



Career Services

## 2013-2014 Career Guide



## WELCOME TO THE OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

The Office of Career Services assists students in every stage of their career development. Whether you are selecting a major, searching for jobs and internships, exploring occupations or preparing for graduate school, we can help.

Our office is in the Joseph B. Platt Campus Center ("Platt") located in the center of the Harvey Mudd College campus.

### What can the Office of Career Services do for you?

The Office of Career Services (OCS) can be a valuable—and sometimes fun—place to visit. The career center offers the following:

Career Coaching and Planning • Walk-in Appointments • Resume, Cover Letter and Personal Statement Critiques • Mock Interviews • Career Assessments • Internship and Job Search Assistance • Workshops, Programs and Career Fairs • Panels and Speakers • Networking with Alumni • Information Sessions • On-campus Recruiting and Employer Database

#### contact

909.621.8091  
[www.career.hmc.edu](http://www.career.hmc.edu)

#### office hours

##### Academic year hours:

Weekdays,  
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

##### Summer hours:

Weekdays,  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

#### follow us on facebook

[www.facebook.com/HMCCareerServices](http://www.facebook.com/HMCCareerServices)

#### follow us on twitter

[twitter.com/HarveyMuddOCS](https://twitter.com/HarveyMuddOCS)

### Meet Our Staff



**Judy L. Fisher**  
Director  
[judy\\_fisher@hmc.edu](mailto:judy_fisher@hmc.edu)



**Jonie Tsuji**  
Career Counselor  
[jonie\\_tsuji@hmc.edu](mailto:jonie_tsuji@hmc.edu)



**Aneesha Akram**  
Assistant Director  
[aakram@hmc.edu](mailto:aakram@hmc.edu)



**Elizabeth Saelzler**  
Office Manager  
[esaelzler@hmc.edu](mailto:esaelzler@hmc.edu)

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- Career coaching and planning by appointment
- Drop-in visits for quick questions
- Resume and cover letter instructions and critiques
- Critiques of personal statements for research positions and graduate school
- Job and internship search assistance
- Mock interviews with review and feedback
- ClaremontConnect, a web-based recruiting and career information system is shared with all The Claremont Colleges. It lists on- and off-campus jobs, work study positions, internships, part-time and full-time jobs. It contains profiles of approximately 9,000 employers searchable by location, industry and job function.
- Hot Internships is a weekly e-bulletin for internships and summer research.
- The Job Miner is a weekly e-bulletin for full-time positions.
- MUDDMines is a weekly e-newsletter that features programs and workshops at The Claremont Colleges.
- OCS Facebook and Twitter
- The Career Resource Library has a limited number of books that can be checked out.

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## Programs

- **Class-specific meetings** are held to review important topics relevant to each class.
- **Skill development workshops** are conducted on a wide range of topics, such as resume writing, how to network at a fair, job search tips, interviewing, how to find internships and applying to graduate school.
- **Career fairs** for full-time employment and internships are offered during fall and spring.
- **Information sessions** are presented by graduate programs and employers.
- **On-campus interviews and resume referrals** are handled through ClaremontConnect, and interviews are held in the Office of Career Services in fall and spring.
- **Graduate School Panel** with recent alumni is held in fall.
- **Social Business Dinner** is an annual senior event covering business etiquette and networking skills with professionals serving as table hosts.
- **Financial seminar** is for seniors to learn about investing, credit cards, insurance and much more.
- **Mudd on the Road** is a company visit program. Students tour the facilities and talk to alumni and HR people to learn about opportunities.
- **Speed Networking** is an event where students network with employers and alumni in brief, four-minute discussions and during receptions.
- **Mock Interviews with Mudders** is a program where employers and alumni conduct mock interviews that allow students to practice their interviewing skills.

The process of career choice and decision-making is not a haphazard one or one of luck but rather a consistent process of research, knowledge acquisition and educated choice. To accomplish this and make the “right” choice, it is necessary to spend some time learning about yourself—your interests, skills, values and personality—combined with learning about what is needed from a variety of career fields. Finding the career that best suits you is an important, and exciting point in your life. You may think you know yourself, but do you really? Take a few moments to evaluate yourself, then match the results with a number of career fields. You’ll be glad you did.

Four major areas of self-knowledge that people usually consider during career exploration:

- 1 **Interests** – What subjects and activities make you happy?
- 2 **Skills** – What skills do you have now, and what skills are you willing to develop?
- 3 **Values** – What is truly important to you in life, and what must you have in a job?
- 4 **Personality** – Are you a people person or are you more reserved?

**Preparing for your future is an individual process, and making sensible choices about your career is in your hands. Exploring various options takes time. Use this guide to gauge your progress, and remember the OCS staff is here to help.**

### Year-by-Year Checklist

#### First Year

- Visit the OCS and get to know the staff.
- Meet with OCS staff to discuss your goals and to begin to identify your interests, abilities and values.
- Complete your profile on ClaremontConnect, the web-based career management system.
- Clarify your interests and skills through classes, student organizations and community service.
- Identify potential majors that relate to your interests and abilities; discuss plans with your academic advisor.
- Take advantage of relevant career workshops, programs and events, e.g., the Career Fair.
- Keep your grades up, and seek help if necessary through faculty, friends and tutors.
- Establish relationships with faculty members, staff and administrators who will assist you.
- Start your own career folder/file and maintain it with relevant information throughout your college years.
- Write your resume and cover letter, and conduct a summer internship/research campaign.

## Sophomore Year

- Narrow down your choices for a major; meet with faculty to get some clarification.
- Attend career workshops and programs.
- Update your ClaremontConnect profile, if necessary.
- Conduct informational interviews regarding your choice of major or careers over winter and spring breaks.
- Obtain relevant work experience through an internship, a summer research position, a job or volunteer position.
- Begin to identify the three to five values that are most important to you in your career.
- Develop some short-term and long-term career goals by meeting with OCS staff each semester.

## Junior Year

- Relate your values, interests and abilities to two or three tentative career choices.
- Develop your career goals by meeting at least once a semester with OCS staff.
- Again, make sure your CC profile is updated so you can receive internship blasts.
- Research more thoroughly the occupations that you are considering.
- Continue to increase your skills through meaningful extracurricular activities, internships and work.
- Begin to research programs and entrance requirements if graduate school is in your future.
- Seek a summer position that will give you direct experience in a field you wish to pursue after graduation.

- Update relevant experiences and activities on your resume and have it reviewed.
- Attend workshops, programs, panels and career fairs to further explore your options.
- Build relationships with faculty and professionals who will serve as references.
- Consult with your faculty advisor to ensure you are on track for graduation.
- Study for graduate school entrance exams if appropriate.


## Senior Year

- Sharpen your job-search skills early in the fall with OCS workshops and programs.
- Make sure your CC profile is accurate for job blasts and on-campus interviews.
- Apply to graduate school and take required entrance exam(s), if appropriate.
- Identify various funding sources for graduate and professional school.
- Have your graduate school essay critiqued by your faculty advisor, the Writing Center staff and/or the OCS staff.
- Buy interview clothes.
- Improve your interview skills with a mock interview.
- Take advantage of on-campus and off-campus recruitment programs.
- Attend career fairs and information sessions to learn more about the various career fields.
- Network with alumni and other professionals about your job search and opportunities. Join groups on LinkedIn.



- Write resumes and cover letters, visit employers, send follow-up notes, make phone calls and set up interviews.
- Create various versions of your resume. Take hard copies to interviews and career fairs. You will be sending most resumes by email or uploading them to employers' websites.
- Consider joining a professional association that is related to your major or career field.
- Remember: Use many different strategies in your overall job search.

### Your Career Decision-Making Process

- If you are uncertain and undecided about your future career plans, then make a conscious effort to resolve your uncertainty. Commitment, dedication, purpose, involvement and persistence are qualities crucial to career planning.
  - Analyze your values, personality characteristics, interests, skills, achievements and work environment and lifestyle preferences. Making an honest assessment of yourself is tough but necessary.
  - Make a list of several possible occupations that interest you.
  - Collect and study information about your potential occupations. Remember, you are researching an occupation(s) for which you may need to spend a lot of money and energy on acquiring the necessary education, so it deserves thorough research.
  - Examine the current social, economic, political and geographic factors that might influence your career choice. The nature of the economy usually has a greater direct impact on career planning than any other single environmental factor.
- 
- Determine a career goal from judgments you make about yourself and the characteristics of your occupational prospects. New information may cause you to change your mind. Also, remember that your career decision is not always for a lifetime.
  - Put the career decision you have made into action by developing your own job search campaign. This includes obtaining the correct job search tools such as a solid resume, interviewing skills, etc., as well as getting the experience you need, such as an internship or volunteer work.
  - Evaluate your career decision often. You may have found your perfect fit. You may need to find something that better suits you.

## Making Your Career Decision

Your first task is evaluating your alternatives. On Page 7 is a model that can be used in weighing the relative values of many variables. It can help you select and rank your preferred career options.

### Process

1. List a number of careers you are interested in down the left side of the grid.
2. Use the columns to the right to list the factors you consider important to this decision, with a “total” column on the far right. We have shown some sample factors, but you can replace these with your own.
3. In each box, use a system of 1 to 5 to rate how well each career could meet the value you find important. Make 5 the most important, and 1 the least.
4. As you total each row, remember that the numbers are just indications of which occupations satisfy more of your values. This information can help you make your decision. Choose your top alternative for future goal setting.

### Career Decision Template—What I Find Important

LIST YOUR ALTERNATIVES	OPPORTUNITY FOR ADVANCEMENT	CHALLENGING, FULFILLING WORK	GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION	SALARY	TYPE OF CO-WORKERS	TOTAL
1. (Example: ABC, Inc.)						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						



# TAKING AN INVENTORY OF YOUR SKILLS

First, let's take a quick self inventory. It will help you write stronger resumes and letters and interview more successfully. Think about your skills on the list below.

### Intellectual Skills

Communicating  
Problem solving  
Analyzing/Assessing  
Planning/Layout  
Organizing/Organizational savvy  
Decision-making  
Creativity/Imagination/Innovation  
Managing time  
Basic to complex computation  
Logical thinking  
Evaluating  
Ability to relate knowledge  
Ability to transfer experience  
Coping with labor market movement  
Understanding others  
Synthesizing  
Marshaling available resources  
Accommodating multiple demands  
Judgment  
Foresight  
Troubleshooting  
Job awareness  
Mechanical aptitude  
Computer knowledge  
Implementing  
Self-understanding/awareness  
Situational analysis

Assessing environments/situations  
Understanding human interactions  
Conceptualization  
Generalization  
Goal setting  
Controlling  
Quantitative thinking  
Dealing with work situation  
Financial knowledge  
Tool usage  
Accounting/Bookkeeping  
Artistic ability  
Business sense  
Tolerance of ambiguity

### Interpersonal Skills

Working with/getting along with others  
Relating to others  
Managing/Directing/Supervising  
Empathizing/Being sensitive to others  
Teaching/Training/Instructing  
Counseling  
Motivating  
Gaining acceptance/  
Building rapport  
Helping/Cooperating  
Cultivating cooperation

Selling  
Accepting supervision  
Delegating  
Instilling confidence  
Team building

### Attitudinal Skills

Positive attitude  
Good work ethic  
Receptivity/Flexibility/Adaptability  
Responsibility  
Determination/Perseverance  
Acceptance/Appreciation/  
Concern for others  
Willingness to learn/change  
Ambition/Motivation  
Self-confidence  
Enthusiasm  
Patience  
Assertiveness  
Honesty  
Loyalty  
Kindness  
Reliability  
Risk taking  
Compromising  
Cheerfulness  
Conscientious  
Decisiveness

### Resumes

A resume is your tool to make an impact on a potential employer and secure an interview. There are literally hundreds of books on the market with good advice about how to write an effective resume, each with a different opinion on style and content. The Office of Career Services believes that writing a quality resume for internship and full-time job opportunities begins with a targeted one-page summary of your skills and experiences that convinces the employer you would be successful in that position. The goal is to make your resume so engaging that the reader cannot wait to meet you.

### What is a Resume?

A resume is an advertisement of who you are and your abilities and accomplishments. It emphasizes your skills, personal attributes, education, experience and other background information that demonstrates your qualifications for the type of position you are seeking. It answers the prospective employer's question, "*What can this candidate do for my organization?*" Writing your first resume can seem overwhelming, but it is worth your effort because it is one of your most persuasive job search tools. Remember there is no one, right formula for this marketing tool. Also, you'll need multiple versions of your resume as you target different readers. The staff of the OCS is here to help you create a powerful resume.



