learned in courses, team projects.
3rd paragraph	State knowledge/skills acquired in work and extracurricular experiences.
4th paragraph	Indicate knowledge of organization and why you want to work for them.
Final paragraph	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

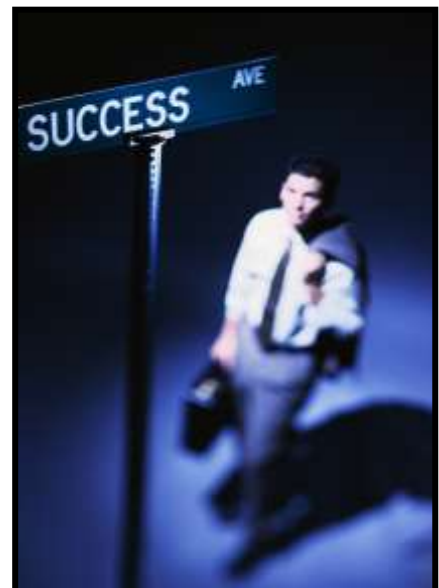
Many job openings are discovered by interacting or networking with others to let them know you are looking for a job. Networking can range from a casual, unexpected encounter to a planned, organized meeting – so always be prepared. Remember that you are always “on” when job searching, so always conduct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

- Professors, coaches, and advisors to student organizations.
- Fellow members of student or other organizations - college, volunteer, etc.
- “Personal professional contacts” - bankers, accountants, lawyers, ministers.
- 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.
- Friends, acquaintances, neighbors; family and extended relatives.



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 association web site job boards, and conferences with job fairs or job networking events.
- Temporary employment agencies.

- Send a thank you note or email 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!

Social Media and 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 1

Jonathan Jones

706 Green Tree Lane, Covington, LA 70433 (985) 555-0101 jjones@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

To demonstrate exceptional leadership, team work, communication, and organizational skills in a career in sport management, while positively impacting an organization and continuing to develop professionally.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Sport Management

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA
Graduation Date: May 2014 GPA: 3.6

Course Work Includes:

Sport Administration, Governance in Sport, Social Aspects of Sport, Psychosocial Dimensions of Sport, Facility and Event Management, Drugs and Society, Legal / Ethical Issues in Sport, Sport Promotion and Fundraising, Sport Information and Media Relations, Principles of Management, Principles of Marketing, Financial Accounting, Anatomy and Physiology

SUMMARY OF SKILLS

- Strong academic background in sport management, including facilities management, event planning, marketing and promotions, media functions, and physical/social aspects of sports.
- Acquired practical experience by completing internship with professional sports team.
- Demonstrated strong team work skills in class projects, athletic experience, and internship.
- Ability to communicate and relate well with others to accomplish goals.
- Highly self-motivated, organized, disciplined, and able to manage multiple tasks effectively.
- Certified in CPR, 2013, 2014

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Intern

Zephyrs, New Orleans, LA, February 2014 - May 2014

Completing internship in Community Relations area of Minor League Baseball team. Assist with preparation and implementation of projects and programs. Make community appearances as Boudreaux (mascot). Package and ship donation requests, and keep inventory of donation items. Maintain donation information in computer database. Manage game day staff (stadium ushers, etc.) and Boudreaux's Kids Crew. Assist with on-field promotions and assist other departments as needed.

Baseball Student Athlete, Southeastern Louisiana University, August 2011 - May 2013

Excelled in NCAA Division I athletics by devoting an average of 30 hours per week to conditioning, practices, meetings, films, travel and game competitions, and demonstrating leadership, teamwork, perseverance, and time management skills.

ACTIVITIES & HONORS

Dean's List, multiple semesters; Thirteen Club honors recognition; Sport Management Association member

SAMPLE RESUME 2

Rachel Henderson
1212 Remington Ct., Kenner, LA 70062
(504) 555-2000 rachelhenderson1@gmail.com

Objective

A career in the field of health and fitness promotion and education, with opportunity to apply knowledge and skills in health and wellness, communication, and client/patient relations.

