

Table of Contents

Career Center Services Benefiting Student-Athletes	2
<i>Career Center Career Clusters</i>	3
<i>Career Center Definitions of Resources and Services</i>	4
Current Web Resources	4
Campus Recruiting.....	4
Career Coaching.....	5
Career Development Timeline	6
Resumes	9
<i>Qualities of Athletes Valued by Employers</i>	11
<i>Career Center Resume Checklist</i>	13
<i>Resume Samples</i>	15
Student-Athlete With No Paid Work Experience	15
Student-Athlete With Considerable Work Experience	16
Cover Letters	17
<i>Cover Letter Sample</i>	18
<i>Cover Letter Checklist</i>	19
Interviews	20
<i>10 Steps to a Successful Interview Experience</i>	21
Internships and Jobs	24
<i>The Search Process: A Step-by-Step Guide</i>	25
<i>Sports-related Careers</i>	27
Graduate School	28
<i>Choosing a Graduate or Professional School</i>	29
Commodore Career Connection	33





Career Center Services Benefiting Student-Athletes

- **Career Center Web Site** – Our Web site has a variety of links and information on all aspects of the job search. We encourage you to check it out! <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/career>.
- **Career Coaching** – Students wanting to discuss their personal career path and job search strategy from initial thoughts to assessing job offers may make an appointment by calling the front desk at 615-322-2750.
- **Career Center Programs** – You are invited to attend any of our Career Center sponsored events. These programs range from resume and interviewing workshops to networking events. Check our Web site for upcoming events or look at the Calendar of Events for a full list.
- **Career Resource Center** – With over 400 titles pertaining to various aspects of the job search, there are many materials that can help you with your career search. Specifically there are several books targeted to student-athletes: *Athlete's Guide to Career Planning*, *Sports Marketplace*, *The 50 Coolest Jobs in Sports*. Visit the Career Resource Center on the 2nd floor of the Student Life Center.
- **Internship search** - A Web-based consortium that searches over 25,000 nationwide opportunities for paid and volunteer internship experiences. Visit <https://www4.vanderbilt.edu/career/students/idb/> to search the internship database.
- **VUCONNECT** alumni network- VUCONNECT is a database of Vanderbilt alumni who have agreed to offer advice on their particular career field, industry, location, etc. to other VU alumni and students. You can access the site at www.vuconnect.com. To sign up, go to the activation screen and fill in your first name, last name and create a password. Once you have signed up, go to “login with ID and password” button and enter VUCONNECT.
- **Career Link**- If you don't do anything else for your career search, make sure you at least sign up for Career Link. It is your link to job & internship postings, campus recruiting events, and career education programs. Log into your account on the Vanderbilt Career Center homepage.

Career Center Career Clusters

Public Policy, Government, and Law

- *Public Policy, Think Tanks, Human Rights, Poverty, International Development, International Relations, Military*
- *Government, Politics, Law*



Engineering and Information Technology

- *Automotive*
- *Aeronautical, Defense, Electronics, Systems*
- *Consumer Products, Process Design*
- *Technology, Computers, Software, IT*
- *Oil, Gas & Electric*
- *Construction, Structures, Transportation*
- *Medical Devices*

Finance, Real Estate, and Insurance

- *Finance, Banking, Corporate Finance, Hedge Funds, Private Equity, Investment Banking, Commercial Banking*
- *Venture Capital, Real Estate*
- *Actuarial, Insurance*

Consulting, Management, Leadership Training Programs, and Human Resources

- *Consulting*
- *Management (Leadership Training Programs),*
- *Human Resources, Sales*
- *Hospitality, Tourism, Restaurant Industry*
- *Fashion,*
- *Sports*



Arts, Media & Communications

- *Advertising, Marketing, Public Relations*
- *Creative Arts: Music, Dance, Photography*
- *Entertainment: New Media, TV, and Film*
- *Fiction and Non Fiction Publishing: Writing, Journalism, and Illustration*
- *Television and Radio Broadcasting*
- *Museums, Galleries, Auction Houses*
- *Architecture*
- *Culinary Arts*

Education, Community Organizations, and Non-Profit

- *K-12, Higher Education*
- *Community Organizations, Non Profits, Ministry*
- *Social Services, Mental Health*
- *Environment and Sustainability*

Healthcare

- *Healthcare, Medicine, Global Health, Public Health, HealthCare Policy/Advocacy, Healthcare Management, Scientific & Clinical Research, Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology*



Career Center Definitions of Resources and Services

CURRENT WEB RESOURCES:

CareerLink: Your link to job & internship postings, campus recruiting events, and career education programs.

VUCONNECT: Network of alumni volunteers eager to assist you with career advice

Internship Search: Powerful database of company and industry information including contacts, company profiles, available internships, and business information resources.

CAMPUS RECRUITING:

On-campus interviews: Opportunity for employers and students to connect during on-site interviews in the Vanderbilt Career Center.

Remote interviewing: Your opportunity to interview remotely via webcam with domestic and international employers.

Industry Career Day: An industry-specific recruiting event where top employers come to Vanderbilt to recruit and screen qualified candidates.

Job Postings: Full-time job and internship postings listed in CareerLink by a variety of employers.

Resume Critiques: Opportunity for students to meet one on one with a Career Coach to have their resume reviewed. Contact the front office at 615-322-2750 to set up a time.



CAREER COACHING:

Career Cluster: A group of related industries and/or career fields.

Career Coaching: The interactive process of supporting students in their exploration, identification, and pursuit of an industry or field of interest.

Career Coach: A VCC staff member who partners with a student to support them in their exploration, identification, and pursuit of an internship and/or job in an industry or field of interest.

Coaching Assessment: Time when students can drop in for a 15-minute appointment with their completed ICAP to have a career coach help them identify next steps.

I.C.A.P (Individualized Coaching Action Plan): On-line form students complete to begin their relationship with the Career Center.

Total Access: An industry-specific educational event that provides students the opportunity to NETWORK and LEARN firsthand from industry experts.

MBTI Report: an assessment providing insight into your personality preferences that can help you with career and life choices.

Alumni Career Services provide alumni access to on-line career and job search databases, the Career Center's events and programs, career resources from other universities and colleges, and networking with other alumni.