### What is the Purpose of a Resume?

- Helps emphasize your transferable skills
- Provides you with an opportunity to make the impression you want
- Helps you get interviews
- Provides a framework for discussion during the interview
- Reminds the interviewer about you after the interview is over and justifies the hiring decision to others

#### Keep in mind

**The average employer takes less than 30 seconds to evaluate a resume.**

## WRITING YOUR RESUME

### Step 1

#### Take Stock of Yourself

Develop a list of all the experiences you've had, going back to high school if necessary. This might include jobs, volunteer positions, internships, leadership positions you've held, activities or trainings you've participated in, special skills or knowledge you possess, as well as awards and honors you've received.

### Step 2

#### Identify Target

Identify and make a list of the position(s), area(s), and/or industries that interest you, e.g., engineering, biological research, financial services, etc. Research skills and other qualifications required for the type of work you have identified.

### Step 3

#### Write About Your Accomplishments

Now list your different work experiences (paid and unpaid) and review each experience to identify possible accomplishments (e.g., problems you solved, special projects such as Clinic, special assignments, awards, honors, training and commendations). Determine which of these accomplishments are related to your job target, are of interest to the reader of your resume, and illustrate important transferable skills. Remember that accomplishments should be written in short, measurable and results-oriented statements. Use numbers, percentages, statistics and superlatives (i.e., first, only, most, best, top), if and when appropriate.

#### example:

- Worked on a team of three classmates to complete five assignments on time.
- Managed student phone-a-thon, raising \$190,000 (89% of goal).
- Consistently exceeded weekly and monthly production quotas for local software company.

### Step 4

#### Format

Chronological: This is the most common format used by college students. It is a historical time-line presentation of your education and experience, **in reverse chronological order, with the most recent events first.**

### Step 5

#### Categories

**Heading** – Include your name (bold, cap, 12 point is suggested), address (do not abbreviate and, if applicable, use apartment number), zip code, telephone number, email address and personal website if applicable.

**Objective or Qualifications Summary** – Many employers aren't requiring cover letters so a well-written objective is important. Or, instead of an objective, a qualification summary can be used as a quick snapshot to support your application.

### example:

Clear objective: "An internship in civil engineering."

Vague objective: "Seeking a challenging entry-level position in a progressive organization that provides career growth."

**Education** – Include degree, major (if applicable, minor or emphasis), school's name, location and anticipated graduation date. Overall and major GPA, typically 3.0 or above, can be included if they are a selling point.

Your education is listed in reverse chronological order.

### example:

Bachelor of Science, Biology, Expected May 20xx  
Harvey Mudd College, Los Angeles, CA, GPA: 3.5

This section may also include selected classes, professional training, honors, awards, study abroad or special projects.

**Experience** – Include part-time and full-time jobs, temporary positions, self-employment, Clinic research, internships, volunteer or community service experience and any work done for a faculty member. When describing your experience, stress accomplishments by carefully selecting action verbs and phrases that will advertise your key skills and illustrate your potential (see Action Word List). Each experience should include position title, name of employer, geographic location (city and state) and dates of employment.

**If your GPA is not a 3.0 or better, please see the OCS staff for suggestions.**

**Activities, Community Service or Affiliations** – You can list your involvement in clubs, organizations, committees, sports, community service, professional associations and other affiliations related to your job objective or industry. List and emphasize those activities in which you utilized leadership and teamwork. If you held an office, list the position held and the outcomes or benefits of your efforts. Listing interests is optional.

**Special Skills/Technical Skills** – This section may include computer skills, especially software programs you have used; lab techniques and the use of specialized equipment; and other specific knowledge skills related to your career field. State your level of competency (e.g., proficient, knowledgeable, familiar).

**Languages** – Language skills are a marketable asset. Different approaches to presenting these skills include: fully bilingual/bicultural in...; speak, read, write, translate, and interpret documents; conversationally fluent in...; knowledge of Asian business protocol.

### Finishing Touches

- Preferred font size is 10-12 point; use standard fonts like Helvetica, Times, New Roman, Arial, Verdana
- Emphasize points with bullets, UPPER CASE, **bold**, *italics*, and underlining.
- Do not over use the bullet; it is best to use with accomplishment statements.
- Use numbers or percentages to describe your accomplishments.
- Use formal language; avoid pronouns (I, me).
- Do not use abbreviations. Use acronyms, only if the reader will understand them.
- Use action words; do not start job with “responsibilities include...”
- Make sure all verb tenses are consistent (present for present experience, past for past experience).
- Use the jargon of your desired job target and industry.
- Organize your resume categories as they relate to your job target. Place the most important sections first.
- Always tailor your resume to the type of position you want and prepare a different version for each position.
- Update your resume whenever there are changes.
- Resumes should be truthful and accurate.
- Use white or off-white bond paper for resumes, cover letters and references, if applicable.
- Include a cover letter with your resume. Note: Many website applications do not require or permit.
- Resumes should be short and concise; designed for easy skimming, and kept to one page if possible.

- Carefully proofread your resume; do not rely on spell check, e.g., to and too.
- Have your resume edited by one or two individuals who can be objective and point out unclear or awkward areas.
- Do not include “references available upon request.” Have a separate reference sheet.
- Do not forget to upload your resume to CC.
- Remember: A resume is a work in progress!

**Do not include personal information such as age, height, weight, sex, health status or a personal photo. Also, do not include salary history.**

### Action Words

The best accomplishment statements usually start with an action word. An action word is a strong, descriptive verb that grabs the reader’s attention and puts the focus on what you did well. This approach is more powerful than merely describing duties and responsibilities. Verbs should be in the past tense unless describing a current experience.

## Communication

addressed  
arranged  
articulated  
authored  
clarified  
communicated  
composed  
conducted  
consulted  
contacted  
demonstrated  
described  
drafted  
informed  
interacted  
interpreted  
interviewed  
observed  
presented  
promoted  
publicized  
published  
translated  
verified

## Financial

adjusted  
allocated  
appraised  
audited  
balanced  
budgeted  
calculated  
disbursed  
doubled  
downsized  
eliminated  
exceeded  
financed  
forecast

gained  
generated  
increased  
invested  
managed  
maximized  
minimized  
planned  
projected  
reconciled  
reduced  
reported  
researched  
secured  
solicited  
supplemented  
systematized

## Leadership/ Management

accelerated  
approved  
assigned  
attained  
authorized  
chaired  
consolidated  
contracted  
controlled  
coordinated  
decided  
delegated  
determined  
directed  
enforced  
ensured  
evaluated  
executed  
formalized  
governed  
guided

influenced  
instigated  
instituted  
managed  
maximized  
mediated  
minimized  
motivated  
narrowed  
negotiated  
organized  
originated  
oversaw  
pioneered  
presided  
prioritized  
promoted  
qualified  
rated  
recommended  
recovered  
responded  
selected  
sponsored  
streamlined  
steered  
structured  
succeeded  
suggested  
supervised  
trained  
utilize

## Research

analyzed  
applied  
articulated  
audited  
balanced  
calculated  
charted

checked  
clarified  
collected  
compared  
compiled  
concentrated  
conducted  
constructed  
consulted  
critiqued  
detected  
diagnosed  
discovered  
documented  
examined  
exhibited  
experimented  
explored  
extracted  
generated  
identified  
inspected  
integrated  
interpreted  
interviewed  
invented  
investigated  
measured  
obtained  
planned  
prepared  
researched  
reviewed  
revised  
screened  
searched  
submitted  
summarized  
surveyed  
systematized  
tracked

## Teaching

acquainted  
adapted  
affected  
answered  
apprised  
assessed  
augmented  
awarded  
certified  
charted  
clarified  
coached  
collaborated  
conducted  
delivered  
demystified  
developed  
educated  
empowered  
enacted  
encouraged  
evaluated  
expanded  
explained  
facilitated  
formulated  
graded  
guided  
implemented  
informed  
innovated  
instructed  
learned  
lectured  
originated  
participated  
presented  
studied  
summarized  
taught

translated  
tutored

## Technical

assembled  
built  
calculated  
charted  
compiled  
computed  
conceived  
conducted  
detected  
devised  
eliminated  
engineered  
expedited  
fabricated  
forecast  
improved  
inspected  
installed  
integrated  
interfaced  
maintained  
mastered  
modified  
molded  
operated  
overhauled  
pioneered  
prepared  
prevented  
processed  
profiled  
programmed  
proved  
reconstructed  
remodeled  
repaired  
reported  
researched



# WRITING ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Writing good accomplishment statements is the key to creating an outstanding resume. These statements should describe the situation, identify the task(s) involved, highlight your action(s) and identify the results. The formula is often called S.T.A.R.

One common weakness with undergraduate resumes is the lack of accomplishment statements. It's easy to write what you did in a particular job, but the more challenging part, and often the important part, is telling the reader how good you are at what you did.

**A well-formulated accomplishment statement has two parts:**

1. What result or benefit was generated because of your work? This result should be stated in terms of the value added and in as tangible and as quantifiable a manner as possible.
2. What steps you took or what techniques you used to achieve results.

## The Benefits You Can Expect from Creating Accomplishment Statements:

- Improved self-awareness of your skills and abilities that will be the foundation for your job search.
- Concrete credibility for everything you claim in the way of qualifications and abilities. You will have simple documentation of the value you can bring to an employer.
- Greater confidence in presenting yourself to potential employers. You will understand better that you are not "asking for a job," but rather you are offering a contribution to an employer.

## Tips for Writing Accomplishment Statements:

- Always start with an action word.
- Use unique and varied verbs to describe a similar event.
- Avoid wordiness and unnecessary adjectives.

## Use Verbs to Strengthen the Descriptions of Your Experiences.

This approach is more powerful than merely describing duties and responsibilities. Verbs should be in the past tense unless describing a current experience.

**To help generate a list of accomplishments, try to answer some of the questions below:**

### Have you...

- Done something faster, better, cheaper?
- Saved an organization money or eliminated waste?
- Identified and/or helped solve problems?
- Instituted new methods, systems or procedures?
- Reorganized or improved an existing system?
- Maintained a consistently high level of performance?
- Achieved results with little or no supervision?
- Coordinated any event or project?

# TECHNICAL/SCIENTIFIC RESUMES

Although technical or scientific resumes use one of the traditional formats, there are some nuances in the content and presentation. Individuals targeting computer technology, engineering, consulting or scientific laboratory positions should consider the tips below. The length need not be one page, but should still be concise. If over one page, your name and page number should be on all successive pages.

- Include all paid and unpaid experiences, research projects and any teaching experiences that relate to the industry that you are targeting.
- Include operating systems, hardware platforms, environments, programming languages, software applications, communication protocols, databases, etc., of which you are knowledgeable. Remember to use “buzz” words that would catch the eye of the employer or scanning programs. However, do not misrepresent your skills by including skills with which you are not familiar.
- List relevant upper-division coursework or projects that emphasize your technical skills or lab techniques, knowledge and experience. List coursework by title, e.g., “Logic Design” rather than by course number.
- Summarize your technical skills and research techniques in an itemized fashion (e.g., a bulleted format) and prioritize them by your proficiency using them.
- Quantify your experience whenever possible. Cite numerical figures, percentages of efficiency improvement, lines of code written or debugged, numbers of machines supported, etc.
- Include publications with full reference if it is already published. If the work is in progress or submitted, make that clear. **Bold your name in the list of authors.** Also list any scientific meetings/presentations with the title of meeting or conference and your abstract title in *italics*. If you presented a talk or a poster, remember to include the year.
- Include your GPA if it's 3.0 or higher. Many technical companies assume that if your GPA is not listed, it is below 3.0. You can list your overall, major or upper division coursework. If you have questions, please see the staff in the OCS.

**S** **Situation** – Keep it brief  
**T** **Task** – Specify  
**A** **Action** – Yours  
**R** **Results** – Should be quantifiable

### A BEGINNER'S RESUME SAMPLE

Resume length should generally be one page. If needed, decrease margins from the default of 1.25 to .8 with no smaller than 11 point font.

#### **MARY OR MIKE MUDD**

301 Platt Blvd.  
Claremont, CA 91711  
909.621.9000  
**mmudd@hmc.edu**

#### **Objective** (optional)

Keep it short. It gives employers a general idea about what type of position you're seeking. They read your resume looking for those experiences/skills that support your objective. If you know the functional role you desire and/or what industry you're interested in, state those as well. Note: You will need to write unique objectives for each position. Objectives are concise and direct. For career fairs, if you're in the exploratory state, you might want to omit an objective.

**An entry-level position in software engineering.**  
**A summer internship in the field of biomedical research.**

#### **Education** (mandatory)

Should be at the top of your resume or after an objective as an undergraduate.