Education

Bachelor of General Studies / Concentration in Applied Behavioral Sciences
Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA
Graduation Date: May 2014 Major GPA: 3.2

Skills Summary

- Excellent interpersonal skills in interacting with people at all levels of organization
- Strong written and oral communication skills including public speaking
- Promote team spirit by acknowledging contribution of others' ideas and opinions
- Experience serving as a leader in both athletic and work environments
- Goal-oriented with ability to manage multiple tasks and projects effectively
- Computer skills: Word, Excel, PowerPoint

Experience

Student Assistant, Pennington Student Activity Center

Southeastern Louisiana University, January 2012- May 2014

Served as Assistant to Coordinator of Intramural Sports as a supervisor of indoor soccer. Recruited participants, officiated games, maintained a safe environment for all participants and spectators by enforcing rules and regulations and locking up the facility each night. Served as Assistant to Professional Staff. Responsible for greeting and checking in members, answering questions, and addressing concerns.

Student Assistant, International Initiatives Office

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA, August 2011 -2012

Assisted with office procedures, answering parent, student, and faculty questions, and promoting study abroad programs through updating website, orientation presentations, and creation of print media.

Activities

Southeastern Louisiana University Lady Lions Volleyball, August 2012 - May 2014

NCAA, Division I

Recruited and Selected for Scholarship

Hammond High School Varsity Volleyball, August 2009 - May 2011

Team Captain, 3 years; Varsity Squad Freshman Year

Honors & Awards

2012 AVCA All-South Region Scholar (Honorable Mention); 2011 AVCA All-South Region Scholar (Honorable Mention); 2011 Southland Conference All-Academic (Second Team); The National Society of Collegiate Scholars; The Thirteen Club; Southeastern Louisiana University Athletic Scholarship

SAMPLE RESUME 3 – No Work Experience

Shelly Ryan

400 Pineview Dr., Bogalusa, LA 70427

(985) 555-3232

shellryan2@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE

A career in the field of marketing, advertising, or public relations, in which a strong knowledge base in marketing principles and strategies combined with communication, organizational, creativity, and team work skills, will enhance a company's products and services and increase profitability.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, Marketing

Concentration in Advertising and Integrated Marketing Communications

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA December 2014

GPA: 3.4

Course Work Includes:

Marketing Research, Consumer Behavior, Personal Selling, Advertising, e-Commerce & Marketing Strategy, Marketing Research, Business Statistics, Management Information Systems, Legal Environment of Business, Principles of Management, International Marketing, Business Strategy, Public Speaking, Social Psychology

Special Course Projects:

Participated in marketing class team projects, including developing marketing plan for local restaurant, and an international marketing strategy simulation project.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Team Captain, Lady Lions Women's Soccer

Southeastern Louisiana University, 2012 – present

Oversee the operations of women's soccer team. Meet with coaching staff to address issues regarding team cohesiveness and adherence to NSCAA guidelines. Assist with teammates' stretching, conditioning and nutrition. Devote 20+ hours per week to athletics while carrying full college course load. Ensure team members dedicate time for studies by monitoring weekly study hours. The Southeastern Louisiana University women's soccer team was one of 436 women's soccer programs nationwide to recently receive the National Soccer Coaches Association of America College Team Academic Award, bestowed on teams with a team grade point average of 3.0 or higher. The GPA posted by the Lady Lions was the highest among Southland Conference and in-state schools.

SERVICE PROJECTS

Volunteer, Special Olympics, 2011-present

Assist with annual competition events planning and fundraising efforts.

ACTIVITIES & HONORS

American Marketing Association

Attend meetings with guest speakers presenting on marketing career-related topics

Dean's List, multiple semesters

SAMPLE COVER LETTER 1

Rachel Henderson
1212 Remington Ct., Kenner, LA 70062
(504) 555-2000 rachelhen1@gmail.com

April 15, 2014

WakeMed Health & Hospitals
Raleigh, NC 27511

Dear Human Resources Director:

I saw the recently advertised Fitness Specialist position on your organization's web site and am very excited about this career opportunity. My academic preparation, combined with my experience as an athlete, will allow me to offer the knowledge and skills you are seeking in the ideal candidate for this position.

I will graduate in May 2014 with a Bachelor of General Studies from Southeastern Louisiana University. As part of this major, I have taken courses in the area of exercise science, with the goal of a career combining this knowledge with my desire to assist others in achieving and maintaining healthy lifestyles. In courses such as Anatomy and Physiology, Anatomical Kinesiology, Healthy Lifestyles, Fitness Testing and Prescription, and Nutrition, I have acquired knowledge of health-related learning and behaviors, as well as the various aspects of physical, mental, and social well-being. I enjoy communicating with others to share my knowledge of health and fitness and am committed to serving as a catalyst for positive lifestyle changes for others.