Career Development Timeline

Freshman Year

Career Tracking

- Take the *Individualized Coaching Action Plan (ICAP)*, online career assessment through the Career Center and attend a coaching assessment, visit the CareerLink calendar for dates/times
- Begin developing a resume through Optimal Resume and a cover letter for summer opportunities, (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/career/undergrads/optimal_resume.html)
- Sign up on *CareerLink* through the Career Center website, (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/career/>)
- Attend at least 1-2 career workshops (resume writing, finding a great internship, etc.) visit the CareerLink calendar for program dates/times
- Attend Career Center Industry Career Days (ICD) and Total Access events to learn about opportunities in specific industries

Personal Development

- Participate in volunteer opportunities through Life Skills
- Participate in DoreSTEPS, Vanderbilt Visions & Student Athlete Orientation
- Consider VUXP, a Vanderbilt Leadership Development program
- Consider meaningful summer work options/internships

Sophomore Year

Career Tracking

- Define major and academic concentration with help of Faculty Advisor
- Take the *Individualized Coaching Action Plan (ICAP)*, online career assessment through the Career Center and attend a coaching assessment, visit the CareerLink calendar for dates/times
- Sign up and/or update your profile on *CareerLink* through the Career Center website, Attend at least 1-2 career workshops, visit the CareerLink calendar for program dates/times
- Develop a resume with college activities and cover letter for applying to internships

Pursue Summer internship or study abroad Opportunities

- Attend Career Center Industry Career Days (ICD) and Total Access events to learn about opportunities in specific industries
- Attend the Nashville area College to Career Fair in February at the TN State Fairgrounds
- Meet with Career Center coaches about summer internship options
- Research meaningful summer work options or summer abroad programs
- Participate in SEC or NCAA internships – see Life Skills for more information

Personal Development

- Sign up for Alternative Spring Break
- Get involved with Student Organizations on campus

Why these steps should be completed:

- Meaningful summer internships or studying abroad can be very valuable experiences and lead to career opportunities upon graduation
- When applying for internships, graduate schools, or jobs, recruiters look for applicants that are well rounded individuals. The addition of volunteer and community service activities on your resume will reflect your involvement in different areas other than school and athletics.

Junior Year

Career Tracking

- Take the *Individualized Coaching Action Plan (ICAP)*, online career assessment through the Career Center and attend a coaching assessment, visit the CareerLink calendar for dates/times
- Update your profile on *CareerLink*, (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/career/>)
- Upload a resume and cover letter in *CareerLink* based on your career interest. Companies contact the Career Center for resumes, and this ensures that yours will be included.
- Update resume & attend a resume workshop offered by the Career Center; Develop a cover letter for applying to internships
- Sign up for Mock interviews with the Career Center through Interview Stream Virtual Mock Interview
- Conduct Informational Interviews with various contacts (Alumni, Friends/Family) to learn more about your industry of interest.
- Research specific industries and develop target list of potential employers
- Sign up for campus recruiting through CareerLink to pursue internship opportunities
- Meet with a Career Center Coach and consider job/post-graduation plan (Share job/post-graduation plan with athletic academic counselor)

Purse Summer Internships or Study Abroad Opportunities to build your professional skills.

- Meet with Career Center coaches about summer internship options
- Attend Career Center Industry Career Days (ICD) and Total Access events to learn about opportunities in specific industries
- Attend the Nashville area College to Career Fair in February at the TN State Fairgrounds
- Research meaningful summer work options or summer abroad programs
- Consider participation in SEC or NCAA internships – see Life Skills for more information

Research Graduate & Professional School Options

- When considering Graduate & Professional Schools, become aware of admissions process & admissions testing requirements (Attend Law School Fair offered by the Career Center, Pre-Health Fair offered by the HPAO)
- Research scholarships for graduate and professional schools
- Identify faculty & staff for references
- Meet with Faculty Advisor and consider job/post-graduation plan

Personal Development

- Participate in volunteer opportunities through Life Skills
- Get involved with Student Organizations on campus

Senior Year

• **Career Tracking**

- Take the *Individualized Coaching Action Plan (ICAP)*, online career assessment through the Career Center and attend a coaching assessment, visit the CareerLink calendar for dates/times
- Update your profile on *CareerLink*, (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/career/>)
- Upload an updated resume and cover letter in *CareerLink* based on your career interest. Companies contact the Career Center for resumes, and this ensures that yours will be included.
- Sign up for Mock interviews with the Career Center through Interview Stream Virtual Mock Interview
- Conduct Informational Interviews with various contacts (Alumni, Friends/Family) to learn more about your industry of interest
- Sign up for campus recruiting through CareerLink to pursue full-time opportunities
- Meet with Career Center coaches to discuss career options and goals
- Attend Career Center Industry Career Days (ICD) and Total Access events to learn about opportunities in specific industries
- Attend the Nashville area College to Career Fair in February, visit www.nashvillefairs.org for up to date information

Research Graduate & Professional School Options

- Attend Professional School Fair (Law School Fair offered by VU Career Center, Pre-Health Fair offered by the HPAO)
- Make sure all necessary tests have been taken (GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT)
- Follow-up with athletic academic counselor regarding available NCAA post-graduation scholarships

Personal Development

- Participate in volunteer opportunities through CHAMPS
- Get involved with Student Organizations on campus

Why these steps should be completed:

If all the steps are completed each year, you should be prepared to achieve your career goals!!!





Resumes

NAME

Your name should reflect what you want to be called and/or the formality of your resume, i.e., David Franklin Bergan, David F. Bergan, D. Franklin Bergan, Dave Bergan, Frank Bergan. It may be in all CAPS or Title Case and should be a larger size font than the rest of the text.

Current Address:
Vanderbilt/Nashville Address.
If Current and Permanent Addresses
are same, center address under name.

Permanent Address:
Home address if not
same as campus.

OBJECTIVE An objective should be focused and concise. Unless you are very focused in your job search, it is recommended that no objective be on your general resume. An Objective is suggested for targeted resumes. An Objective is an option on a general resume.

EDUCATION This section should include Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, your degree spelled out, major(s), minor(s), month and year of graduation (no "anticipated" or "expected"), GPA (definitely if 2.80 or above); **List GPA to the hundredth (i.e. 3.05)**; if Overall and Major GPA are close, only list Overall; if rough first two years, may say "3.30 over last three semesters"). Inclusion of your High School information is optional!

HIGHLIGHTED

COURSES This section is optional and only used if you are very weak in experience or have taken special courses (outside of those usually required) that are relevant to the job you seek. A senior course project might be described in this section.

HONORS Dean's List, honorary organizations, and scholarships. List Vanderbilt honors first, then any exceptional high school honors. If only one or two honors, these may be combined in a section titled Honors and Activities.

ACTIVITIES Put the organization first then tell your position (i.e., member, president, program chair), responsibilities/accomplishments, and dates of activity. If you need more room, list in paragraph form. **DO NOT repeat information from the Career Center sample resume word for word! Be original and creative in your personal descriptions!**

EXPERIENCE This is where you tell the employer "What you can do for his/her organization" based on your experience. Begin with most current/present employment and proceed in reverse chronological order. Give concrete examples of your accomplishments and skills. Use action/power verbs to begin statements; try to avoid "Responsible for...". Use present tense for current activities, past tense for activities completed. Leave out unnecessary "a, an, the". Quantify activities, i.e., supervised 15 workers, counseled 25 students, managed \$15,000 budget. Be brief and to the point.

SKILLS (or SKILLS & INTERESTS) Here, you present your computer skills, foreign language skills (Conversant in..., Fluent in..., Strong knowledge of...), relevant travel experience (Lived in Spain three

years. Extensive Asian travel.), accounting hours, licenses or certifications, and interests. This information helps you come across as human. The more relevant the information is to your job target, the more essential that it be included. International students may want to include their Visa status in this section.