**Bachelor of Science (write it out) or B.S., Your Major**  
**Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA Expected May 20xx**  
**GPA (If above 3.0 or if requested by an employer.) You can choose the higher of the two GPA's—cumulative or major.**

#### **Relevant Coursework** (optional)

Students who have taken courses related to a job they are applying for may choose to highlight these courses.

**Experimental Engineering, Engineering Design, Systems, etc.**

Normally high school is excluded; however most first- and second-year students don't have enough experience and need to list accomplishments from high school.

**Birmingham High School, Van Nuys, CA June 20xx**  
**Took AP courses in Calculus, Chemistry, Physics**

### **Honors and Awards** (if applicable)

Honors and awards are part of your education. If these are not self-explanatory, describe them.

**Harvey Mudd College Scholarship (four years) 20xx – 20xx**  
**National Merit Scholar 20xx – 20xx**

### **Abroad Experiences** (if applicable)

Students who have taken courses related to a job they are applying for may choose to highlight these courses.

**Summer Abroad Program, 20xx**  
**University of London**

### **Skills** (mandatory)

List hard skills here. This means computer, language and lab skills, but can include, for example, certificates, proficiency or mastery in technical equipment. Always qualify your knowledge base with one of the following words: Proficient, Knowledgeable or Familiar.

**Proficient in Microsoft Word; knowledgeable of C++, Matlab, etc.**  
**Conversant in Spanish.**

### Experience (mandatory)

Here is where you list, in reverse chronological order, experiences that demonstrate your skills abilities, capabilities and potential.

#### Choose from these different experiences to create your Experience Sections:

- Part-time and Full-time Jobs
- Paid or Unpaid Internships
- Significant involvement/leadership in: Clubs, Organizations, Volunteer Work, Athletics, Sports
- Research/Presentations

#### Use an experience that is appropriate, for example:

Related | Research | Project Work | Leadership | Relevant | Volunteer | Other

- Delegate your various experiences into appropriate sections.
- Put the sections that are most important to the job you are applying for as high as you can on your resume.
- Write your title, the employer, city and state with dates. You can bold either the title or the organization.
- Use powerful action verbs to describe your role combined with accomplishment statements that are powerful and succinct. Use present tense for a position you hold currently; use past tense for all others.
- A well-formulated accomplishment statement has two parts:
  1. Write what results or benefits came as a result of your work. This result should be stated in terms of the value added to the employer and written in as tangible and as quantifiable a manner as possible by adding numbers and/or percentages.
  2. What you did or the action you took to achieve that result.

**Your Title, Your Employer, The City, Abbreviated State    5/xx – 9/xx**

- Increased production by 10%.
- Improved effectiveness of website.
- Wrote or Presented a report to 50 representatives.

**Note:** Periods may or may not be used after descriptions that follow a bullet. Be consistent! To save space, use semicolons between multiple points made after one bullet.

### Extra/Co-Curricular\*\* or Activities (if applicable)

If you've held leadership roles, you may title this section Leadership Activities. Remember, all your activities are important. We recommend that you write accomplishment statements when your role is not obvious by your title. Spell out acronyms. Similar to your experience section, follow a consistent format.

**Tutor, Pomona High School, Pomona, CA 20xx**

**Improved grades of five elementary students by tutoring weekly in math.**

\*\*extra/co-curricular is for on-campus activities

### Interests (optional)

Some employers like to see an Interests section. If you include interests, BE SELECTIVE. For example, list travel, sports and arts activities. Do not provide personal data. Do not use this section to highlight soft skills, i.e., "excellent communication skills" or "mature." Articulate these qualities in a cover letter.

**Travel, classical music enthusiast, basketball.**





## RESUME SAMPLE—BIOLOGY

Use a professional email;  
avoid personal ones like  
happyface@darwin.com.

Post only during  
your first two years.

Use action words  
to describe your  
accomplishments  
and make sure that  
the verb tenses  
match (i.e., present  
tense for current  
work; past tense for  
past jobs.)

Use italics to  
denote the title of  
an article or book.

**MARY HARVEY**  
mary-harvey@gmail.com

**College Address**  
340 E. Foothill Blvd.  
Claremont, CA 91711  
909.624.1234

**Permanent Address**  
123 Happy Circle  
San Francisco, CA 91010  
818.555.4321

**OBJECTIVE**  
A research position in molecular biology or immunology.

**EDUCATION**  
Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA  
Bachelor of Science, Biology Expected, May 20xx

**Relevant Coursework**  
Genetics with Lab; Immunology; Microbes and the Immune System; Cell and Molecular Biology; Neurobiology; Biochemistry  
Garfield High School, Seattle, WA June 20xx  
GPA: 3.8; Advanced Placement in the following courses: Biology, Chemistry and Calculus.

**Honors**  
Dean's List Distinction 20xx–20xx  
National Science Foundation Scholarship 20xx  
National Merit Scholar 20xx

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**  
**Harvey Mudd College**, Claremont, CA 9/xx– present  
• Analyze determination of hybridization between two species of soft coral.  
• Compile data using PCR and randomly amplified polymorphic DNA (RAPD).  
**Baylor College of Medicine**, Houston, TX Summer 20xx  
Participant in Summer Medical and Research Training (SMART) Program  
• Conducted DNA sequencing to determine effect of point mutation on hexokinase deficiency in patient.  
• Presented findings to audience of 100 peers and medical professionals.  
**The Joint Science Center**, Claremont, CA Spring 20xx  
• Researched activity and binding properties of mitochondrial hexokinase in fetal livers.

**PUBLICATIONS**  
• *"Differential cytokine expression in acute and chronic murine graft-versus-host-disease,"*  
**Harvey, M.** and Smith, C. (20xx). *European Journal of Immunology*, 23:333-337.  
• *"Effects of supporting electrolyte on the partitioning of cation/neutral couples into perfluorosulfonate films."*  
Van Ryswyck, H. and **Harvey, M.** (20xx). *Journal of Electroanalytical Chemistry*, 325:351-357.

**SKILLS**  
• PCR (polymerase chain reaction) • DNA and RNA isolation • CDNA synthesis • Northern & Southern blotting  
• Radioactive end-labeling • Sub-cloning of bacteria • Sterile technique • ELISA assays • IR, UV/visible & NMR spectroscopy • Cell cultures

**REFERENCES**  
(Since this is a scientific resume, you could give the reader three references from faculty you've conducted research with at HMC or off-campus.)

## RESUME SAMPLE—CHEMISTRY

This is a way to save space with your address.

Objectives should be short and concise.

Bold your name among publication authors.

STUDEE S. MUDDER  
ssmudder@g.hmc.edu

**College Address:** 340 E. Foothill Blvd., Claremont, CA 91171 • 909.624.1234  
**Permanent Address:** 123 Some Street, Sunnyvale, CA 91010 • 818.555.4321

→

**OBJECTIVE**  
A position in physical, analytical or inorganic chemistry or nanofabrication.

**EDUCATION**  
**Bachelor of Science, Chemistry**  
**Harvey Mudd College**, Claremont, CA May 20xx

**Relevant Coursework**  
Physical, Analytical, Instrumental, Organic and Inorganic Chemistry with Labs | Quantum and Spectroscopy  
Advanced Group Theory

**Honors and Awards**  
Dean's List Distinction 20xx–20xx  
Galileo Society Scholarship 20xx  
DuPont Science Scholarship 20xx  
National Merit Scholar 20xx

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**  
**Department of Chemistry**, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA 9/xx–present  
• Study the kinetics of attaching metalloporphyrins to self-assembled monolayers on gold electrodes  
• Perform electrochemistry on the monolayers

**National Nanofabrication Users Network REU**, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY Summer 20xx  
• Fabricated biomolecular sieves with novel geometry for separating protein mixtures  
• Assisted scientists with making targets for the accelerator  
• Developed a computer program to simulate heat loads in target wheels  
• Prepared written report; presented results to peers and faculty

**Department of Energy REU**, Lemont, IL Summer 20xx  
• Conducted research for the Target Development Facility for ATLAS Accelerator, Argonne National Laboratory  
• Reported findings to a group of five scientists and engineers

**PUBLICATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**  
• "Temperature Calculations of Heat Loads in Rotating Target Wheels Exposed to High Beam Currents,"  
Greene, J.P. and **Mudder, S.S.**, CP576, American Institute of Physics, April 20xx.  
• Kinetics of Metalloporphyrin-based Ligand Substitution with Surface-confined Ligands.  
Poster presented at ACS National Meeting, March 20xx.

**SKILLS**  
• NMR • GC-MS • UV-VIS Spectrophotometers • Evaporator (e-gun & thermal) • Cyclic Voltammetry • Plasma Etcher

**CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**  
• Member, Mudders Organizing for Sustainability Solutions 20xx–present  
• Participant, Claremont-Mudd-Scripps Tennis Team 20xx  
• Treasurer, South Hall 20xx

## RESUME SAMPLE—BIOCHEMISTRY

Include your GPA if it is 3.0 or higher. List your major GPA if it is higher than the cumulative. Most companies will assume your GPA is below a 3.0 if you do not list it. See OCS staff for suggestions.

Use numbers and percentages when possible to describe your accomplishments.

Use bullets sparingly; it's best to use with your accomplishment statements.



### HAROLD MUDDE

12345 Main Street • Claremont, CA 91711 • 909.641.1297 • hmudde@yahoo.com

#### OBJECTIVE

An entry-level position in a bioscience laboratory environment applying proven skills in laboratory research and investigation.

#### EDUCATION

Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA

B.S., Joint Major in Biology and Chemistry—Expected, May 20xx. Cumulative GPA 3.3; Major 3.5

#### Upper-Division Coursework

Plant Chromatin Domains; Molecular Biology; Genetics; Virology; Chemical Biology; Animal Development; Plant Growth and Development; Ethics in Medicine; Cellular Biology; Immunology; Microbiology

#### Honors and Awards

National Science Fellow 20xx

Dean's List 20xx–20xx

#### TECHNIQUES AND METHODOLOGIES

Plasmid DNA Isolation; preparation of Agarose and SDS gel electrophoresis; Immuno-precipitation; sterile technique; myoblast and fibroblast tissue culture; lambda phage and plasmid purification restriction and mapping; bacterial sub-cloning and transformation; determination of rate of protein synthesis in vivo through radioactive markers

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

Proficient in Word, PowerPoint and Excel. Familiar with Access.

#### PUBLICATIONS

"Finding of Plasmid DNA Isolation," White, J.B., Brown, T.D., **Mudde, H.** *American Medical Journal*, April 20xx.

#### PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION

National Southern California Undergraduate Research Conference, Los Angeles, CA

Fall 20xx

• Invited to present paper on Plasmid DNA Isolation at prestigious conference at the University of California, Los Angeles along with 500 other students.

#### LABORATORY AND FIELD PROJECTS

**Independent Researcher**, Department of Biology, Harvey Mudd College

Summer 20xxx

- Screened a library of lambda phage containing an autonomously replicating sequence that could transform yeast to replicate autonomously.
- Prepared and isolated DNA from recombinant bacteriophage as well as constructed restriction maps.
- Performed southern blot analysis on lambda phage; determined percentage of homology within the various clones.

#### RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Lab Assistant**, Sungeno Technologies, San Jose, CA

Summer 20xx

- Prepared genetic markers to screen inheritable traits in corn lines; prepared southern blots.
- Analyzed through restriction fragment length polymorphism (RFLP) techniques.
- Performed over 2,000 genomic corn DNA preps; transferred preps to nylon membrane.

#### ACTIVITIES

**Volunteer**, American Red Cross, Los Angeles, CA

Spring 20xx

**Adult Volunteer**, Huntington Hospital, Pasadena, CA

9/xx–5/xx

## RESUME SAMPLE—COMPUTER SCIENCE

You can save space with your name and contact information on one line.

If appropriate, place skills where they can be seen quickly.

Employers like to see leadership skills as well as teamwork examples.



