COM Career Development
Guide to Landing the Right Job/Internship

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COM Career Development
640 Commonwealth Ave. Room 112
(617) 353-3490
comjobs@bu.edu
bu.edu/com/career-development
careers-bu-com-csm.symplicity.com
11 Steps to a Successful Job Search

1. Update your BU CareerLink profile. Make sure your profile is 100% complete so you can request resume appointments and apply for jobs.

2. Update your LinkedIn profile. Include your work history, a photo, a summary, and a headline to start.

3. Connect on LinkedIn. Use the Find Alumni feature to locate people in your industry. Connect to classmates, professors, and co-workers to increase your network.

4. Search for jobs and internships. Start on CareerLink with the CSM job search to find positions in Boston and nationally. Search for jobs by location on LinkedIn. Look at trade and industry resources for more job boards and search sites.

5. Research positions and companies so you can use industry keywords in your application.

6. Update your resume and cover letter. Tailor your documents to each position you apply to.

7. Find people who can serve as references or write you a letter of recommendation.

8. Sign up for a resume review appointment to make sure your documents are in great shape before you submit your applications.

9. Keep track of your applications. Make a list of when and where you applied and who you emailed.

10. Prep for interviews with practice questions and mock interviews.

11. Say thank you to any recommenders and interviewers.
CareerLink Tips

Log in to BU CareerLink at https://careers-bu-com-csm.symphlicity.com/students/

To update your profile:
Click the graduation cap on the left side and add any missing information to your account.

To search for jobs:
Click the briefcase on the left side and then on “CSM Jobs.” From there, click on “Advanced Search” at the right to search by keyword, location, and type of position.

Star jobs or follow companies you’re interested in to easily access them the next time you log in.

To upload documents:
Click on the paper icon on the left side. Upload resumes or cover letters to BU CareerLink. One of the COM Career Development Resume Specialists will approve or reject the first document you upload.

To apply for jobs:
Once we approve your documents, and find the perfect job, click the apply button. There’ll you’ll be able to attach your relevant documents and easily apply.

See your pending applications to keep track of your job search progress.

To sign up for a resume review:
From the home page, click on “Request a Counseling Appointment” on the right side of the page. Select the counselor names and find a time that works for your schedule. Select the time and Submit Request. You’ll get an email confirming your appointment so you can add it to your calendar.

RSVP for events:
Click on the signpost icon on the left side and find upcoming career fairs, information sessions, and workshops to attend. Network with companies and learn more career development strategies.
Job Search & Research Resources

Job Searching

- BU CareerLink provides job and internship postings specific to BU students. Upload your documents, save favorite jobs, apply through the CareerLink website, and track your applications.
- LinkedIn: use the job search function to find open internships at your favorite companies. Use the people search to network with connections at companies. Learn more about networking.
- Trade magazines: look at the top trade magazines for your industry to find job boards and internship leads.

- Usa.gov
- USchamber.com
- Idealist.org (nonprofit organizations)

Industry Resources

ADVERTISING

AdClub: Jobs, agency directory, classes, Brandathon

Advertising Age: Lookbooks, job search, salary info, creativity info, news, events

Advertising Educational Foundation: Career advice, ad agency structure, articles, guides, list of ad associations

American Advertising Federation: Job bank, student competition, career fairs

American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As): Multicultural Advertising Intern Program (MAIP), job search/board, scholarships, ad agency job descriptions

Advertising Crossing: Job search, job board, career tips

FILM & TV

Entertainment Careers: Studio structure, job board, salary info

Film & TV Pro: Film crew job board/search

Get Film Jobs: Employer profiles & jobs, creative job board & search, film blogs & resources

Mandy.com: Job board, listings for production jobs

Massachusetts Film Office: Casting & crew calls, events

Media Match: Company list/profiles, job search/board, list of industry professionals w/profiles

PUBLIC RELATIONS

O’Dwyer’s PR: PR firm listing & ranking, company profiles

PR Council: Job board, PR firm finder, industry member profiles

PR Crossing: Job search, job board, PR Career tips

PR News: Job board, articles, events, PR firm finder, list of PR Links

PR Week: Job list/search, PR agencies list with info (good for company research for job apps), articles, case studies

JOURNALISM

Massachusetts Broadcasters Association: Radio and TV Jobs, events, resources

American Society of Magazine Editors: Magazine job board, internship, resources, awards, events

Journalism Jobs: Job board/search, resources for journalism research, fellowships, awards, salaries, career articles

Corporation for Public Broadcasting: Jobs, internships, funding, reports
Guide to Finding & Landing the Right Job or Internship

Application Research

Researching a company is integral to a strong application and interview. Not only does it help you appear more knowledgeable, guided research takes the guesswork out of applications. The more you know about what the company is, does, and is looking for, the more you can target your application. A well-researched application shows industry awareness, dedication, and attention to details.