REFERENCES ONLY if you need additional text on a page do you include this section. Then you may say “Available upon request.” It is preferred that reference information be provided on a separate page when requested.

NOTES:

- Always SPELL CHECK your resume and have someone else proofread it as well. IT MUST BE WITHOUT ERRORS!
- Be consistent: if you use the Post Office abbreviation for a state in one place, use for all states; if periods at end of one section, at end of all sections.
- You want to present your best self in your resume, but every statement must be truthful and easy to substantiate in an interview or through references.



What if I have nothing to put on my resume?!

Okay, okay – you’ve been so busy with athletics and classes that you just don’t have much to include on your resume. There are ways of dealing with this. As a student-athlete who has devoted thousands of hours to your sport, you may want to include a **Summary of Qualifications** that explains the amount of time required to participate in Division I athletics, and reveals some of the “transferable” traits and skills that you will apply to a job upon graduation.

Examples of some of these “transferable” traits and skills include:

- Hard working team player with excellent leadership and technical skills. I will apply the same degree of diligence and dedication to a career in Sales that has allowed me to maintain good grades while devoting an average of 25 hours per week training and playing for a Division I women’s volleyball team.
- Student-athlete who devoted an average of 30 hours per week to training, practices, meetings, travel, and game competition while completing a challenging Psychology degree.
- A student-athlete who has excelled in Division I athletics while completing a challenging Economics curriculum in four years. Demonstrated leadership; teamwork, motivational and time management skills that I intend to apply to a career in Management.
- Student-athlete who devoted approximately 25-30 hours per week to training, conditioning, studying playbooks, meetings, travel, and games while attending Northern Illinois University on a full-time basis.
- A student athlete who achieved academic success in a challenging Business Administration program while excelling in Division I athletics. Demonstrated leadership, teamwork, and time management skills that I intend to apply to my position as a Retail Management Trainee.

If you don’t have enough work, volunteer, community service, or leadership experience to fill the page:

- Set your margins at 1.3” and use the maximum size font (12).
- Consider putting the Categories (Objective, Education, Experience, etc.) in a narrow left hand column, with the remaining content on a wider right hand column.

- In the **Education** section, include **Relevant Courses** that relate to the job to which you are applying.
- In the **Experience** section, include any experience in **public speaking** to the media or before groups of children, at camps, schools, etc.
- Include any **coaching** or **training** you did at sports camps. Emphasize communication, organizational, and motivational skills.
- Did your team perform any **community service**? If so, include it.
- Can you use three or more computer software programs? If so, include them under “**Computer Skills.**”
- If a captain or co-captain, describe responsibilities that demonstrate leadership and responsibility.
- In the **Awards** or **Achievements** section, include athletic or athlete-scholar awards, team captaincies, Player of the Week/Month awards, Most Inspirational, Most Improved, All-Conference awards, etc.
- **High school** achievements should be excluded, unless (a) they are so impressive or relevant to the position that you feel compelled to include them, or (b) you are absolutely desperate to fill the page.

Qualities of Athletes Valued by Employers

It is in the nature of athletes to impart the following qualities on participants. These personal strengths are desirable in virtually all jobs, regardless of the field. How well have you done in acquiring these qualities? How strong are you in each of them? Ask yourself these questions as you review the list and be sure to incorporate these qualities into your resume and cover letters. Ask your career adviser for guidance in your resume and cover letters.

Time management. Athletes are often outstanding in apportioning their time, because they must balance a full- time academic workload, full-time commitment to athletics, travel to other schools for games, time-out for fatigue, and possibly part-time employment or other off-campus commitments. Take a close look at the different activities you have juggled during college, and appreciate the time management skills you have developed as a result.



Teamwork. Through athletic team membership, most athletes become intimately familiar with the experience of working toward group goals. Working with a coach is a lot like working with a department manager. The dynamics of team play teaches the athlete what it means to be a role player-that it is sometime necessary to submerge one's ego and personal goals into the goals of the organization, and that leadership is the ability to get people to work as a team.

Goal-Oriented. Athletes cultivate the ability to concentrate their energies and attention over an extended period of time and to block out distractions while they proceed



Competitiveness. The competitive spirit is the lifeblood of the athletic experience, and most athletes thrive on it. They gain experience in the rigors of winning and losing, and they relish the opportunity to fight more battles, test their abilities, and risk their self-esteem against tough opposition. This translates into a strong asset in most jobs.

Confidence. Athletes are continually in situations where they must "pump themselves up" and believe in their own powers to produce effectively under pressure. The ability to approach a tough performance situation with the belief that you'll do well is crucial. Practice in maintaining self-confidence, especially under tense circumstances; it can carry over to the readiness to take on stiff on-the-job challenges.



Persistence/endurance. Athletics is often characterized by long and hard work toward distant rewards and the ability to wring a maximum effort from yourself whenever necessary. This may include playing while in pain or, in general, performing under adverse circumstances. Athletics teaches intensity of effort and the belief that sufficient preparation and determination will eventually payoff.

Loyalty. Closely related to teamwork, this quality emerges from the bond that an individual athlete builds with his or her team and is expressed in the willingness to support team efforts under any circumstances. Loyalty contributes heavily to the morale of the team or work group, because it enables each team member to trust that others will work toward the same ends.

Discipline. This is a hallmark of the athletic experience. Organizing one's time, adhering to guidelines, exacting maximum effort on a regular basis, concentrating one's energies, and screening out competing priorities are all necessary for competence in athletics. The systematic application of one's energies toward a desired goal is highly valued in any work situation, especially in those that require independent effort.

Taking criticism. Athletes are accustomed to taking criticism because their performance on the field is watched closely and any weak points seldom escape comment. Athletes typically develop into good listeners when constructive criticism is offered, because they recognize its value in helping them advance toward overall goals.

Dealing with setbacks. Sports offer continued opportunities to test oneself, succeed or fail, and then come back for more. No one who competes in a sport can avoid the experience of failure, sooner or later. Among the most valuable lessons of athletics are how to win, how to lose, and how to rebound after either.

We don't expect that all college athletes will have developed in great abundance all ten of these qualities we have noted. Many athletes will look at these descriptions of qualities and say: "That's not me." We would be surprised if you did not disclaim more than one of them for yourself. Nonetheless, it is likely that you have more of these qualities than most non-athletes do, and we believe you should appreciate them in yourself, the better to use them to your advantage.





Career Center Resume Checklist

The following checklist provides guidelines to help you develop a winning resume. If you have questions about this checklist, please contact us.

SUGGESTED RESUME FORMAT

Contact Information

- ❑ **Name.** Use a font size larger than the largest font in the resume so it stands out. The rest of your contact information can be in the smaller font size.
- ❑ Your current **mailing address.**
- ❑ **Phone number.** Be sure your voice mail message sounds professional.
- ❑ **E-mail address.** Avoid using “cute” or inappropriate e-mail usernames.
- ❑ URL of your web site. That is if you have one and **only** if the content is appropriate for employer viewing.
- ❑ Remove any automatic hyperlinks on your e-mail address and URL.