**AL GORITHM** | 340 E. Foothill Blvd. | Claremont, CA 91711 | al\_gorithm@g.hmc.edu | 985.451.0507

### EDUCATION

B.S., Computer Science; Concentration in Economics  
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE, Claremont, CA Expected, May 20xx  
Dean's List, Spring 20xx

### Relevant Coursework

Computer Systems Performance Analysis; Financial Markets & Modeling (in progress); Software Development; Algorithms;  
Programming Languages; Financial Economics; Introduction to Probability and Statistics; Differential Equations;  
Fiscal and Monetary Policy

### COMPUTER SKILLS

Programming: C/C++, Java, Python, Ruby, PHP, HTML, JavaScript, SML, Haskell  
Software: R (for statistical computing), Excel

### CLINIC EXPERIENCE

Sandia National Labs, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA 9/xx–Present  
• Simulate I/O Node of Supercomputer  
• Design validation framework to validate the accuracy of the simulation

### WORK EXPERIENCE

**Student Webmaster**, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA 9/xx–Present  
• Secure, update, and maintain Harvey Mudd College's website using Linux, Apache, MySQL and Perl/PHP

**Software Developer**, Brown Environmental Center, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA 5/xx–8/xx  
• Designed and developed software for keyword/phrase search in text documents  
• Implemented software as separate module using Java for easy integration with the Center's existing software

**Researcher**, Computer Science Department, Claremont, CA 6/xx–8/xx  
• As member of team of three, developed non-invasive wireless sensor network  
• Wrote external temperature and humidity sensor drivers in C  
• Tested network by deploying it in a local lizard habitat

**Tutor and Grader**, Computer Science Department, Claremont, CA 1/xx–5/xx  
• Tutored juniors; graded assignments for course on Data Structures and Program Development in C++

### LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

**Member**, Mudder Investment Fund 9/xx–Present  
• Manage a \$50,000+ portfolio of securities (stocks and ETFs)

**Founder and Editor-in-Chief**, Mudd Online (hmc.edu/muddonline) 9/xx–3/xx  
• Established student-run e-newspaper; built website; hired and supervised student writers

**Mentor**, Harvey Mudd College Summer Institute Summer 20xx  
• Mentored 30 incoming students; organized events and trips for the students over a two-week period to ease transition into college.

## RESUME SAMPLE—ENGINEERING

Enlarging your name helps it stand out.

This is a great way to explain your Clinic projects.

Highlight your publications.

**MACK MUDDY** / m.muddy@g.hmc.edu  
340 E. Foothill Blvd. • Claremont, CA 91711 • 925.202.6700

**EDUCATION**  
Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA  
B.S., General Engineering | Expected, May 20xx

**Relevant Coursework**  
Optimization Techniques • Systems Simulation • Advanced Systems Eng. • Experimental Eng. • Dynamics of Rigid Bodies • Structural Mechanics • Fluid Mechanics • Digital Electronics • Circuits • Principles of Computer Science

**Skills**  
Programming Languages: Matlab, Simulink, Labview, Python • In Progress: Java, Racket (Scheme), Prolog, JFlap  
Software: Comsol, SolidWorks, Origin • Verilog • Rapid Prototyping

**Honors and Awards**  
Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society Spring 20xx-Present • Hubie & Pattie Clark Summer Research Fellow Summer 20xx

**CLINIC PROJECTS**  
**Sandia National Laboratories**, Harvey Mudd College Fall 20xx-Present  
*Industry-sponsored project to deliver a functional cleaning robot for the Z-Accelerator | 5-person team*  
• Designing detailed CAD models of assembly using SolidWorks, chief designer  
• Machining a prototype using rapid prototyping techniques; acting as machine-shop proctor

**Optivus Proton Therapy**, Harvey Mudd College Fall 20xx  
*Industry-sponsored project to deliver a tool for precise x-ray alignment | 4-person team*  
• Optimized designs based on deflection and stress analysis in Comsol with SolidWorks models  
• Led exploration of optical-and laser-based alignment techniques and high precision actuation  
• Wrote mid-year report; presented findings to company liaison and four engineers

**LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**  
**Underwater Robotics Club**, Harvey Mudd College Fall 20xx-Present  
*Club competing in the Marine Advanced Technology Education Center ROV Competition*  
• **Founder and manager** of a club of 15 members with a \$13,000 budget  
• Implementing closed-loop feedback control of the submersible in Simulink  
• Designing and constructing the electronic systems and chassis in SolidWorks  
• Developing and testing multiple techniques for waterproofing electronic enclosures

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**  
**Department of Engineering**, Harvey Mudd College Fall 20xx-Present  
*Investigating the 3-dimensional morphology of microbands in plastically deformed crystalline metals*  
• Reconstructing and segmenting large 3-dimensional data sets using Matlab  
• Optimizing the run time and memory usage of a Fast Multiscale Clustering algorithm tenfold  
• Developing a Matlab script to visualize the orientation and other features of microbands

**National Institute of Standards and Technology**, Gaithersburg, MD Summer 20xx  
*Investigated the magnetic properties of Germanium doping in alloys for SRAM application*  
• Developed an adaptable multi-purpose Labview program for controlling 6+ laboratory devices allowing rapid reconfiguration of experiments and automated data collection  
• Conducted experiments to verify resistivity of microscopic samples of various parameters

**PUBLICATIONS**  
**Abstract/Presenter:** "Subgrain Boundary Identification in 3D EBSD Data though Fast Multiscale Clustering," **Muddy, M.**, Allen, S., Silva, J., Bassman, L. Int'l Conference on 3D Materials Science, June 20XX  
**Poster/Presenter:** "3D Reconstruction and Analysis of Microband Boundaries in FCC Metals," George, T., **Muddy, M.**, Tan, B., Bassman, L. The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society Conference, 20XX  
**Publication:** "Enhanced magnetization drift velocity and current polarization in (CoFe)1-xGex alloys" Tao, R., and **Muddy, M.** 9/xx-12/xx

## RESUME SAMPLE—MATHEMATICS/BUSINESS

Using CAPS and lower-case bold type helps call attention to the important elements in your resume.

Put study abroad under education.

If you want to fill up the page, you can add interests, or if your interests relate to the objective, include them.

**Polly Gonn**  
1210 Dartmouth Avenue, #19, Claremont, CA 91711 • pgonn@yahoo.com • 909.424.6817

→ **EDUCATION**  
Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA  
Bachelor of Science, Mathematics and Economics Anticipated, May 20xx  
GPA: 3.45 Dean's List—Spring 20xx, Fall 20xx

→ **Study Abroad**  
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, Spring 20xx  
Program focused on Mathematics

**Honors and Awards**  
Corporate Scholars Program (three years)  
National Merit Award 20xx

**RELATED EXPERIENCE**  
**Board Member**, Entremudders, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA 2/xx–Present  
• Selected as one of 10 members to participate on a board that actively manages assets of over \$100,000.  
• Chose several stocks over the last fiscal year that increased approximately 80 percent since May of 2006, the largest gain of the current year.

**Senior Financial Analyst Intern**, Morgan Stanley, Arcadia, CA 5/xx–8/xx  
• Cultivated over 200 prospects for follow-up by senior financial advisors.  
• Prepared month-end reports for review by department head, which resulted in increased flow of information to management.  
• Only intern who was elevated to the rank of Senior Financial Analyst Intern; earned \$1,000 bonus in addition to standard intern stipend.

**Marketing/Public Relations Analyst Intern**, The Carlyle Group, Washington, D.C. 5/xx–8/xx  
• Significantly increased media contacts reporting on private equity deals done by Carlyle; wrote press releases; fielded journalist queries.  
• Conducted extensive research on private equity markets, competitors and customers through leveraging statistics and Internet searches.  
• Participated in restructuring of company's marketing strategy; proposed a re-evaluation of approaching media relations; observed company valuation and negotiations for investments from venture capital firms and partners.

**Financial Advisory Intern**, UPS Financial Services, Inc., Newport Beach, CA 5/xx–8/xx  
• Built and maintained relationships with potential customers.  
• Observed company valuations as well as analyses of accretion/dilution, liquidity and pro-forma financial statements; circulated and analyzed different transaction and market comparables.

**LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**  
**President**, Entremudders, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA 9/xx–Present  
• Set agenda for meetings and led proceedings; direct Steering Committee in planning future events; work with area business professionals to make presentations.  
• Recruit new members.

**SKILLS**  
Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

→ **INTERESTS**  
Enjoy basketball, golf, tennis and designing layouts for model trains. Hang glide and wind surf.



## RESUME SAMPLE—PHYSICS

Avoid using trendy typefaces.



You can list courses you are currently taking by adding “in progress.”



**P. ROB LEMSET**

prlemset@g.hmc.edu

**College Address:** 340 E. Foothill Blvd., Claremont, CA 91711 808.286.3429

**Home Address:** 2226A Cooper Road, Honolulu, HI 96822 808.988.1750

### EDUCATION

B.S., Physics  
Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA Expected, May 20xx  
GPA: 3.71

### Relevant Courses

**In Progress:** Microprocessor-based Systems; Electromagnetic Fields  
**Completed:** Numerical Analysis; Scientific Computing; Statistical Mechanics; Quantum Mechanics; Theoretical Mechanics; Optics Laboratory

### Honors and Awards

Dean's List—Fall 20xx, Spring 20xx, Spring 20xx, Fall 20xx, Spring 20xx  
National Merit Finalist 20xx  
AP Scholar with Distinction 20xx

### SKILLS

**Programming Languages:** Verilog, Java, C++  
**Software:** Microsoft Office, MATLAB, Maple, Mathematica, Xilinx, Geant4

### CLINIC PROJECT EXPERIENCE

**Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory**, Physics Clinic, Claremont, CA 9/xx–Present  
• Leading a five-person team at Harvey Mudd College  
• Characterizing Lawrence Livermore's present muon veto paddle design  
• Analyzing computer models to create an improved design

**Southern California Edison**, Engineering Clinic, Claremont, CA Spring 20xx  
• Member of a five-person team  
• Created and verified theory for parasitically extracting power  
• Constructed a proof of concept

### WORK EXPERIENCE

**Grader**, Department of Mathematics, Claremont, CA 9/xx–Present  
• Grading the numerical analysis class at Harvey Mudd College

**Algorithm Developer**, NovaSol, Honolulu, HI Summer 20xx  
• Created algorithms to co-register hyperspectral and panchromatic images  
• Researched and designed feature extraction methods  
• Constructed an end-to-end system for image classification

**Teacher's Assistant**, Maryknoll School, Honolulu, HI Summer 20xx  
• Assisted in teaching Microsoft Office to a group of eight  
• Tutored students and graded for algebra and geometry classes

# COVER LETTERS

The success of your career search depends to a large degree on your ability to communicate effectively in writing. As an applicant seeking employment, you may find yourself writing many different letters. The following are the most common: cover letter, letter of inquiry and thank you/follow-up letters.

Some employers will ask for a writing sample, e.g., an abstract from a paper you've written.

## The Purpose of a Cover Letter

The cover letter is a formal business letter which is often the first contact with a prospective employer. It serves as an introduction of you and your experience. Since it is usually the first impression you make on the employer, you want it to be your best.

**It is important to note that many employers are asking candidates to apply online to the company's website; these sites do NOT always require or have an area online for cover letters.**

The cover letter acts as your marketing tool; this is your chance to brag about your skills and show that you are interested in the position and the company and that you have something valuable to contribute. Before writing your letter, find out as much as you can about the organization and the specific position. This research enables you to better relate your skills and qualifications to the organization and the position. Remember that employers can easily spot generic letters. It takes some time and planning in order to create a cover letter that is effective. Therefore, you will need to have your letter reviewed, critiqued and edited.

## Content

### Step 1 The Introduction

Indicate why you are contacting the employer, the position you are applying for, and how you became aware of this position. If you are responding to a

position announcement, mention where you saw it. If an individual refers you, definitely mention his/her name.

### Step 2 Their Need—Your Experience

Address the hiring need they have and how you specifically meet their qualifications. Here is where your research will pay off. Highlight the best evidence of your qualifications. Convince the reader that what you have is exactly what they want. Do not write the same things you have on your resume.

### Step 3 Conclusion and Contact

State that you are interested in having an interview. Include where, when and how you can be contacted; however, the best technique is to be proactive by telling the employer exactly when you will initiate your follow-up telephone call or email and sticking to this date!

## Appearance

The recommended letter format is block-style, a format where all text begins at the left margin. Paragraphs are not indented. Address your cover letter to an individual with the job title who will most likely hire you. Your letter and resume are more likely to be read if you send them to someone specific. It is OK to call the Human Resource department to find out the above information. Also, see someone in the OCS for assistance. There will be situations where you will not be able to obtain the name of a specific person, so you may want to use a title such as Hiring Manager.

If you don't hear anything in a few days, which is quite normal, call the company's representative.

### Writing Style Guide

- Be original, brief (one-page), business-like; write clearly and concisely.
- Keep your sentences 10 to 20 words long.
- Limit paragraph length to five to seven sentences.
- Use powerful action phrases to describe accomplishments, qualities and experiences.
- Try to avoid the overuse of "I."
- Personalize; reflect your style by balancing professionalism with personal warmth and friendliness.
- Convey enthusiasm, commitment and confidence.

Cover letters and resumes are often sent as attachments in email correspondence. One helpful hint is to also copy your letter and resume into the body of the email as plain text in case the attachments won't open or the employer doesn't like opening attachments. If you forget to attach the documents, this serves as a safety measure. You can separate the cover letter from the resume with a series of "#" characters.