Where to look

- Job posting
- Company website
- LinkedIn
- Wall Street Journal
- Industry journals
- Annual reports
- Press releases
- Current and former employers (connect via LinkedIn, alum directory, CareerLink, etc.)
- Guidestar.org (non-profits)
- Careeronestop.org (U.S. Department of Labor)

What to look for

Start with the job description to understand the position.
- Analyze the posting. What skills are they asking for? How many years of experience? What majors or degrees do they want?
- Which skills are actually required for the job?
- What skills do you need from day one? What can you learn in the course of the job?
- What kind of personality do they want in a candidate? What kinds of soft skills do you need?
- What programs, equipment will you be using?
- How is the job structured? Who will you work with?

Use the company’s website to find out about its goals, products, and trivia.
- Figure out what the company and the department do. How does the department fit in the company?
- Figure out the organizational overview. How big is the company (number of employees and locations)? How long has it been around?
- Is it public? Private? Non-profit?
- Who’s in charge?
- Who are the clients?
- Where is it located (locally or around the world)? Where would you work?
- How is the company involved with the community?
- Does it donate to or volunteer at charities?
- What’s the company culture? What are some employee perks? What opportunities are available for advancement, learning, or training?
- What’s their mission statement? Their objectives?
- How do their goals, opportunities, and positions fit with you and your goals?

Look on third party sites (LinkedIn, news sites, etc) to research the industry.
- Who are the competitors? How do they compare?
- How much is the company worth? How are stocks doing (long and short term)?
- What are some challenges they face? What are some of their strengths?
- What are trends in the industry?
- How has it evolved over time? Stayed constant?
- Why is it in the news? Have there been any big recent leadership changes?
- What’s the reputation?
- Is it downsizing? Growing?
- How long do people tend to work there? Why do they leave? What do they go on to next?
- What kind of experience do employees in your department have?
Strategizing the Application

Applying for jobs can be daunting, but it doesn’t have to be. These steps will help you avoid application stress and create the strongest submission possible.

STEP 1: Analyze the job description
Does the job interest you? Are you qualified? Do you have most of the required skills?

Save the job description. It won’t be posted forever, and you’ll need to reference it while writing the application and prepping for interviews.

Go through the posting carefully. Highlight qualifications integral to the position. Look for potential keywords. Note anything you can prove through previous experience.

What skills are they asking for? How many years of experience? What degrees or majors? What programs or equipment?

How is the job structured? Who will you be working with?

What skills do you need upon arrival? Which can be learned on the job?

For your own career planning (not the application): How would this position help you further your career through experience, connections, or skills? What do you hope to gain from this position?

STEP 2: Research the company
You know the basics of the position. What the department and organization basics?

How does your position fit into the organization as a whole? What role does it serve?

Find the name, title, and address of the hiring manager online.

What draws you to this company/department? What impresses you? What does the organization value, especially in its employees? How do you demonstrate the company’s goals or align with their values?

Note anything of interest.

STEP 3: Research yourself
Unless you already have an impeccable resume and cover letter flawlessly tailored to this position, it’s a good idea to examine what you have to offer.

What required skills and experience do you have? Which recommended ones? What other valuable skills do you bring?

Make a list of your former jobs, internships, activities, and their job duties.

Are there things you’ve done that demonstrate excellence in a position? Don’t just read through old resumes—think in terms of this position: how does your past experience relate?

Think of things to prove and to demonstrate your qualifications.

STEP 4: Incorporate research Into your application
Organize it
Put all the info in one place and save it until the entire job search is over. If you’re researching while writing the resume/cover letter, you don’t want to have to do all of the research over again once you get an interview.

Personalize your cover letter
Figure out what about the company interests you. Show your enthusiasm and personalize it with specific examples.

Tailor your application
What skills and experience do they value? Show you’ve got what they need. Find a need or weakness in the company. Do you have the means to fill it?

Show you’re savvy
Show understanding of the company, department, and industry in your application.

Prep for your interview
Learn as much as you can about the company. Come up with intelligent, probing questions that you can’t find the answers to online.
Strategizing the Application

STEP 5: Writing the resume
From your job list, select experience that best proves your fit. Create a section for “related” experience that directly corresponds to skills in the posting.