Objective

- ❑ Keep your objective **short and concise** by simply stating the industry and/or job title and the company name (for example, “Seeking position summer intern with Goldman Sachs”).
- ❑ **Eliminate personal pronouns** such as “I” and “my” from your objective.

Education

- ❑ List degrees in reverse chronological order (most recent listed first).
- ❑ **Spell out** degrees (i.e. “Bachelor of Science in [your major]”, not “BS”).
- ❑ Emphasize your degree by placing it **before** your university and in bold.
- ❑ Include the **city and state** after the institution name (there is no need to include the zip code).
- ❑ List the **month and year** of your graduation. Do **not** put “expected” or “projected” graduation (i.e. if you are graduating in May 2011, put “May 2011”).
- ❑ Include GPA if it is a 3.0 or above, and use “GPA” (not “G.P.A.”). Round the number off (i.e. 3.25, not 3.249).
- ❑ If you have completed a study abroad experience, include it in the education section.
- ❑ If you financed your education, say so. For example, “Maintained a 3.5 GPA while working part-time to pay 75% of tuition.”

Experience

- ❑ List your experience, starting with the most recent position (**reverse chronological order**).
- ❑ Include full and part-time jobs, paid or unpaid internships or practicum, and volunteer work, especially if it is related to your desired job.
- ❑ List your **job title** and **company/organization name** in bold.
- ❑ Include city and state **only** for employer location, **not** the complete address.
- ❑ When listing dates, you can include the **month and year, semester and year, or just the year** of employment. You do **not** need to include exact dates.
- ❑ Do **not** include unnecessary information such as supervisor’s name, salary, type of job, etc.
- ❑ List job descriptions/duties with **bullets** instead of writing them in paragraph form.
- ❑ Use **strong action words** to describe what you did in your past jobs (**avoid** passive phrases such as “responsible for” and “duties included”). **Eliminate personal pronouns** from your descriptions.

- ❑ Use appropriate **verb tense**. Use present tense action words to describe present employment experience and past tense action words to describe past employment experience.
- ❑ Include numbers to **quantify** experience where possible. For example, # of employees supervised, \$ amount of budget managed, # of workshops taught or projects coordinated, \$ amount saved by your ingenuity.
- ❑ Focus on what you **accomplished**/your **results** and how you were **valuable** to past employers, **not** on your responsibilities. For example, **instead of** “Responsibilities included implementation of policies and procedures, training of new employees, interfacing with subordinates and vendors,” **try** “Worked with staff and vendors to increase product turnover by 15% and sales by 23%. Trained 14 new employees, 5 of whom were rapidly promoted.”

Skills

- ❑ Include **computer** skills and name the software programs in which you are proficient.
- ❑ Include **transferable** skills such as communication skills, problem-solving/analytical skills, etc.
- ❑ Include language skills if applicable. (Non-native English speakers should **not** include English since this is assumed.)

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES

You can include some of the following categories as experience in addition to those listed above:

- ❑ Honors/Awards
- ❑ Extracurricular Activities
- ❑ Volunteer Work/Community Service
- ❑ Certifications/Licenses
- ❑ Course Projects
- ❑ Research
- ❑ Publications
- ❑ Presentations

GENERAL RESUME GUIDELINES

- ❑ A resume is a marketing tool, **not** a complete job history. Include **only** the items that will help you get the job you want. Leave off anything that won't. Try to **target** your resume to a specific position or industry.
- ❑ Your resume should be **one to two full pages** in length, but preferably only one full page.
- ❑ Your document should look **balanced**, be pleasing to the eye, and be **easy to read**.
- ❑ Your resume format (bolding, italics, etc.) **must be consistent** throughout your document.
- ❑ The body text should not be too small (**no less than 10 pt.**) or too large (**no more than 12 pt.**).
- ❑ Do **not** use personal pronouns like “me” and “I.”
- ❑ Use consistent and **proper punctuation**.
- ❑ Do **not** include a list of professional references. This should be a **separate** document in the same format as your resume.
- ❑ It is unnecessary to include a statement at the bottom of your resume that refers to the availability of your references. However, you may want to include a statement at the bottom of your resume that let's the reader know that you have a professional portfolio for review/to share.
- ❑ Run a **spell check AND proofread** carefully. You should also get at least two additional people to proofread your resume.

**For more information on resumes, go to the VCC web site at
*www.vanderbilt.edu/career.***

Resume Samples

Student-Athlete With No Paid Work Experience

Christina Smith

123 Station B
Nashville, TN 37240
(615) 555-5555

ChrisSmith@vanderbilt.edu

- OBJECTIVE** A challenging position in sales and customer service (optional)
- SUMMARY**
- Student-athlete who excelled in Division I athletics
 - Devoted an average of 30 hours per week to conditioning, practices, meetings, films, travel and game competitions
 - Demonstrated leadership, teamwork, and time management skills that I will apply to my business career
- EDUCATION** *Bachelor of Arts*, English, May 2011
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN
GPA: 2.89/4.00
- Relevant Coursework**
Fundamentals of Oral Communication Interpersonal Communications
Public Speaking Practical Writing
- EXPERIENCE** **Team Captain, Women's Basketball**
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, Aug 2007 - May 2011
- Achieved 100% attendance at practices and games for three consecutive years
 - Oversaw the smooth operation of the women's basketball team
 - Met with coaching staff on an on-going basis to address issues regarding team cohesiveness; and adherence to team, VU, and NCAA Guidelines
 - Scouted high school talent; provided tours of campus and athletic facilities to prospective student-athletes and their parents
 - Assisted coaches with teammates' stretching, conditioning, and nutrition guidance
 - Performed other duties assigned by Coaching Staff or Athletic Administrators
 - Learned and executed the policies and procedures governed by the NCAA
- SKILLS**
- Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint. Type 45 wpm
 - Strong public speaker: Conducted numerous presentations to school groups and gymnastic clubs on the importance of education, conditioning, and competition
- ACTIVITIES**
- Participated in VU's Life Skills Program for Student-Athletes- served on the SAAC committee
 - Attended meetings on such topics as sports betting, alcohol abuse, and career planning
 - Served as a positive role model to incoming athletes, offered suggestions and guidance regarding college life, and balancing academics and athletics