### Tips

- Keep a copy of your letter for future reference.
- Proofread each letter carefully for proper spelling, syntax, grammar and typographical errors.
- Have someone else critique your letter to offer constructive feedback.
- Use a common font with a professional appearance

### Types of Letters to Write

#### Letter of Inquiry

If you find a company of interest and there isn't a position posted, you can write a letter to inquire how one finds out about employment opportunities. These are usually addressed to the Human Resources office. It is important to show that you've thoroughly researched the organization and to clearly express your interest and qualifications. You can also check with the HMC Alumni LinkedIn group to see if there is someone from that company with whom you can connect.

#### Follow-Up/Thank You Letters

A thank you, or follow-up letter, may be one of the most important letters you will write during your job search. It is a way of offering your appreciation for being given an interview and, in some cases, accepting or declining an offer. Most importantly, it is another way of further marketing yourself and impressing potential employers. Thank you letters are usually personal and express your sincere interest in the position and the organization. They expand upon your qualifications, illustrate examples of your work and further develop issues discussed in the interview. Customize your letter to meet each individual situation. Few individuals remember to send letters, so this will set you apart!

**Did you know that only 36% of students follow up an interview with any type of formal business communication? Employers tell us they not only appreciate a well-crafted and sincere thank you, they also expect one.**

### Here are some suggestions:

- Address the letter to the key person(s) with whom you interviewed.
- You can send individual notes or one to a manager or the team leader mentioning multiple names.
- Send the letter within one or two days following the interview.
- Be personal, specific and sincere. Express appreciation for their time and consideration.
- Restate ideas or examples you shared in the interview that were well received.
- Provide any additional information that might have been requested during the interview.
- Confirm the employer's or your follow-up action (if any).
- Reiterate your interest in the position! Tell them what impressed you about the organization.
- As always, proofread for errors.

It's important to consider the type of letter you write. An emailed letter will get to the intended person very quickly, especially if the recipient uses email extensively. However, a handwritten or typed and mailed letter can be more personal and can create more of a connection. As an applicant seeking employment, you need to get a feel of how the interviewer typically communicates. Certain industries are more "high tech" than others; research is necessary to determine which method of delivery will be best received. Note: Make sure your handwriting is legible if you use a simple note card.

### Accepting a Job Offer

More than likely, the employer will request a letter of acceptance. This letter should refer to the offer letter or telephone conversation stating that you accept the offer at a specified salary and starting date. You may express your eagerness to join the organization and confirm any instructions for travel, where to report, etc.

### Declining a Job Offer

Should you decide not to accept a job offer, a thank you letter is mandatory and should be sent as soon as possible. State that you are removing yourself as a candidate for consideration. Indicate your appreciation of the offer and the time invested in your interview.

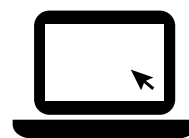
**While a resume provides a summary of your skills and experience, a cover letter takes it a step further by allowing you to highlight your specific qualifications.**

# EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Email is the preferred method of communication between job seekers and employers. While we may be unguarded in our tone when we email friends, a professional tone should be maintained when communicating with prospective employers. Email can be a powerful tool in the hands of a knowledgeable job seeker. Use it wisely, and you will shine; use it improperly, and you will be seen as immature and unprofessional. Try to be succinct in getting your point across—then end the email.

### General Guidelines

- Use a meaningful subject header—one that is appropriate to the topic.
- Be professional. Address the person as Mr., Ms. or Dr. unless told to call them by their first name previously, and definitely verify the correct spelling.
- Sign your email with your full name.
- Be brief and don't overload the employer with lots of questions.
- Ditch the emoticons and abbreviations like J/K or LOL, which are best reserved for family and friends.
- Don't use strange fonts, wallpapers or multicolored backgrounds.
- Avoid using slang.
- As with everything in the job search, proofread and check spelling.



**It's very important to send a thank you note, whether it is by snail mail or by email.**

In conclusion, when you're dealing with employers, there is no such thing as an inconsequential communication. Your emails say far more about you than you might realize. If you are sloppy and careless, a seemingly trivial communication will stick out like a sore thumb.

## COVER LETTER FORMAT GUIDELINES

If you are attaching the letter with your resume in the email, you might use this formal format.



Avoid using To Whom it May Concern or Sir/Madam. It is best to use Hiring Manager if name is unknown. Otherwise, use Mr., Ms. or Dr.



Your Name  
Your Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name of Contact Person, Title  
Organization/Company  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear (Contact Person): Mr., Ms., Dr., or Hiring Manager, if unknown

**Opening Paragraph:** Opening salvo—make it good!

- Establish tone in the first sentence to make the reader want to continue reading.
- Name the job for which you are applying. Tell how you learned about it.
- Mention the name of the person (if any) who referred you to the organization and vacancy.

**Body Paragraph:** This is the critical content section.

- Knowledge of organization/company is important. Do research! (Why them?)
- Acknowledge the skills required by the open position.
- State the skills/strengths you will bring to the job and that parallel those needed to fulfill the position.
- Give examples of your skills and work experience—quantified results, accomplishments, achievements and how they will transfer to the job.
- You may want to build this section from several short paragraphs that separate and emphasize your skills and strengths.

**Closing Paragraph:** Push for personal contact—an interview.

- Refer to documents enclosed or available, such as your portfolio with resume, reference letters, a reference sheet and, if applicable, writing samples.
- Assert yourself by telling the contact person you will call him/her on a designated date to set up an interview. Alternatively, state you are available for a personal interview at his/her convenience.
- Make it very easy for the person to contact you. List your best phone number and email as well as days and times when you can be reached. Yes, even though it's on the resume, state it again.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Typed Name

Attachment(s)



## SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1—EMPLOYMENT

Indicate where you heard about the position.

Mention a piece of information about the company to show that you have taken the time to do some research.

Use strong action words, just as you do in your resume to describe your experiences and achievements.

Use the word Attachment.

M. Mudd  
340 Foothill Blvd.  
Claremont, CA 91711

March 6, 20XX

Mr. John Bowman, Vice President  
California Federal Credit  
800 Travis Avenue, Suite 1404  
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Mr. Bowman:

I am interested in applying for a position within your organization's management training program, where I can strengthen my knowledge and exposure to the consumer finance industry. Your organization was represented at the Career Fair at Harvey Mudd College. I enjoyed talking to Jose Hernandez about your organization.

I plan to pursue a career in financial management and would like to begin my career in banking and consumer finance. From looking at your website, I feel your management program offers a wonderful opportunity to learn both banking and consumer finance. I was impressed by the organization's growth in the past five years, as well as how it is implementing new programs all the time.

As current president of Harvey Mudd College's Associated Students, I have had the opportunity to strengthen my leadership and organizational skills by planning and coordinating various fundraising and special event activities for the campus community. Through my academic coursework in mathematics, I have also developed strong communicative, analytical and problem-solving skills which will be necessary not only as a management trainee, but also in a future role as a branch manager. Furthermore, while attending college, I gained experience in customer relations and sales through various part-time positions in retail sales and telemarketing. In addition to these experiences, my interpersonal skills, self-motivation and willingness to learn will also enable me to be a strong candidate for your excellent management-training program.

I have attached my resume for your consideration. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my qualifications. I plan to contact you within the next week to determine the possibility of arranging an interview time. However, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (909) 621-4444 or john\_smith@hmc.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Mike Mudd

Attachment

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2—EMPLOYMENT

**Always address letter to a specific person; it's OK to ask Human Resources for the correct person's name.**

**If someone recommended you for the position, definitely mention that person's name.**

**Be proactive by letting the company know when you will follow up. Make sure you call within the time you specify. Also, be sure to include your contact information.**

Polly Gonn  
1567 Breese Avenue, Apt. #560  
Claremont, CA 91711

March 20, 20XX

Mark Patterson, Section Manager  
Hewlett-Packard Company  
16399 W. Bennett Drive  
San Diego, CA 92717

Dear Mr. Patterson:

I am applying for the position of systems analyst in your San Diego office that was advertised in Harvey Mudd College's newsletter. My friend, John Brown, is employed in the Los Angeles office and highly recommends Hewlett-Packard.

Early in my coursework in Computer Science and Mathematics at Harvey Mudd College, I began seriously considering future employment with Hewlett-Packard Company. We use a number of your products in our laboratory work. The design, precision, and reliability of these products are impressive. More recently, I noted in a professional computing journal that you are undertaking a new project to apply microcomputers in automatic control systems.

Many of my electives were in the fields of control systems and computers, and I worked for three summers in microcomputer applications. I believe that I am well qualified to begin my career employment on your new project; I know that it is directly related to my interests.

I have attached my resume for your consideration. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how my education and experience would be consistent with your needs. I will contact you by phone within five to seven days to discuss the possibility of an interview.

If you need to reach me, my phone number is (909) 627-5555 and my email is polly\_gonn@hmc.edu.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Polly Gonn

Attachment

# SAMPLE ELECTRONIC LETTER—INTERNSHIP

Dear Ms. Jones:

I read with interest your recent internship posting on ClaremontConnect for an electrical engineering position. From what I know about your company and the unprecedented work that you do in the telecommunications industry, I feel confident that I can bring skills and leadership to the internship.

As you can see from my attached resume, I am completing my junior year in engineering at Harvey Mudd College. Not only have I gained tremendous experience and exposure to the field of electrical engineering, I've also received hands-on training through various engineering projects. I've also coupled my educational learning with a summer work experience at Varian Associates. At Varian, I was able to solidify my classroom experiences and put them to use.

In addition to the technical skills that I would bring to your organization, I have gained leadership experience that I believe could be helpful to your organization. I've held two leadership positions in school-affiliated organizations. Specifically during my role as president of Tau Beta Pi, my team was successful in organizing an event that raised \$3K for the operating budget. As vice-president of my dorm, I helped plan weekly activities for 75 residents. I'd like to continue to use these abilities and my technical expertise in the field of electrical engineering for your highly reputable company.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person or to speak with you over the phone. In the meantime, I thank for your time and interest. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Molly Mudd

### SAMPLE LETTER OF INQUIRY

Al Gorithm  
301 Platt Blvd.  
Claremont, CA 91711

January 5, 20XX

Ms. Marsha Goulart  
Human Resources  
Silicon Tech  
555 Technology Drive  
Mountain View, CA 95555

Dear Ms. Goulart:

I read your company's description in the *National Association of Colleges and Employers Job Choices* online magazine and would like to inquire about employment opportunities in your rotational engineering program. I am interested in working in software development and would like to relocate to northern California after graduation.

I will receive my Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Harvey Mudd College this May. My interest in software development started while I was in high school and developed further through a variety of research projects conducted during the academic years and summer. In addition, my internship at a large technology company last summer convinced me to pursue a career in software engineering. When I researched the top companies in Silicon Valley, Silicon Tech emerged as having a strong reputation for its excellent rotational program. In talking to some alumni who have had the privilege of participating in this program, I know that Silicon Tech provides the kind of professional environment where I can make an immediate contribution.

My resume is attached (or will follow) for your consideration. My education and experience match the qualifications you seek in your program, but they don't tell the whole story. I know from feedback from faculty and former internship supervisors that I have the interpersonal skills and motivation needed to build a successful career in software development. My recent experience gives me confidence in my career direction and in my ability to perform competently.

I know how busy you must be during this time of year, but I would appreciate a few minutes of your time. I will call you during the week of January 24 to discuss employment possibilities. In the meantime, if you would like to contact me, my number is (909) XXX-XXXX and my email is [agorithm@g.hmc.edu](mailto:agorithm@g.hmc.edu).

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Al Gorithm

### SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Use this format only if attaching to your email. If not, start with Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. Interviewer.

Be specific and include date, name of company and the position for which you applied.



Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Date

Name of Interviewer(s), Position/Title of Interviewer(s)  
Name of Company/Organization  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Interviewer:



I appreciated the opportunity to talk with you on (date). The information you shared with me about (company name) was excellent, and I am excited about the possibility of applying my education to the position (identify the position) we discussed.

I am confident that my education, skills and experience provide me with a solid foundation for the position of (identify the position). I feel I can be an asset to your organization.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to hear about your organization. If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Typed Name

**Send a  
thank you  
letter within  
48 hours  
of your job  
interview.**

### SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Dear Ms. Holt:

As a follow-up to our conversation on April 1, 20XX, I would like to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer. The position of Environmental Analyst will provide exactly the kind of experience I have been seeking. I feel very confident that I can make a significant contribution to the City of Los Angeles, and I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me.