Make another for “additional” experience with less relevant experience. Show your soft skills and employability.

Include company name, job title, location, and start and end dates. Reference the posting—strategically use industry keywords and phrases from the posting. Draw from your research on yourself and the company. Focus on achievements and the needs you can fill.

Keep things clear, concise, direct, and in the active voice. Omit articles (a, an, the) and pronouns. Use strong action verbs and be explicit. Don’t leave things open ended.

Once you have the text, think about formatting. Look at examples on the COM Career Development website. Put your header at the top (include your name and contact info). Play with fonts, margins, and layout until everything fits on one page and you find what works for you.

Edit edit edit. Check for spelling and grammatical errors. Strengthen the writing and clean up formatting. Organize everything by descending importance (strongest, most relevant info at the top of each section).

STEP 6: Writing the cover letter
Copy the header from your resume.

Include the name, job title, and mailing address of the recipient.

Write clearly, concisely, and in full sentences (include pronouns and articles here). Use strong action verbs in the active voice. Show interest and enthusiasm.

Introduce yourself. Designate the position you’re applying for. Who are you in relation to this position? What can you offer specific to the qualifications?

Highlight your skills. Elaborate on select experience. Don’t repeat your resume—go beyond. Do you have a short anecdote or example to prove your skills?

Connect your qualifications back to the position. What do you uniquely bring to the position? How will your personality and work ethic make you an invaluable member of that department? Be specific and positive.

Close on a polite note. Indicate a desire to move forward.

Edit edit edit. Check for spelling and grammar.

Review your resume. Is anything repetitive or missing? Is it skimmable (can someone identify your qualifications in 30 seconds)? Is it tailored (does it describe only you and only that position)?

STEP 7: The whole package
Read through your cover letter and resume together. Do they complement each other? Does the cover letter effectively introduce the resume? Do they elaborate on each other? Do they engage the reader?

Double check everything. Bring in your application to COM Career Development for an outside perspective.

Once you’re confident with everything, send in the application and good luck.
Interviewing

Congrats, you got an interview.

Interviews come in a variety of settings and formats. You might have a phone or Skype interview. There’s the traditional one-on-one in-person behavioral interview. Or, you might have a skills testing, case, or group interview. Often, multiple formats will be used in various stages of the interview process.

Regardless of the format, the goal of the interview process is the same: to determine fit.

PREP

Interviews can be intimidating, but with a little practice, you’ll be fully prepared and ace your interview.

Figure out the details
What format will the interview be? Where will it take place? Figure out how to get there—public transit, parking, room number. If it’s a phone/Skype interview, make sure you’ve exchanged the relevant contact information. Who will be contacting whom?

Bring the goods
Print out copies of your resume. Have multiple copies—more than the number of people you’ll be interviewed by.

Know how to get there
Figure out what stop to use or where to park. Do a trial run if you can.

Get your outfit ready
Dress a little fancier than you would for day-to-day work. It’s fine to be more dressed up than the interviewer. When in doubt, wear business formal attire (black, navy, or dark grey suit or skirt suit; button down shirt; dark shoes—no sandals).

Make sure all pieces of your outfit are clean, well-fitting, in good condition, and match. Shaved face, clean hair and nails, no perfume/cologne, subtle makeup, minimal jewelry, and fresh breath (but no gum chewing or mints during the actual interview). Cover up any tattoos and piercings (besides earrings).

PHONE/SKYPE SPECIFIC TIPS & TRICKS:
Exchange contact info (email and phone/Skype). Determine who is supposed to call whom. Even if they’re calling you, get their phone number and email just in case anything goes wrong.

Add them as a contact to your phone or Skype account beforehand.

Go somewhere quiet
Make sure you have a good connection. Place a test call.

Be early
Be ready in your spot 15 minutes before the allotted time.

Be professional
Dress professionally. Sit up straight. Smile. Although it may feel unnecessary in a phone interview, it’ll come through in your voice and speaking style.

Interviewers are looking for fit in a few main areas: skills, personality, company culture, and work ethic. The company is trying to determine your fit with the organization, job duties, and existing department, but you need to ascertain the same for yourself. In a way, they’re trying to impress you as much as you are them. Use the interview and your research to learn whether the job is right for you.
Interviewing

RESEARCH
In a competitive job market, lack of research can be interpreted as lack of interest. You need to know enough about the company to know if you would take the job. And, enough about yourself, your skills, and their needs, to convince them that you’re the right fit.