Student-Athlete With Considerable Work Experience

Christina Smith

123 Station B
Nashville, TN 37240
(615) 555-5555

ChrisSmith@vanderbilt.edu

- OBJECTIVE** A position in the field of Sales or Marketing (optional)
- EDUCATION** *Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies*, May 2011
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN
Emphasis: **Organizational/Corporate Communication** , GPA: 3.16/4.00
- PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**
- Customer Service/Sales Representative**, *AT&T Broadband*, Atlanta, GA, Summer 2010
- Handled customer inquiries concerning services and billing statements
 - Created work orders for new and existing accounts
 - Provided quality customer service for a high volume incoming call center
- Interviewer**, *Nashville Metropolitan Health Department*, Nashville, TN, Summer 2009
- Compiled and entered responses on computerized database
 - Conducted phone surveys regarding public health concerns, medical visitations, and familiarity with local health services
- Marketing Research Associate**, *The Nielson Company*, New York, NY, Summer 2009
- Conducted phone surveys for major corporations (McDonalds, Kraft Foods, Altoids)
 - Entered responses on proprietary computerized database
 - Gained first-hand knowledge of strategic market analysis to identify product growth
 - Learned procedures for initiating improvements in marketing targeting consumers
- ACTIVITIES**
- Social Chair**, *Sigma Chi Fraternity*, Aug 2009 –Dec 2010
- Conducted social and recreational events with other student organizations
 - Arranged volunteer activities for 12 members at a local homeless shelter
- Activities and Events Chair**, *Kids Zone*, Sept 2008 - May 2009
- Created and organized events for local children to participate in recreational sport activities
 - Scheduled two motivational speakers
- Volunteer**, *Nashville Mission*, Aug 2008 - Present
- Serve food to homeless during the holidays
 - Assist with food and clothing drives
- ATHLETICS**
- Attended Vanderbilt’s athletic scholarship, 4 year member of Men’s Football Team
 - Elected Captain by teammates and coaches two years, 2009, 2010
 - Voted “Most Inspirational” Player by teammates, 2008
- COMPUTER SKILLS** • MS Word, Works, PowerPoint, Excel, Access; Adobe Illustrator

Cover Letters

Some Good Advice

- If the job you're applying for requires specific skills that you possess and applied as an athlete (e.g., time management, multi-tasking, leadership, competitiveness, self-discipline, teamwork), emphasize these qualities in the **cover letter**.
- Your cover letter is a writing sample, so it is vital that it be neat, well written, and free of typos.
- Use the same letterhead, font and paper as the resume (24 pound bond, white or ivory paper).
- Tailor the cover letter for the position to which you are applying. Research the company and position prior to writing the cover letter. Refer to aspects of the company and/or position to which you are best suited.
- Create a separate **reference list** using the same letterhead, font and paper as the resume and cover letter. Only give it to the recruiter when it is requested. Avoid "personal references" (friends, family). Include employers, professors, administrators, and coaches who can speak to your work ethic, responsibility, intelligence and maturity.





Cover Letter Sample

Vanderbilt University Station B
Box 350001
Nashville, TN 37235-0001
February 27, 2010

Ms. Debbie Brown
Abra Cadabra Investments
123 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10013

Dear Ms. Brown:

I enjoyed speaking with you at the Vanderbilt Industry Career Day about opportunities at Abra Cadabra Investments. As a senior majoring in Human and Organizational Development and minoring in Economics, I am very interested in seeking a full-time position with Abra Cadabra. I intend to pursue a career in investment banking after graduation and through my research have found your firm to be a leader in this industry.

From my enclosed resume, you will see that I possess knowledge and experience in multiple business settings. My major, which is designed to foster a broad range of knowledge and skills for understanding, helping, motivating, and managing people, has helped me develop skills to effectively work in group settings and be successful with clients. My position as a Financial Analysis Intern with Microdell Computer Corporation helped me to learn to analyze situations and data, and synthesize the information into a working solution. Being a member and a team captain with the Basketball team at Vanderbilt has taught me how to work effectively in a team environment and how to be an extremely hard worker.

If you need any additional information, please contact me at 615-343-1111, or sara.a.athlete@vanderbilt.edu. I look forward to the opportunity to interview with Abra Cadabra when you are on campus.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Sara A. Athlete

Enclosure

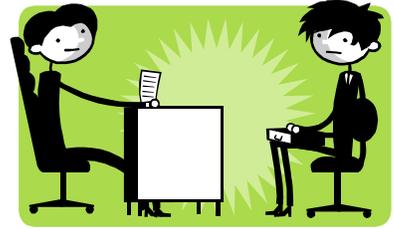
Cover Letter Checklist

	YES	NO
The introduction paragraph indicated the specific position or field I am seeking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I read only the first sentence of each paragraph, I get the message of the cover letter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My purpose for sending the letter to the reader is clear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My introductory paragraph motivates the reader to continue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I demonstrate interest in the organization/field.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I address specific skills, experiences, or education that the organization/field is seeking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have used the CAR method to give a comprehensive example, demonstrating how the skills were developed and how they will benefit the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My cover letter “flows” smoothly. Similar skills are grouped in the same paragraph.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have thanked the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My contact information is included (phone # and email address).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have indicated my next step.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My cover letter comes off as personal, warm, and professional.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have used active voice and action verbs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My sentences are easy-to-read, with varied structure and length.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My cover letter is in a business letter format.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are no spelling or grammatical errors in my cover letter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have signed my cover letter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Interviews

What to Wear at a Job Interview & Job Fair

First impressions are crucial in an interview situation. The clothes you wear, your hairstyle, everything that a recruiter knows about you before you say hello – all are part of that important first impression. If you haven't bought a suit yet and aren't sure what to look for, get a knowledgeable friend or salesperson to help you choose a good quality, multi-seasonal, **conservative business suit**. Avoid salespeople who encourage you to select from "the latest styles." How many suits will you need for your interviews? Probably just one. Recruiters don't expect you to have a large wardrobe, just an appropriate one, so don't feel at a disadvantage if you have to wear the same suit to more than one interview with the same employer. You can vary the look of suit with a change of shirt or blouse (always spotless and wrinkle-free) and tie.



Hair - You don't have to choose an ultra-conservative style that just isn't you – but you do need to help the recruiter focus on you and what you're saying rather than your haircut. Your hairstyle needs to "travel" well. Before most interviews you'll be lucky if you have time to comb your hair much less attempt a major restoration. Women - lose those pretty hair bows; they just don't work with a suit. If you need a barrette for a pulled-back style, choose a simple design in metal or tortoise-shell.

Shoes - Shine your shoes. Men - wing tips or brogues (shoes with laces) are preferable to slippers. Women – go with plain or moderately adorned low-heeled pumps. No sling-backs or open toes.

Socks & Stockings - Gentlemen – always wear dark dress socks that cover your legs when you sit down. Ladies - a color that is very different from your own skin color is usually a mistake. Your legs should be "leg colored." Do not try to match your stockings to your suit. White stockings aren't quite as bad as white socks on the guys - they're just a mistake

Accessories - Nothing that jingles, glitters, or otherwise attracts attention (e.g., pinky rings, ankle bracelets, and over-sized earrings). Should a man wear an earring? Perhaps. But if he does, he should know that some recruiters will feel that an earring may not fit the company image. And cover those tattoos. If you carry a portfolio, briefcase, or purse, it should look tidy and professional. If you have your book bag with you, leave it with the receptionist so you don't have to lug it into your interview.

Fragrance - Many people are allergic to or bothered by strong scents. Hair styling potions are often heavily scented as well. Heavy fragrances may prompt your recruiter to cut your interview short.

Other Things To Think About - Makeup - simple, conservative, natural, professional. Fingernails – clean and tidy. Eyeglasses – clean. And attend to your personal hygiene –fresh breath, no body odor, and your clothes should not smell of cigarette smoke or spicy foods.