As we discussed, I will report to work on Monday, June 30, 20XX. I understand that I will have a starting salary of \$60K. Again, thank you for your offer. I will keep in touch as my start date nears.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

### SAMPLE DECLINE JOB OFFER LETTER

Dear Dr. Little,

Thank you for meeting with me on Friday to discuss the opportunity for employment within your Research and Development Department. The enthusiasm and warmth of the Clingenix people I met during the interviews impressed me, and the position would be very challenging.

However, while I appreciate your generous offer, after considerable thought, I have decided to decline the position. I have accepted a position elsewhere that I feel is better suited to my long-term career goals. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

### REFERENCES

Think carefully and strategically about who you ask to speak to a potential employer on your behalf. You should feel confident that your references would speak of your performance in glowing terms. After all, the employers are asking for these references to learn more about you as a potential employee.

It is recommended that you do not list “references available on request” on the resume. Bringing references to an interview will set you apart from the average candidate.

A list of references consists of three to five people who will give a potential employer excellent reviews of your past performance. Your reference list is a supplement to your resume, but do not send it with the resume unless requested to do so.

A reference may come from a professor in whose class you have excelled or with whom you’ve done research, a staff member who has mentored you, a current or previous work supervisor and /or a coworker who has experienced what it is like to work with you on a school or volunteer project. Always get permission prior to

listing someone. Contact references prior to an interview to let them know that they may be contacted and by whom. It is good idea to email them a copy of the position description and a copy of your resume.

Be sure to keep in touch with your references regularly throughout the job search process. Let them know what type of position you’re aiming for as well as the organizations you are considering. Help them think through what they should highlight about your skills and accomplishments so that it is clear that you meet the qualifications for the job you’re trying to land.

After you’ve signed the offer letter, don’t forget to let your references know of your success, and be sure to graciously thank them. References play a critical role in all successful job searches. See example on Page 39.



## SAMPLE REFERENCE LIST

**Tip: Add a brief description of your reference's relationship to you and in what capacity he/she would be able to speak regarding your skills and abilities.**



### YOUR NAME

340 Foothill Blvd., Claremont, CA 91711 | 909.621.0000 | email

### College Address

340 E. Foothill Blvd.  
Claremont, CA 91711  
909.624.1234

### Permanent Address

123 Some Street  
Summerland, CA 91010  
818.555.4321

### REFERENCES

Name, Title  
Company/Organization  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
Phone and Email

Mr. Reference was my direct supervisor at ABC Company. He can speak to my customer service skills and interest in learning new systems.

Name, Title  
Company/Organization  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
Phone  
Email

Name, Title  
Company/Organization  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
Phone and Email



## Summer Opportunities

As a student at Harvey Mudd College, you need to carefully use your summers to gain experiences since it is difficult during the academic year to work at an off-campus job, research position or internship. There are many options for summer opportunities, from researching on campus with faculty members to doing a paid internship in your industry of interest. Choose the option that will help you gain experience in your future career field. Remember, these experiences allow you to explore or “test drive” a career field, narrow down your interests, gain work-related experience and integrate what you are learning in the classroom when you enter the world of work.

## Research

If you are planning to pursue graduate school studies, you are most likely going to choose to conduct research on or off campus through various programs. The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds many undergraduate research programs called REU's (Research Education for Undergraduates). These can be found through the centralized NSF website and through faculty members. The OCS will often send out notifications, and there is a Quicklist on ClaremontConnect.

## Temporary/Part-time Jobs

You may need to return home to work and/or may simply need a temporary job. These positions are not always career-related but are usually helpful for gaining extra income. To locate these opportunities, our job listing service, ClaremontConnect, can be helpful. In addition, check the employer profiles in CC to find companies you

could approach. We are here to offer you assistance in crafting a letter to these employers to explore the possibility of creating a summer/temporary position. The weekly Hot Internships e-bulletin advertises summer positions.

## Internships

Conducting an internship is an excellent opportunity for you to learn about an industry of interest, get real work experience on your resume and make contacts for future employment, especially during your last year. It is your responsibility to research options and find a suitable position, and if you haven't looked already, don't worry. It's quite easy to find good internship opportunities. Internships come in all shapes and sizes—paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, three months, two weeks or any other length of time.

## Ways to Find Internships

- ClaremontConnect has internships listed under the Opportunities and Campus Recruiting section. These are searchable by job function, industry and geographic location. You can also do advanced searches and set up search agents. You can contact companies directly to find internships by looking for employers under the Organization and Contacts section.
- Hot Internships e-bulletin, which is distributed to students through their HMC address, lists opportunities that are most current and require immediate application.
- Leads from faculty, friends, employers, family and current students.

The OCS will support your efforts to find the best summer opportunity. Please see us for assistance.

## DEVELOPING YOUR JOB-SEARCH PLAN

There is no one best method for conducting a job search. You need to determine what strategies will work best for you. One approach is to use multiple methods. Most experts recommend that you begin your search at least three and possibly up to nine months in advance of anticipated employment. Here are some possible strategies you might want to use along the pros and cons of each.

### job-search techniques

TECHNIQUES	TOOLS	PROS	CONS	TIPS
<b>Networking</b> Talk with everyone you know to develop a list of possible contacts	List of contacts Resumes Business attire LinkedIn account	Learn about unadvertised positions May result in a courtesy interview Often results in a closer match to your ideal job	You may exhaust all of your leads Time-consuming A lead in itself won't get you a job	Call upon family, friends and faculty for advice Join various groups, including HMC's Alumni Association Create a system for your contacts Keep broadening your network of contacts Thank your contacts
<b>Career Fairs</b> A form of networking where recruiters come to college campuses to meet many candidates in a centralized location	Resumes Research notes on companies attending Business attire	Recruiters come to you Ability to generate personal contacts at the organization where you want to work May find out about unadvertised positions Provides face-to-face contact and delivery of application materials Recruiter is more likely to remember you when reviewing resumes	Can be difficult to navigate Some recruiters may simply direct you to their website for application Competition among many students for the recruiter's time	Always ask permission to drop a name Bring many copies of your resume for distribution Be clear and direct about your career goals Gather business cards and make notes on back Follow up with a thank you note

## job-search techniques

TECHNIQUES	TOOLS	PROS	CONS	TIPS
<b>On-Campus Recruiting</b> Recruiters come to campus and interview students on site in OCS  Register and search on ClaremontConnect for companies recruiting on Claremont campuses. Sign up for interviews when eligible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescreen</li> <li>• Open</li> <li>• Resume drops (see glossary)</li> </ul>	Tailored resumes  Employer literature  Business attire  Portfolio	Recruiters primarily use On-Campus Recruiting for business, engineering and computer science  Recruiters have a vested interest in hiring graduates  Opportunity to interview with many companies without having to spend a lot in travel time and money  Typically used as a screening interview and can be less formal than an on-site interview	On the decline as a method employers use for finding candidates due to the expense  Because On-Campus Recruiting is used primarily for screening and interviews are not held at the employer's office, you may walk away with a lack of knowledge about an organization	Check postings each week Bring extra copies of your resume  Be just as prepared as you would be for an on-site interview  Always follow up with a thank you note
<b>Harvey Mudd College Job and Internship Database</b> Online database open to all Claremont College students and alumni, which contains full-time, part-time and internship positions in all fields as well as work study and on-campus jobs	Resumes  Cover letters	24/7 access to positions posted by employers who are vested in recruiting at The Claremont Colleges, especially HMC  Ability to upload resumes, cover letters and other documents for direct application to organizations  Ability to publish resume in an e-book available for employers to contact you directly  Ability to search positions posted in the NACElink Network under Nationwide Opportunities	Search can be time-consuming as you need to check back often if you don't set up search agents  Some employers open positions to all majors, which can make it difficult to search for something very specific  No face-to-face contact  Can be difficult to navigate and find positions specific to your field	Upload your resumes and take advantage of the resume books  Broaden your search criteria  Check back often or, better yet, set up several search agents, email alerts or RSS feeds

## job-search techniques

TECHNIQUES	TOOLS	PROS	CONS	TIPS
<b>Job-Posting Websites</b> Countless databases are available  Electronic submission of all application materials that are tailored to positions	Access to web  Resumes with keywords known in industry and designed for electronic submission	24/7 access to jobs in every field throughout the country and worldwide  General databases as well as numerous industry-specific databases  Offered through professional associations, newspapers, commercial databases  Many sites are free or low-cost  Many employers use multiple methods for posting positions as well as job-listing services	Competition is growing as web use increases  Can be difficult to find reputable postings as many third-party recruiters post thousands of jobs without listing the employing organization	Be strategic about what sites you utilize  Narrow your search criteria  Use frequently as information and sites change quickly
<b>Twitter</b> Offers new ways to find opportunities and network  Targets social media savvy job hunters	Access to web  Resumes  Handles and avatars	Recruiters use—can follow them  Up-to-the minute postings  Stay on top of information about company	Can be too casual  Limited to 144 characters	Check for new handles in field  Keep separate personal and professional accounts  Be professional
<b>In-Person Visit</b> Visit many companies  Ask to see person in specific department  Submit resume and application, if possible	Business attire  Company address list  Resumes	Can make a personal connection  Resume and application can be placed on file with the company	Requires a great deal of time to make a relatively small number of contacts	Research the companies prior to your visit; ask for a specific person or ask about a specific type of job  See if there is anyone you know that works there that could make an introduction

## job search techniques

TECHNIQUES	TOOLS	PROS	CONS	TIPS
<b>Targeted Mailing</b> Locate companies in your field of interest and develop specific resumes and cover letters of inquiry about current opportunities  Address them to someone directly rather than to a generic human resources manager	List of well-researched companies  Tailored cover letters  Resumes	More strategic approach than mass mailing  Usually generates more positive response than generic template letters and resumes	Time-consuming  Requires more fact-finding and follow-up  Can exhaust options and contacts	Organize your contacts  You can send materials to HR or to the person in charge of the area to which you are applying  Great method when used in conjunction with networking  Start early
<b>Resume Referral</b> Register with one of the many national referral services  As employers list jobs, the data bank of registrants is searched for matches  If your qualifications match, they are sent to the employers	Registration form supplied by service	Another way to monitor the job market and share your qualifications with employers	May invoice a fee  Often more helpful to those in technical and specialized fields  May not learn about activity of your materials	Use only in conjunction with other job-search techniques
<b>Employment Agencies</b> Respond to employment agency ads or contact those agencies that place applicants on temporary to permanent assignments	Resumes  Business attire	A good way to get temporary income	Agency could charge fee	Identify agencies that specialize in your field  Check with the OCS staff  Make frequent contact with your advisor to obtain better service and explain exactly what kind of work you prefer

## NETWORKING

Before you start any of the previous job search techniques, you need to be knowledgeable about the industry you wish to pursue. This will give you the edge when it comes to effectively preparing yourself for the search. Factors to consider when researching industries include trends, skills in demand, impact of technology, products and services in demand, new and upcoming companies, and geographic areas experiencing growth and decline.

In addition, research allows you to assess whether an organization within an industry fits your personality, talents and skills. Remember not to skip this important step even though it takes time. Most people spend more of their waking hours at work than at home, so make sure it's a good fit.

### Specific Company Research

If you know the company you are interested in working for or you are preparing for an interview, gather a variety of information—information the company has produced (website) and information organized by other sources. You should note the quality of the product or service, projected growth, company culture and policies.

It is essential to be knowledgeable about the companies you will be contacting during your job search. Demonstrating that you have researched a company can set you apart from other candidates. Besides giving you the competitive edge, you will create a “hot list” of companies that may be a good fit for you. A few resources that can assist you with company research are:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Hoovers.com](#)

[Fast Company](#)

[Los Angeles Business Journal](#)

[Hispanicbusiness.com](#)

[Black-Collegian.com](#)

Have you ever heard the saying “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know?” As you build your career, you’ll find that the relationships you develop are as important, and sometimes more important, than the qualifications highlighted on your resume. Therefore learning ways to network through informational interviewing, attending career events, using social networks like LinkedIn and joining professional associations is critical in your effective job search. Your network is your list of individuals who serve as primary resources for industry information, referrals, job leads and assistance with the online job application process.

**The majority of jobs are found through networking, so learning how to network well is important. It is through these connections that you will find out about hidden or unadvertised positions.**

### Putting Your Fears to Rest

It’s very common to feel uncomfortable asking a contact for help because you fear they will think you are trying to get to know them for personal benefit. Most people in the workforce realize there is value in advising college

students and in helping them navigate the job search process. Many professionals will be happy to help if they're in a position to do so.