As a student athlete, I was able to bring this philosophy of wellness to the playing field by setting an example of determination and passion for reaching our team's goals through consistent training and work-outs. Being highly self-motivated, I was also able to motivate others, and I excel at relating to a variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Applying analytical skills to assess situations and develop plans of action are also a requirement of being an athlete, and I developed and applied these skills on numerous occasions resulting in team success.

Your job ad states that the fitness specialist will provide group and individual instruction and education to participants varying in age, ability and health status in several exercise programs that are part of the WakeMed Health & Hospitals system. Program coordination and working as part of a health and wellness team to perform day to day operations is also a requirement. I am confident that, with the above qualifications, you will view me as an applicant that deserves strong consideration for the position.

I have submitted my resume as per your web site instructions; please let me know if additional information is needed. I look forward to the opportunity to interview and to be a part of the largest health system in Greater Raleigh, with employees who "represent the best minds and the biggest hearts in the business."

Sincerely,

Rachel Henderson

SAMPLE COVER LETTER 2

Shelly Ryan

**400 Pineview Dr., Bogalusa, LA 70427
(985) 555-3232**

October 28, 2014

Health & HighTech, Inc.
1000 Baronne St.
New Orleans, LA 70000

Dear Hiring Manager:

Please accept this letter as my application for the Marketing Assistant position you advertised on Monster.com. I am seeking a position that will allow me to contribute the knowledge and skills I have acquired through my college studies and my experience as a student athlete, and I am confident that your Marketing Assistant position will allow me to make a positive impact on Health & HighTech and the clients you serve.

I will be graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Marketing in December 2014. My course work has provided a strong knowledge base in marketing principles and theories, as well as practical applications for theoretical knowledge through course projects involving simulations of marketing situations and challenges. Course work in personal selling, consumer behavior, and social psychology have increased my understanding of the psychological aspects of marketing products and services to consumers. I have also acquired knowledge of e-Business models, online market segmentation, online marketing research and sales processes, and managing online customer relationships, in my course work and class projects.

In my experience as an athlete and as an athletic team leader, I have demonstrated highly developed leadership and team work skills, with the ability to prioritize and effectively manage people, time, and tasks to successfully achieve goals. I am highly self-motivated, energetic, with excellent interpersonal and communication skills, and thrive in a competitive environment that offers opportunity for creativity and professional growth.

In researching Health & HighTech, I discovered that you are known for the latest health and fitness management technology products, which have positively impacted the lives of over one million customers. Your commitment to the highest quality in your products as well as your desire to improve the lives of others indicates that you are the type of organization I would be proud to be a part of.

I am submitting a resume which further describes my qualifications. I would welcome the opportunity for an interview, and can be reached at the contact information above. Thank you for considering me for the position. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Shelly Ryan

SAMPLE REFERENCES PAGE

Jacob Johnson

1000 47th St., Apt. 19, New Orleans, LA 70000

504-000-0000 JJJohnson@gamil.com

REFERENCES

Mr. Jim James, Assistant Director
Dept. of Athletics
Southeastern Louisiana University
985-555-3333
Jim.James@selu.edu

Mr. John J. Jones, Assistant Director
New Orleans Zephyrs
New Orleans, LA
504-555-2222
John.Jones@selu.edu

Dr. Martha Mapes, Professor
Dept. of Kinesiology and Health Studies
Southeastern Louisiana University
985-555-1111
mmapes@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 any related work, athletics, 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 those liked 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 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?

Discuss what skills you have acquired from your experience as a student athlete (team work, leadership, perseverance/commitment, goal-setting, self-motivation, time management, etc.). Also, if you were an officer, or served on committees in student organizations, discuss these experiences and what they taught you: “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 mention your student athlete experience, or that your internship was the most rewarding because you gained knowledge and skills directly related to this job, then elaborate on that statement. 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 elements required for a successful team effort. For example, your belief that all team members have something to contribute could be your “philosophy of successful teamwork,” 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 to 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, as an athlete, it is critical that you manage your time and that you plan, organize, and complete tasks and responsibilities in a timely manner 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. And, research the field or industry.

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 or teammate.
- 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 Assistant Director of Athletics position. This position strongly matches my interests and career goals. The interview confirmed my initial positive impressions of Nicholls State University, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for you and in making a valuable contribution to your athletics department.

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.”