10 Steps to a Successful Interview Experience

1. Do your research!

1. Research the Industry, the Company and **Review** Additional Resources

-Use *CareerSearch* and other resources to research the company. Know the competitors, news, where the headquarters are, parent companies, mission, company values, key people, etc.

-Use *Vault and Careers by Major*(see VCC website) as well as other resources to research the industry. Know the top companies and key players in the industry, industry trends, hot spots, salary trends, etc.

-*Other Resources:*

Career Planning Guide (CPG)

Hoovers: Provides company profiles and industry information of over 21 million companies.

Fortune's Best 100 Companies and Fortune 500

Wetfeet: comprehensive website containing information about careers and industries.

Occupational Outlook Handbook: information about more than 200 career fields from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2. Attend employer information sessions.

Attend the many company presentations hosted by those unique employers that have a relationship with Vanderbilt. This is your opportunity to network with and learn from company representatives who want to share the inside scoop with you! RSVP in CareerLink to reserve your spot.

3. Participate in VCC events, such as industry career days and Total Access programs.

Take advantage of these "tailor made" educational events with employer panels, networking, industry overviews and more. RSVP in CareerLink to save your spot to connect with top industry players!

4. Develop your "elevator speech."

An elevator speech is a quick way to let people know what you are looking for, and what you have to offer. Someone who hears it should come away with a memorable sense of you and the selected accomplishments you're proud of. Answer these questions as you plan your 60-second elevator speech:

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE- Before writing any part of your elevator speech, research your audience.

KNOW YOURSELF - Before you can convince anyone of your proposition you need to know exactly what it is. You need to define precisely what you are offering, what problems you can solve and what benefits you bring to a prospective contact or employers

OUTLINE YOUR TALK - start an outline of your information using bullet points.

FINALIZE YOUR SPEECH - Now that you have your outline of your material, you can finalize the speech. The key to doing this is to expand on the notes you made by writing out each section in full.

5. Conduct a virtual mock interview

Practice makes Perfect, Practice makes Perfect, Practice makes Perfect...

-Conduct your virtual mock interview using our new software InterviewStream".

This will allow you to conduct a simulated interview, video your responses and email the recorded interview to up to three persons. Schedule your appointment today by calling 615-322-2750!

-Participate in Mock InterVU week. Hosted by the CareerCenter in the Fall and Spring, this is your chance to receive feedback from local employers and alums after conducting a face-to face mock interview. See CareerLink for sign up dates!

6. Be able to answer an employer's request to "walk me through your resume."

- Know your resume and be prepared to walk the recruiter through your resume in 2-3 minutes
- Bring extra copies of your resume
- Don't focus on every detail
- Explain why you chose your university, job, or internship. Focus on what was different about that school/job and how it fits with your career plans
- Add a few details not included on your resume
- Maintain eye contact – do not read straight from your resume.

7. Prepare for behavioral interview questions and know the "CAR" Method (Challenge, Action, Result).

- Research common behavioral interview questions and compile a list of specific examples to support your answers
- Practice answering interview questions using the "CAR" Method
- Challenge: Give an example of a situation in which you were involved that resulted in a positive outcome
- Action: Talk about the various actions involved in achieving the outcome
- Result: What results directly followed because of your actions?

8. Dress appropriately for the interview and demonstrate appropriate mannerisms during the interview.

During an interview remember to be personable as well as professional, and above all be polite to everyone you meet. Do not chew gum, smoke, swear, or use slang. Be aware of your body language, vibes, and reactions - use your instincts to keep things on course. Maintain eye contact. Watch your posture and be aware of your mannerisms. A student's professional image is an important part of the job search, especially during the interview process. A polished "dress for success" appearance creates a positive first impression and is essential so that the employer can move on to learning more about the you and your qualifications without any distractions or hesitancy. It is important for you to invest in professional looking attire with colors and designs that are appropriate for the industry and that convey confidence. Visit www.symsdress.com for additional information on appropriate dress for an interview.

9. Be able to answer the "Three Whys" (Why you, Why the Company, Why the Industry).

Employers are looking to hire students who are articulate and can express who they are and why they are interested in a particular company and/or industry. Be sure you can convey to an employer your Three Why's:

1. Why you. Be able to discuss your values, interests, skills, and career goals, and how these attributes are applicable to the position for which you are interviewing. Be able to tell the employer why you are a good fit for the position, and be ready to answer the question, "Why should we hire you?"

2. Why the company. Employers want to know that you are interested in their company specifically. Do your research, and be able to discuss in detail at least three reasons why you are interested in a particular company.

3. Why the industry. Employers seek candidates who are committed to making a successful contribution to their industry. Be able to discuss with the interviewer: why you chose this particular industry (why it appeals to you, what led to your decision to pursue a career within the industry, etc.); your knowledge of industry trends; and your career goals within the industry.

10. Follow-up after the interview.

- Before you leave the interview, be sure to get contact information for each interviewer. The Career Center may not always be able to get this information for you.

- Know who makes the next move. Find out from the employers when they expect to make their hiring decision. If an employer has not contacted you by the agreed upon date, then it is okay for you to contact the employer for an update.

- Send a thank you note within 24 hours to each employer who interviewed you. Most candidates never send thank you notes after their interviews; doing so can help you stand out from the crowd, and it's the polite and professional thing to do.



Internships and Jobs

Quick Ideas to Get Started on your Internship or Job Search:

- Consider your skills, interests, and values
- Identify the types of jobs in which you are interested and those in which you are not. Use job descriptions from companies, recommendations from friends, and the Career Center's Resource Center to help you narrow your scope. Remember that during a tight economy, you may need to be more flexible in your search.
- Visit the Career Center to familiarize yourself with our Resource Center. Check our Web site at www.vanderbilt.edu/career for the weekly Coaching Assessments and Resume Critique times.
- Understand the differences in companies: Fortune 500 vs. non-profit vs. small to mid-size vs. privately held.
- Identify the types of companies and geographic locations that interest you.
- Create a target list of potential employers for your own off-campus search.
- Attend the Fall Industry Career Day(s) to network with employers and practice your communication skills. Don't forget to dress in business attire!
- Know your online resources available at the VCC's website:
 1. *CareerLink* via the Career Center's website is the primary tool for managing student and employer information, job and internship postings, programs and important dates, and on-campus interviewing.
 2. The *VUCONNECT* at www.vuconnect.com is a database of over 13,000 alumni contacts located in metropolitan areas across the country who have volunteered to help current students and alumni with career advice.
 3. *CareerSearch* is a database of professional databases. Accessed via the Career Center's website, it is used for locating company information.