Know the company
Learn as much as you can about the organization. Go back to your job application research. Talk to current employees about company culture, goals, and problems. Know the basics: what they do, who they work with, competitors, and industry trends. Be on the lookout for news, strengths, and challenges.

Know the position
Analyze the job posting. Understand the basic job duties. Check LinkedIn for people with similar positions and read their job descriptions.

Find the salary range for that position and location
You may not be asked your salary expectations at first, but you should know the ranges for that position, that location, and your experience.

Know your contact
Who will be interviewing you? Look them up on LinkedIn and the company website. Read staff bios. Understand their role in the organization, find some background info.

Know your skills
Review your resume. Know why you’re interested in the job. Understand your work ethic, how you do your best work. Be prepared to talk about yourself.

Go through your work history and develop basic answers for questions like: “tell me about yourself”, “tell me how you dealt with a difficult customer/co-worker”, “give me an example of a situation in which you worked through a problem to find a solution.”

Remember details
Have specifics for each of these mini-stories. Come up with engaging (true) ways to convey the narratives.

Look over the list of common interview questions (pages 10-11) and be prepared to answer any of them.

PRACTICE
From your resume and cover letter, they’ve already determined a basic fit on paper. Now they want to know how you will do good things for the company.

Tell stories
Most questions will require short but elaborated answers. Usually, there is no right or wrong, and the interviewer wants to see how you communicate and problem solve.

It’s more important to be genuine, authentic, and engaged than tailored exactly for the position. But, if you’re asked a seemingly inane question, think about the underlying purpose of the question: what are they really trying to discern? Most likely, the question is not random and they’re trying to figure out how you think on your feet and solve problems. Think back to your company research. What overarching skills, qualities, goals, and traits are they looking for in a candidate?
Interview Practice

STAR method: The idea is that past experience is the best indicator of future success. It’s used in behavioral interviewing. With STAR, describe the:

**Situation**
What was the context and problem? Who were you working with? What role did you have?

**Task**
Explain how the situation had changed, and how you were expected to address the change. What needed to be done? How were you involved?

**Action**
Clarify the steps you took to address the task. What did you do to resolve the problem? How did you contribute? Demonstrate skills. What was your method?

**Result**
Explain how your actions contributed to the final product. What was the outcome? What did you learn? How did the situation end? Quantify the results if possible.

Practice with Mock Interviews on CareerLink. Here, you can do general industry mock interviews or you can create your own with questions from a variety of fields and topics. Record your answers with a webcam and send the answers to others for feedback.

Mock interview with COM Career Development: Schedule a mock interview with a COM Career Development member to get some additional practice and feedback.

DURING the interview

**Be on time**
Arrive between 15-30 minutes early. To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late, and to be late is to not get the job.

**Be polite to everyone you meet**
Stand up when the interviewer comes to meet you, shake hands firmly, smile, maintain eye contact. Avoid filler words (um, uh, you know, like, well). Don’t cross your arms, slouch, or fidget.

**Bring copies of your resume**
Don’t assume that your interviewer remembers it, has a copy of it, or has read it. Bring along a list of references. Bring a pad and pen, but only take notes during if necessary and ask permission first.

**Be clean and well groomed**
No gum or mint chewing during the interview. Don’t smell like smoke or drugs (legal, decriminalized, or illicit). Avoid perfume or cologne.

**Listen & pay attention**
Respond to the question at hand. Be engaged, ask questions, show interest.

**Be positive**
Don’t bad-talk any former employers, co-workers, or supervisors.

**Be confident! You’ve got this!**
Interviews

AFTER the interview

Reflect on the interview
What went well? What could you improve upon? What surprised you? What did you learn? What did you forget to mention? How do you feel about the position now? Is it a good fit for you? Would you take the job if it were offered?

Send a thank you note within 24 hours
Keep it short. Thank them for the interview. Address something that was mentioned. Reiterate your ability to provide further information if needed. Close with something professionally personal (if it came up in the interview). Sending as an email is fine, but for extra oomph, send a handwritten note as well.

Follow up promptly
If you promised to provide references, samples, or further information by a certain date, make sure it’s on time (and early is better).

Tell your references that someone might be in touch
Provide the name of the company, position, and interviewer.

Say Thank You

After each interview, send a thank you note within 24 hours. If you more than one person interviewed you, send each person a thank you note. This shows politeness, respect for people’s time, and diligence.

The thank you note should be short. It should be well-written and professional. Try to match the tone of the interview: if the interview was formal and the thank you note is too friendly, that could cost you the job. Email is perfectly acceptable, though hand written thank you notes have an added touch.