## What Networking Is and Is Not

### It is:

Talking with other people who have interests similar to yours • Asking for an expert opinion on your qualifications • Conversing with professionals about an industry of interest • Expressing your genuine intentions and motivations

### It is not:

Asking for a job • Cold calling someone you don't know • Delivering a salesperson's pitch • Kissing up

## Ways to Network

### 1. Conducting Informational Interviews

Informational interviewing is simply a meeting in person or on the phone during which you gather information about a position, industry and geographic location. In most cases, you'll be pleasantly surprised as you interview contacts; they will probably enjoy being considered experts and will be happy to discuss their career journeys.

An informational interview consists of asking questions of professionals and HMC alumni in order to get a feel for the characteristics of that particular occupation. It helps you understand the types of individuals with whom you might work, the environment that is commonly associated with a particular field and how specific skills are utilized. The process will also enable you to screen out areas of employment you dislike.

### Steps:

- 1 Locate contacts.
- 2 Identify organizations with people doing work of interest.
- 3 Send email or call two days to a week in advance to set up a time to talk.
- 4 Plan on 15 to 30 minutes to conduct the interviews.
- 5 Be prepared by doing your research on the career, company, competition and market.
- 6 Keep records, and send thank you notes.

### 2. Attending Career Events

During the year, the OCS organizes programs that enable you to meet professionals and alumni in an environment where networking will be encouraged. For example, the two career fairs are a perfect way to conduct mini informational interviews with the representatives. Speed Networking is offered solely for this purpose. The Social Business Etiquette Dinner is another example of a program designed to get seniors in front of employers and alumni for networking. The information sessions offered by employers throughout the year are excellent ways to meet professionals that you can follow up with for one-on-one meetings. Stay tuned to our announcements for these events to practice your networking skills.

## 3. Using LinkedIn

### Create your profile

Think of your profile as your online business card, your resume and your letters of recommendation all in one! Users with complete profiles are more likely to receive opportunities. You should demonstrate the knowledge and skills you have developed that relate to your interests. It should include information relevant to your job and internship search. Your major, internship/work experiences, class projects, honor societies and student activities are all relevant.

### Join Groups

By joining groups, you can interact with individuals who have similar interests and who attended similar schools or have similar career objectives. Also, you have access to job listings posted by group members that may not be posted elsewhere. You can start by joining HMC's Alumni Group (2,000+ members).

### Populate Your Profile with Connections

The more people you have in your network, the easier it is to connect to others in a variety of industries and locations. LinkedIn will suggest people to add to your network, but it's important that you add only people that you know. Start building your LinkedIn network by uploading your online address book and connecting to friends, relatives, internship colleagues and professionals you know in the workforce.

You should think about customizing your connection requests with a friendly note with a reminder of where you met or what organization you have in common. If you're being referred by a mutual friend, write a brief introduction of who you are and why you'd like to connect.

## 4. Joining Professional Associations

Trade and professional associations exist to promote the interests of their members. They perform a variety of functions including networking, an exchange of information, professional development, sponsoring continuing education workshops, meetings and conferences, promoting the profession, providing professional certification and more. Ask if they discount student memberships. In many cases, the discount can be substantial. Then, attend a meeting, workshop, conference, trade show or other event. Dress professionally, meet as many people as you can and follow up. Sometimes you can offer to help out at a conference and attend for free. Select one or two associations, and join.

### Quick Tips for Contacting Professionals, Including Alumni

Networking is about building relationships and connections in a purposeful, organized way. Again, networking is not about asking alumni for jobs but asking for assistance.

Remember time is priceless for professionals. Ask when a good time would be to contact them rather than give a long-winded explanation of your background and goals. If you were referred by someone, state that person's name (get permission, of course). If you know them from an event, state the event (e.g., met you at Speed Networking).

In your email or phone message, remember to clearly articulate who you are and what your goals are. State



how you are connected, and describe who you are, then communicate your objectives:

- Learning about their organization
- Seeking advice about a career field or industry
- Desiring referrals to other professionals in their industry or organization
- Applying for an internship or job opportunity at their organization and asking for support to get your resume seen by the appropriate person after applying online.

## Here are some possible conversation starters for phone or email:

*"I found your profile through the HMC Alumni Group on LinkedIn. I am a senior engineering major at HMC. I am very interested in pursuing a career in consulting. Would you have some time to discuss what you do and what recommendations you have for someone with an engineering background looking to enter consulting? We can discuss this via email or phone, whichever is more convenient for you. I look forward to hearing from you."*

*"Hello, I'm Milly Mudder. I completed my Bachelor of Science degree in physics from Harvey Mudd College in May, and I'm investigating research laboratories in the Los Angeles area. You attended the Speed Networking event organized by HMC's Office of Career Services last March, and I thought you might be able to offer some helpful insights as I prepare to launch my career. I sent you a letter of introduction and resume last weekend, and I'm hoping we can arrange a time to speak for a few minutes."*

*"My name is Harry Mudd. John Jones, a colleague of yours, gave me your name and said that you would be an excellent person to talk with to learn more about working in a large software company. I recently spoke to Ms. Smith at the Harvey Mudd College fall Career Fair. I am a senior pursuing a computer science degree, and I would greatly appreciate meeting with you for 30 minutes sometime next week to discuss some of your insights about this field."*

## Sample Questions to Professionals

- What recommendations would you have for someone looking to enter the industry?
- What skills and experiences would help me stand out as an applicant in this industry?
- What does a typical day look like? What do you like most/least?
- What are the key companies, organizations and professional associations that I should know about?
- What abilities are important for success in your field?
- Are there other professionals that you recommend I talk to?
- What abilities are important for success in your field?
- How can students find summer internships in your field?

You'll notice none of the questions ask about a specific job. This type of direct request makes a contact feel put upon. You should only be seeking wisdom, tips, strategies, leads and directions from these networking contacts.

### Maintaining Communication and Positive Energy

After each encounter with professionals and alumni, immediately send a thank you note (see Page 36). Stay in touch with all your contacts every few months to update them on your status and to inquire if they have heard of any useful news. By all means, let them know when you land a position! They'll be interested in your good news.

Networking is a productive use of your time, but it is very time consuming, and the payoff doesn't happen overnight. Job seekers often get discouraged thinking that they aren't getting anywhere. It is natural to have these feelings at the beginning of this process. Don't give up! Retreating from networking in favor of sitting in your dorm responding to anonymous job postings will slow down your job search efforts. Networking will pay off in the long run.

## Additional Sample Emails for Requesting an Informational Interview

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am currently a student at Harvey Mudd College exploring various fields of engineering. After attending the SWE Conference, I became intrigued by chemical engineering and found your name from the counselor in the Office of Career Services who has access to the alumni database. I understand that you are currently working as a chemical engineer for Chevron.

I would appreciate the opportunity to learn from your first-hand experience and gain some insight into chemical engineering. I wonder if you would be willing to spend 20 to 30 minutes with me discussing what you do at Chevron. I realize that you are very busy; therefore, I would like to make this as convenient as possible for you.

I will call you on October 20 to see if we can arrange a meeting or a phone call. Again, I appreciate your time and consideration, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,  
Milly Mudd  
909.XXX.XXXX

Dear Ms. White:

As an alumna of Harvey Mudd College, I'm sure you understand the difficulties today's graduates face in making the transition from college students to young professionals. I'm about to graduate this May with my B.S. in Biology, and, through some career exploration, I have confirmed that I would like to work in the field of biotechnology before going to graduate school.

I am confident that your position as a researcher with Amgen has provided you with excellent insight into the biotech field. Would you be willing to meet briefly with me to share any suggestions that you may have about careers in this field?

I will call your office the week of February 20 to arrange a possible meeting time or, if you prefer, we can set up a phone conversation. My resume is attached so that you can review my background prior to our conversation.

I appreciate your consideration of my request, and I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,  
Matt Mudd  
Attachment

## Online Job-Search Etiquette

Remember that anything you post on the Internet is public information. You need to think about any information you have posted about yourself and how well it represents you. More stories are surfacing about employers who find information about candidates who post to Facebook. Think about changing your privacy settings on these social networking sites and removing picture tags; in short, be careful of the photographs you use. To protect your privacy, you might want to create an email just for your job search that doesn't reveal your full name. Some people decline to include their cell phone numbers for fear it might be sold to marketing companies.

## Phone Etiquette for Job-Search

To be successful using the phone—prepare, practice, be polite, persistent and follow-up. The best way to prepare is to develop an outline of what you want to say and to practice. This will help you get comfortable and not sound too mechanical.

### Prepare for your call:

1. Who are you calling?
2. Who referred you? A contact can be an effective way to get by the administrative assistant.
3. Why you are calling?
4. Why would a personal meeting benefit both of you?
5. Once you establish an appointment, be sure to verify the name, time and exact address, including floor.
6. Once you have accomplished the purpose for calling, bring the call to a close.
7. Be succinct, and provide them with options to avoid yes/no responses.



## Phone Call Guidelines

- Be prepared for the unexpected! You may be transferred when you had planned to speak only with the assistant, or you may be screened for a potential position when you simply had been making a networking call.
- Keep your calls short and simple. Avoid being interviewed over the phone if an in-person interview is possible.
- Don't forget that an administrative assistant can be your best ally. Get a name, and establish a friendly relationship. If you are unsuccessful with the assistant, try calling before 9 a.m., after 5 p.m. or during the lunch hour.
- In general, avoid Monday mornings and Friday afternoons.
- Sound professional and powerful. Be interesting and enthusiastic.
- Follow up. Do it when you say you will.

## MAKING THE MOST OF THE CAREER FAIR

Career fairs provide you a valuable opportunity to explore careers, find out about employment options, obtain employer information and establish company contacts. Approximately 150 organizations come to Harvey Mudd College to meet with students of all majors about full-time and internship positions. They enjoy the opportunity to talk with you about their organization and to identify potential candidates for current and future hiring needs. For you, the OCS's career fairs provide one-stop shopping. What a great opportunity to be able to talk to numerous organizations at one time and in one place! You get to meet these prospective employers face-to-face, so you must be prepared.

Career fairs are the No. 1 way students at Harvey Mudd College find jobs. However, there is an art to getting a job through participation in career fairs. We hope this guide will help you to be successful.

### Before the Career Fair

#### Take the event seriously

Adopt a positive attitude, and focus on the benefits of attending this event. You can learn a lot from employers about their organizations and job opportunities. It is like an initial interview. You are making the important first impression. If you do not make a favorable impression, you probably won't be asked to the office for an interview.

#### Define your goals

Goals could be finding jobs or internships, seeking information about an organization, making initial contact or practicing communication skills with employers.

#### Create the ideal resume

Make sure your resume is attractive, has no errors and markets your skills, experience and education. Bring 10 to 20 copies of your resume on nice bond paper to give to interested employers (see the OCS for paper). You may want to prepare more than one version, depending on your goals.

**Note:** Many employers won't take resumes at fairs and

will ask you to go to the company website to upload your resume.

#### Plan your strategies carefully and be prepared

Read all the information provided by the OCS on the attending companies. This information is posted on ClaremontConnect. Gathering background information on these organizations will enable you to ask focused and specific questions, making you a much more interesting candidate than those who ask "So, what do you guys do?" Your research will impress employers. You may only have one or two minutes with each employer. There are some typical questions recruiters will ask you when you first meet them:

*"What kind of job are you looking for?"*

*"What do you know about our company/organization?"*

*"What are your career goals?"*

.....

**There are two career fairs offered at HMC each academic year—October and February. You are also encouraged to attend fairs at the other Claremont Colleges and within the greater community.**

.....

### **Explore all of your options**

Have an open mind when you decide which organizations you want to visit. You never know when you may find a great opportunity with an employer you had never considered before. HINT: Start with employers that you are not as interested in to get your momentum going.

### **Prepare a list of questions**

Include questions regarding the details about available positions, training programs, internship opportunities, possible career paths, etc.

### **Prepare a self introduction**

Practice a brief but enthusiastic introduction that shows your strengths, skills, experience and interest.

### **Dress appropriately**

Campus attire is acceptable for the career fairs; however, you will probably be most comfortable if you dress in business casual. Remember that first impressions count. (See Interviewing Guide, Page 56.)

## **At the Career Fair**

### **Allow yourself adequate time**

Arrive as early as possible. You may need to return if you have to go to class.

### **Review the map and directory for the fair**

If this is your first career fair or you need to get comfortable, go to the practice area to talk to volunteer employers (look for signs). Quickly locate and walk by the employers of greatest interest to you. This will confirm their location and alert you to any crowds or lines.

### **Relax and smile**

Try to enjoy yourself and show a lot of enthusiasm and self confidence. Introduce yourself, establish eye contact and present a firm handshake. Have your resume ready to give the representatives.