Some Common Mistakes Job Seekers Make

- 1) Not knowing what they want to do
- 2) Not taking the initiative
- 3) Having too few prospects
- 4) Not viewing employment from an employer's perspective
- 5) Being too direct
- 6) Not targeting correct organizations
- 7) Approaching prospects too informally
- 8) Having an unfocused resume
- 9) Overlooking selling points
- 10) Not following through

The Search Process: A Step-by-Step Guide

How can an internship benefit you? Exposure, Experiment, Experience, Skills, Knowledge, Getting your “foot in the door.” **Also know that many of these resources and steps in the process can be used in the Job Search as well.**

❖ GETTING STARTED

- What kind of experience are you looking for?
- What do you want to gain from it?
- Where would you like to be?
 - Specific industry:
 - Specific company:
 - Specific location:
- What would you like to be doing?
 - Job function:
 - Department:
 - Responsibilities:



❖ WHAT TO DO

80% of internships are gained through

NETWORKING.

Networking- making connections, talking to people, and keeping in contact

- Family, friends, neighbors, professors, and alumni.
- Visit www.vuconnect.com and set up an account
 - A database of over 11,000 alumni who have volunteered to provide career advice
- Informational interviewing** can be an incredibly helpful process
 - This is not a job interview; it is a way to attain information about a specific career or industry
 - Ask about other people you could contact who do have information about internships opportunities
 - Send a thank you note and be sure to keep in contact

❖ OTHER RESOURCES

20% of internships are gained through posted positions.

- CareerLink:** www.vanderbilt.edu/career
 - Career Center calendar of events
 - Job and internship postings
 - Employer websites and contacts
 - Student documents for electronic submission
 - The on-campus interview process
 - For technical assistance call 322-2750
- UCAN:** www.vanderbilt.edu/career
 - A consortium of over 1,800 internships
 - See instructions on website to set up an account

- ❑ www.internships-usa.com: Browse online the 14 publications and learn about specific employer internship programs in the areas of sports, advertising, government/public policy law, human rights, media, and many more.

❖ **PREPARE** Before you apply

❑ **Resumes and Cover letters**

- If you don't know where to start, try using Optimal Resume, a resume and cover letter building software.
- Have a career coach give you constructive criticism
- Meet with a Career Coach one on one to review your resume. Call 615-322-2750 to sign up for a time.

❑ **The Interview**

- Check out typical interview questions and prepare some answers
- Ask a contact in the field, a family member, friend, or a professor to conduct a practice interview with you.
- Practice your interviewing skills via Optimal Interview

**If you have any questions or want additional help,
contact: careercenter@vanderbilt.edu or 615-322-2750.**



Sports-related Careers

The following is a list of job titles and career fields that people who have an interest in Sports may want to consider pursuing:

Human Services

Academic Athletic Adviser
Athletic Counselor
Sports Psychologist

Arts

Athletic Apparel Designer
Equipment Designer
Events Manager: Stadiums/Arenas
Landscape Architect: Athletic Areas
Sports Illustrator
Sports Photographer

Sports/Fitness

Coach
College Intramural Program Director
Health Club Manager
Official/Referee
Personal Trainer
Professional Athlete
Team Manager
Team Scout

Science/Health

Athletic Trainer
Physical Therapist
Recreation Therapist
Sports Biologist
Sports Medical Doctor
Sports Nutritionist
Sports Physiologist

Communications

Publications Writer
Sports Advertising Executive
Sportscaster: Radio/TV
Sports Information Director
Sports Journalist
Sports Marketing Executive
Team Public Relations Director

Other

Agent/Player Representative
Athletic Director
Physical Education Teacher
Sport and Recreation Facilities Planner
Sports Historian

To learn more about these and other job titles and career fields, check out the following resources.

Occupational Outlook Handbook – information about more than 200 career fields from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

Wetfeet – comprehensive website containing information about careers and industries.
<http://www.wetfeet.com>

Princeton Review – detailed information about a wide variety of career fields.
<http://www.review.com/career/>

Graduate School

Place a check mark in front of those answers that best describe why you are thinking of pursuing

Graduate or Professional School (Remember to be honest with yourself):

1.) ___ I have heard it is difficult to get a job with my major, so an advanced degree will make me more marketable to employers.

Reality: Employers will look at your major. However, most employers are looking for your experience.

What skills, attitudes, and abilities can you contribute to help in the success of the organization?
You CAN find a job with any major.

2.) ___ I don't know what I want to do and additional education will help me clarify my interests.

Reality: Frequently students who pursue advanced study for this reason find themselves still confused about their career interests and frustrated with what they feel was a waste of time, energy, and money for a degree they don't want to use. Often they find themselves having made a commitment to a profession that they didn't want to pursue. There is no time like the present to explore and clarify your goals.

3.) ___ The career path I have carefully chosen requires immediate specialized study.

Reality: There are careers that require specialized study in order to pursue them. When you have made an educated and informed decision that your future plan and your personal and professional path requires advanced study, then it is time to pursue an advanced degree.

4.) ___ I should pursue an advanced degree now, while I still remember how to study and don't have other financial commitments such as a family.

Reality: While it may be more challenging to complete academic work due to competing needs, you will not lose your ability to perform academic tasks. When you determine that your career path necessitates pursuing an advanced degree, you will find the resources and the means to achieve your goal.

5.) ___ I feel comfortable in the academic environment and am not yet ready for the responsibility of a work role.

Reality: Many times this is the real reason students pursue Graduate or Professional School. While the "real world" can seem scary and overwhelming, and the familiar academic environment feels safe, you can do it! There is so much out there for you to experience and learn about yourself and the world.

6.) ___ I must pursue graduate school in a program associated with my major. (My major is English; therefore, I must pursue a Master's or PhD in English.)

Reality: When choosing a graduate program, your current major is less important than your career goals. If you are an English major but aspire to work in the field of Public Policy, then pursuing a Master's program with a Public Policy focus would better help you to achieve your career goals than a Master's in English.



To Go or Not to Go....

Pursuing Graduate or Professional School (hereafter referred to as GPS) is not a decision that should be taken lightly, nor is it one that can be made last minute. Each year more and more individuals are attending and obtaining advanced degrees, only to feel upon completion that they have no clear direction. Some of the individuals pursued an advanced degree for one of the reasons above. GPS is an extensive commitment of both time and resources, not to mention it is hard work!

Choosing a Graduate or Professional School

After you have decided that pursuing a GPS degree is the right decision for you, it is time to explore what the right school and program is for you. Many students immediately look for some type of rankings for their specialization of interest. While this can be a starting point, remember that rankings all have different criteria, many of which are subjective. Do you want to make a decision based solely on someone else's opinion? It is a good idea to take some time to determine what is important to you and then gather the information on how various programs meet your needs. Some criteria to get you thinking are below:

Quality of the Program: Does the program teach primarily introductory classes, or does it go beyond? Does the concentration of the program coincide with your goals? Is the program properly accredited and respected for work in your desired field?

Faculty: Are the faculty members well-published? Where have they published? What are they currently researching? Does this research match your interests? Are they available or always traveling?

Students: What is the student population? How large is the graduate program? What is the student/faculty ratio?

What is the average age of the students enrolled? Do students attend primarily full- or part-time?

Location: Where is the school located? What is the climate? What recreational activities are available? What is the social climate? Can you be happy in this environment for the duration of your program?