Thank the interviewer for his or her time and consideration. Reference a personal connection you made. Emphasize why you would be a good fit for a job, perhaps expanding upon a point from the interview.

Sign off professionally (i.e. sincerely, your name).

Keep it short and sweet. If you bungled the interview, this is not the place to go back and say how great you are. But, if you forgot to mention one or two things, feel free to include it here.

Remember, the thank you note (like your resume, like your cover letter) is about the employer, not about you.
Typical Interview Questions

EDUCATION:
• Why did you choose your major?
• Why did you choose to attend BU? In retrospect, how do you feel about that decision?
• How would your education be relevant to the work you would do with us?
• In which campus activities do you participate?
• What classes did you like best? Least? Why?
• Do your grades reflect your ability? Why or why not?
• Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

PERSONAL:
• Tell me about yourself
• What are your hobbies?
• How did you hear about this organization?
• Why do you want to work for this organization?
• What other organizations have you been interviewing with?
• Why do you want this job?
• What do you find most and least attractive about this position?
• What do you know about our products/services?
• Why do you want to follow this career path?
• What distinguishes you from other candidates?
• Describe your ideal job.
• What can you offer us?
• What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
• What would a close friend say is your greatest weakness?
• What personal development strategies have you used to overcome any of your weaknesses?
• Define success. Failure.
• What is your major accomplishment?
• Of which accomplishments are you most proud?
• What were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

EXPERIENCE:
• What job related skills have you developed?
• Give an example of a situation in which you worked through a problem to find a solution.
• How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work and attitude?
• How would a former co-worker describe you?
• What job-related skills have you developed?
• How do you handle criticism?
• What kind of supervision gets the best results from you?
• What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
• Do you prefer working alone or with others?
• Describe your experience using specific software/equipment.

CAREER GOALS:
• What other types of positions are you considering?
• How do you feel about travel?
• How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
• What qualities are you looking for in a boss?
• Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
• Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten?
• What are your career goals—both short and long term?
• How do you feel about working overtime?
• How long do you think you’ll be in this position? Can you commit to two years?
Typical Interview Questions

**BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS:**
- Give me an example of a team project you completed.
- What would your marketing plan be for xxx product?
- Tell me about the most difficult customer you’ve ever dealt with.
- What is the most challenging team you’ve ever been part of? What was your role?
- Describe a situation in which you persuaded someone to see things your way.
- Tell me about a time you failed.
- Give us an example of when you’ve shown your leadership skills.
- Describe a time you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.
- Describe a time you used good judgment and logic to solve a problem.
- Convince me you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.
- Tell me about a decision you had to make quickly and without much information.
- Describe a specific instance that you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Tell me about an important goal you set in the past and how you attained it.
- What would you do if you saw a co-worker doing something unethical?
- Describe the most significant or creative presentation you’ve ever given.
- Tell me about a time you went above what was expected of you to get the job done.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to communicate successfully with another person even with that individual might not have liked you (or vice versa).
- Describe a situation that required you to act under pressure.

**Good questions to ask the interviewer**
- What is a typical day like in this position?
- What kinds of assignments might I expect in the first six months on the job?
- Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
- To whom would I report to in this position? Who would my co-workers be?
- Is this job an addition to the staff or a replacement of a past employee?
- Tell me about the types of projects past employees/interns have participated in.
- Tell me about immediate projects the person coming into the job will be responsible for.
- Where does the position fit into the organization?
- What distinguishes a great candidate from a good candidate for this position?
- Can you tell me more about the structure of your training program?
- Does your company encourage further education?
- What is the company culture like?
- What are the metrics you use to measure performance?
- How do you define success?
- What do you like best about your job/company?
- What attracted you (the interviewer) to this organization?
- What are your growth projects for the next year?
- What exciting or challenging directions do you anticipate over the next few years?
- What challenges are currently facing your organization/industry? What will be the role of the person you hire in facing these challenges?
- What is the next step? When should I expect to hear from you? Or should I contact you?
- When will you make your selection?

**Illegal questions:**
Interviewers are not allowed to ask about race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, disabilities, age, arrest records, military discharge, sexual orientation, or citizenship.

These questions are unlikely to come up, but if they do, either try to find out the underlying cause of the question and respond to that part, or politely inform the interviewer that the question is inappropriate.

**DO NOT ASK**
- What does your company do?
- What can your company do for me? (focus on what you can do for them)
- What is the salary? (this will come up later)
- What types of benefits do you offer?
- How much time do I get for vacation?
- How much is the signing bonus?