Finances: What is the tuition for the program? What kind of financial assistance is available? Do they have graduate/teaching/research assistantships, loans, fellowships?

The Future: Does the program assist with the job search after you receive your degree? Where do the graduates end up working? What internship, research, and job opportunities are available while you are in the program?

Admissions: What are the admissions criteria? How competitive are you?

A good way to start the process of selecting your GPSs is to establish a comprehensive list of possible programs. One place to locate this information is on Thomson Peterson's Web site at www.petersons.com. You can also often find this information on a Professional Association's website. For example, the "American College Personnel Association" lists graduate programs

for Higher Education, and the “American Psychological Association” lists graduate programs in Psychology.

The Application Process

Once you have selected those schools where you want to apply, you must identify their application process. While the various Graduate and Professional Schools have their own nuances, there are a few general parts:

1. The application form
2. Standardized test scores
3. Personal Statements/writing samples/articles
4. Letters of Recommendation
5. Transcripts of all past academic work
6. Financial Aid application

Standardized Tests

The majority of GPSs will require standardized testing. You will need to identify which test is necessary for the program you are pursuing. Some tests are computer-based, and others are paper-based. The most common standardized tests are:

GRE - Graduate Record Examination

The general GRE is required by most graduate programs, whereas the subject GREs are only required by some.

The general GRE is administered at computer centers across the U.S. and abroad. You must call to set up an individual appointment. The subject GREs are paper-based and only administered at certain times during the year. For registration information on both, visit www.gre.org.

LSAT - Law School Admission Test

This test is required for consideration of admission into any school approved by the American Bar Association.

The LSAT is paper-based and offered only at designated times throughout the year. To obtain registration information, visit www.lsat.org.

MCAT - Medical College Admission Test

The MCAT is required for admission consideration in most medical schools. This test is offered by Thomson

Prometric computer sites. To find out more information about the test and how to set up a test date, visit

www.aamc.org.

GMAT - Graduate Management Admission Test

This test is required by most MBA schools. The GMAT is offered only by computer.

There are computer centers throughout the U.S. and overseas. Visit www.gmat.org to find additional information.

DAT – Dental Admissions Test

Dental Admission Test (DAT) is conducted by the Council on Dental Education of the American Dental Association. The DAT is a computerized exam. Registration for the DAT is set up through the Dental Admission Testing Program. The test itself is administered at Sylvan Technology Test Centers in the United States. Visit <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/index.asp> to learn more.

TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language

This test is required of those individuals for whom English is not their native tongue. It does not replace any of the other tests and measures one's level of proficiency in the English language. The results of these standardized tests often have significant bearing on the admission committee's decision. Therefore, it is very important that you take these tests seriously.

Personal Statements

Often this part of the application is the most challenging. Allow adequate time to complete your personal statement. It typically takes several drafts to come up with a theme you like, and you want to allow time for possible writer's block. Remember this is sometimes the ONE and ONLY chance you get to personalize your application. You want to make the best possible impression! The personal statement content will vary, depending on the type of GPS to which you are applying. For example, if you are applying to a Molecular Biology or a Psychology PhD program, the admissions committee is going to be interested in your past research experience, your future career/research goals, and why their program is of interest to you. It is important that you talk to professors and department chairs in your field of interest so that you can gather the types of information for which your programs of interest will be looking in your personal statement.

Letters of Recommendation

Recommendations are another area in which planning early is important. Most schools will want two to three letters of recommendation. Whom to choose is a common question students have. You will need to consider the type of program to which you are applying. Ideally, you will want at least one recommendation from a professor in your field. If your field does not have a "major" associated with it, you will want at least one recommender from your major. It is important that you choose your recommenders carefully. Admission committees can tell the difference between a strong letter and a weak letter of recommendation. They can read between the lines, and a comment such as "John Doe frequently complained of the difficulty he had with trying to understand what grassroots groups in the south were really all about." or "Although he is not inherently curious about all subjects, he is a capable student." can often hurt an applicant. Identify professors you feel know you, your skills, abilities, and accomplishments well and can and would make a strong case for why you would be an asset to your program of choice. Additionally, you want a recommender who can speak to your abilities in comparison to those of your peers and someone



who is able to evaluate your performance in the same terminology as the members of the admissions committee.

Transcripts

You will be asked to submit an official transcript from every institution of higher education you have attended. You will need to obtain the forms required from each school to release your transcript. Try calling the Office of the Registrar at other schools you have attended. At Vanderbilt, visit their Web site at <http://www.registrar.vanderbilt.edu>. Make sure you allow plenty of time for your transcript request to be processed and sent.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid is not automatic, and many times, you will need to fill out financial aid forms with your application. If you are seeking financial assistance, make sure you ask for the proper forms as early as possible. Many schools have one pot of money from which they draw financial aid, be it grants, scholarships, assistantships, etc. Once this money is gone, it is gone. For this reason, the earlier you apply for financial assistance, the better your chances of receiving it.

Financial Aid from GPS's typically comes in several forms:

- **Subsidized Loans** – in the form of the Guaranteed Student Loan Program. These offer reasonable interest rates, and you are not required to begin paying them back until after you graduate. There are three primary loans: Stafford Loans, Perkins Loans, and Supplemental Loans for Students (SLS). Ask the graduate school for the office on campus that you should contact regarding these loans.
- **Research Assistantships** – You assist a professor with research and are compensated for it. Many times, you will have your tuition waived or partially waived and receive a monthly stipend. Other times, you will simply receive a fixed monthly stipend.
- **Teaching Assistantship** – Typically you teach a basic level course or lab and are compensated with a stipend and a full or partial tuition waiver.
- **Administrative/Graduate Assistantships** - You work in an administrative office on campus and receive compensation in return.
- **Fellowships** – These are offered to the most outstanding students and few are available. They are awarded by institutions, the government, and private organizations. Most of the time these grants include free tuition and a stipend and do not have a work requirement
- **Additional** – There are other forms of financial assistance that you can seek, such as a Graduate Resident Adviser, campus job, and internship opportunities.





Commodore Career Connection

The Commodore Career Connection (C3) will build a bridge between you and former Vanderbilt student-athletes by providing professional contact information to job, internship and mentor-seeking student-athletes. This will allow you the opportunity to explore different industries, get advice and network in preparation for your post-Vanderbilt careers.

This networking program is a way to connect two groups of people that share similar educational backgrounds and college experiences.

An example of some former student-athlete's current jobs:

Director of Corporate Tax Consulting, PriceWaterhouseCoopers

Basketball Coach/Teacher, Brentwood Academy

Manager of Business Process Improvements, Coca Cola Corporation

LA County Deputy District Attorney

Director of Sales, Nike Corporation

Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Protection Agency

Orthopedic Surgeon, Ortho Arkansas

If you are interested in contacting a former student-athlete with questions about their career path, please stop by Life Skills Coordinator Alison Wenzel's office in the Academic Center to see the entire database.

If you have any questions, call Alison at 615-343-5463 or email at alison.wenzel@vanderbilt.edu