### **The “mini interview” should be a dialogue, not a monologue**

You have limited time to make an impression and gain valuable information about the company; therefore you should have several questions ready. These questions help you figure out if the company is a good match for you. For instance, *“What skills and characteristics would the ideal programmer need for your project leader position?”* THEN, use that information to sell yourself. *“As you can see from my experience, I have...”* OR, *“Can you tell me what characteristics your most successful mechanical engineers have?”* THEN *“I’m glad to hear that because....”*

**Don’t forget that even though you are saying the same thing over and over again, the information is new to each employer. Take a short break if you need to refresh.**

### **Be prepared to discuss skills, interests and background**

Sell yourself—be ready to articulate your strengths and competencies and the key features that make you stand out from others.

### **Answer questions directly, politely and concisely**

Your goal is to get a SECOND interview “in-house.” If you’re genuinely interested, let them know! “I am quite excited about the possibilities your company offers, and I believe that I have the skills you need....What do I need to do to arrange a second interview?” While this might sound pushy, it’s flattering and says you are professionally confident.

### **Take notes about next steps**

The representatives at the fair may not be able to answer all of your questions that day. Ask for business cards, and if they don’t have one, write down the name, phone and address. NOTE: Make sure you know the most appropriate person to follow up with. Remember you are going to want to follow up with notes after the fair, so you’ll need this contact information.

### **Be courteous**

Know when it is time to move on. Be sensitive to other students by keeping your questions brief. Offer a polite closure when the conversation has ended—something like “It has been nice meeting you.”

### **Don’t forget to network**

There are many alumni serving as representatives who might have worked or interviewed at other companies; thus, they could know of other positions for you. Investigate all the possibilities.

**Write down things you’ve discussed because this will help you write follow-up notes. This is very important!**

### **Questions You Might Want to Ask at the Career Fair**

#### **About the Organization**

- Why is your company a good one to work for?
- Can you give me an idea of what you’re looking for in a successful candidate?
- What education and experience as well as skills are required for entry-level and more advanced positions?
- Are there opportunities for career advancement?
- What challenges do you see for your organization?
- What are the areas of greatest growth?
- Describe the usual college graduate, entry-level position.
- What do you like the most about your organization?
- Do you offer summer internships?
- What experiences might I have as an intern in your organization?
- Considering my particular career interest, are there additional people whom I should contact?

## About the industry

- What are the areas of growth?
- What should a college graduate know about your industry before he/she applies for a job?
- What professional associations or periodicals should I become familiar with in order to acquaint myself with what is happening industry-wide?

## About the occupation

- What are the entry-level opportunities?
- What are the skills that are most important for a position in this field?
- What kind of training is given people entering this field?
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to break into this field?

## After the Career Fair

- Make further notes about the organization and employers while these thoughts are still fresh in your mind.
- Follow up with thank you letters to recruiters that were particularly helpful and organizations with whom you would like to pursue a relationship. Remind them of your interest and your qualifications and reiterate your interest in pursuing a second interview. Few people follow through this way today, and you will stand out and demonstrate professional follow through.

- Set up a system to keep track of follow-up activities, i.e., Excel, cards or a job-search binder. It is very important to be organized during your job-search.

## Career fairs are the No. 1 way to find a job

(based on HMC Senior Surveys from 2007 to 2013)





## THE INTERVIEW

Once you've perfected your marketing materials, such as your resume and cover letter, it's time to focus on your verbal self-promotion and visual first impression. A strong resume may land you an interview, but a fantastic interview will win you a job offer. Interviewing is as much an art as it is a science. An employer's decision to extend a job offer to you is based on many variables, some of which you may never know. To improve your chances, this guide will help you prepare.

### Purpose of the Interview

The interview is a conversation in which you and an employer exchange information. Your objective is to get a job offer, and the employer's objective is to find out the following:

- What you have to offer (your skills, abilities, basic knowledge)
- Who you are (your personality, character, interests)
- Why you should be hired (whether you have what they are seeking)

Your goal is to present yourself as the best candidate for the position and also to learn more about the position and the organization to determine whether both are well suited for you. Thus, the interview is a two-way discussion rather than an interrogation.

The interview often depends on your skills in marketing your potential. Do not miss out on a good position for which you are qualified due to a lack of preparation. You need to be ready to answer questions about your career goals and background. You will also want to develop intelligent questions of your own to help you

obtain the necessary information for making an informed decision. Furthermore, preparation helps build your self-confidence in your interview skills and is the key to successful interviewing.

### Dealing with your stage fright

If just thinking about going on an interview gives you a lot of anxiety, realize you are not alone.

#### Think about the following:

- What do you fear most about the interview situation?
- What is the worst thing that could happen?
- If you were giving advice to someone else in this situation, what would you tell him/her?

Often, when people are nervous, they are responding to an internal voice that warns them not to make a mistake or risk looking incompetent. These negative messages inhibit people from expressing their individuality. Because interviews rely on your positive energy, it is very important to counteract this internal voice by strengthening positive self-messages. Look at it this way: you go into the interview without a job; the worst that will happen is you'll exit without one!



## Preparing for the Interview

Get your goals in focus. You need to know what you want, where you want to be, who can employ you and, most importantly, why you will be good at the job you seek. Next, check your public image. If you have a Facebook or LinkedIn account, check the content to make sure it reflects the image that you want to project to an employer. Employers do look at these social networking sites when they research a potential candidate's background. You can use the free [www.mywebcareer.com](http://www.mywebcareer.com) to evaluate your professional online presence.

### Know Yourself

Most interviews include questions regarding your qualifications, education, campus and community activities, prior work experience, personal characteristics, skills and career interests. Prepare to answer questions about yourself and to identify your three main strengths. Often employers want to know your short-term and long-term goals.

### Research the Position

Remember the employer is thinking "What can this person do for my organization?" Therefore, analyze the job description and how your background, skills and experience apply to the position. If the job description is limited, research similar jobs in similar companies and look up information on the job title in various career information resources, such as the O\*Net, now available through ClaremontConnect.

### Research the Employer and the Industry

It is important to learn as much as you can about the employer before you interview. Also, review the general

industry that this employer is part of to get a bigger picture. You will have a much better chance of creating a positive impression. Examine its literature, visit its website, look it up on Hoovers.com and Vault, and if possible, talk with faculty, alumni, friends and present employees who can be helpful sources of information. Study the mission statement, goals, finances and growth projections to get an idea of the company's direction. If you really want to be part of this organization, do you share the same values?

### Get References

Speak directly with the people you are planning to name as references (prior employers, faculty members, etc.). Let them know the kinds of jobs you are applying for and what specific experiences and abilities you hope they can share about you. Give them a copy of your resume to refer to.

### Practice, Practice, Practice!

Preparing for an interview involves rehearsal. Many interview questions are predictable and can be anticipated prior to the interview. You can also predict "job-specific" questions by analyzing the job description—duties, responsibilities and skills of the position. Practice speaking out loud in front of a mirror, into a tape recorder or with a friend. It is important to hear your voice (is it animated or monotone?) and see your face (do you look like you want to be there?) Practicing will help decrease anxiety. Believe it or not, the more you interview, the better you will respond to simple ice-breaker questions, such as "*What do you think of this weather?*" or behavioral questions, such as "*Can you tell me about a time you had to complete multiple projects.*"

**Be sure to inquire about what type of interview to expect so you can best prepare!**

### Interview Types

#### Phone

Phone interviews are used to screen candidates early in the interview process as a cost-saving technique before inviting candidates for an on-site interview. These can be with one person or a panel of people and can last anywhere from 10 minutes to one hour.

- Alert others living with you of possible incoming calls from employers.
- Create a quiet place free of distractions.
- Make sure that your cell phone is fully charged.
- Make notes ahead of time about important points you want to make.
- Have your resume, job description, questions to ask, pen, paper and other prepared notes in front of you.

Don't get distracted by shuffling papers during the interview.

- Have a glass of water handy.
- Jot down the names of everyone on the other end of the line when they introduce themselves and use their names throughout the interview whenever possible.
- Do not interrupt your interview to take another call.
- Be aware that walking around the room may affect your signal.
- Smile when you talk—your enthusiasm will be heard by the interviewer(s). Express confidence.
- You can't count on clues from the interviewer's body language, so be wary of rambling on too long as a way to avoid awkward pauses. Pauses are a normal part of phone interviews because the interviewer is trying to avoid interrupting you. Stay focused, calm and friendly.

#### Advantages

1. You can have notes in front of you to serve as a reminder of important talking points. DO NOT write out your answers because they might sound scripted.
2. You don't have to worry about getting lost or being late to your interview.
3. You can be in a comfortable location and comfortably dressed.

## Disadvantages

1. You can't see the interviewer's body language or facial expressions
2. If English is a second language for you or the interviewer(s), you may find it hard to understand each other over the phone.
3. You can't see the work environment.

## One-on-One

This is the most common type of interview, with one applicant being interviewed by one person. The interviewer will ask you questions, and you have an opportunity toward the end of the interview to ask questions.

## Group

There are usually two or more candidates in the room interviewing for the same position. There may be one or more people conducting the interview. The employer may be observing how you interact with others on a team. (Do you work well with others? Can you lead as well as listen?) At times, you may be the first one to respond to a question. If you are last to respond, however, you don't want to just reiterate what others have said. Your response should be personal and unique so that it stands out from the others.

## Committee or Panel

A group of people conduct the interview. While this can be an intimidating experience, just remember that it's not all that different from a traditional one-on-one

interview. Ask for business cards before you begin, or try to write down names and titles to help you answer, taking into consideration each interviewer's role. Interviewers will typically take turns asking questions. You can address most of your response to the person asking you the question, but feel free to also shift your eye contact to the other interviewers on the panel and then end by looking at the person who asked the question.

## Meal

You may be interviewed while eating lunch or possibly dinner. Even though the environment may seem less formal, you are still being interviewed, so don't let your guard down! See Social Etiquette tips in the online OCS Guidebook.

## During The Interview

### First Impressions Count!

- Be on time. Find out when and where the interview will take place and how to get there. Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early so you can relax.
- Dress appropriately; that is, according to the standards of the organization.
- Greet the interviewer by name, with a smile and a firm handshake. Treat receptionists in a polite and professional manner.
- If you are not offered a glass of water, it is appropriate to ask for one.
- Sit straight but not too rigid; maintain eye contact, especially when emphasizing a point.

- Nodding your head while the interviewer talks will make him/her feel like you're paying attention.
- Lean slightly forward to appear more attentive while the interviewer is speaking.
- Elevate your chin slightly to give the impression of confidence.
- Show your enthusiasm and energy in a way that feels natural. If you tend to speak in a monotone, use more non-verbal behaviors like smiling. Work on varying the inflections in your voice. Remember enthusiasm is often the major selling point for the person who gets hired.
- Listen, listen, listen! Employers rarely hire people who talk over them or don't respond to the question as asked.

### Interview Format

The first few minutes of the interview are used to establish rapport between you and the interviewer. The interviewer may engage you in small talk or ask questions about interests and hobbies. This is a good opportunity to demonstrate your communication skills. The next portion of the interview is spent in an exchange of information to determine whether you are a good "match." You will be expected to ask questions about the position and organization that will help you decide whether the opportunity is right for you. Avoid asking questions for which answers could have been obtained beforehand.

Answer the questions thoroughly by backing up your statements with specific examples of your skills, experiences and accomplishments. However, do not give more information than what the interviewer is asking for. Avoid negatives/weaknesses and using phrases such as "I really don't have much experience in that area." Show

confidence in yourself and your ability to perform the job. Finally, establish good eye contact with the interviewer and take an active part in the interview.

Do not ask about salary, bonuses or vacation benefits during the initial screening interview. Let the interviewer introduce the subject of salary. If salary is discussed, be prepared to indicate a salary range that you would expect to receive.

### Interview Conclusion

Be alert for signs that the interview is coming to an end. This is the time that the interviewer will ask you if you have any questions. Prepare questions ahead of time; consult the list of possible questions included in this section. Remember that asking intelligent questions reflects the depth of your research and the clarity of your thinking. You do not want to say, "No, my questions have all been answered" as a response. At the conclusion, ask what the next step will be and when you can expect to know the results of the interview. Restate your interest in working for the organization, and thank the interviewer for taking time to talk with you. The interviewer will usually close by telling you what the next step will be, but not always.

### Follow Up

Take a few minutes after the interview to think about what you did well and what you could do better the next time. Make notes about what you discussed, including next steps. Keep a log of addresses, phone numbers, dates of interviews, names of referrals, etc. Write a thank you note to the interviewer within 48 hours of the interview. If you do not hear from the employer within the specified time period, follow up with a phone call.

### TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

The number of questions an interviewer may ask you is infinite. Most of the questions, however, will address you as a person; your educational background; employment experience; communication and interpersonal skills; self-motivation; initiative; leadership and problem-solving ability; professional goals. When you respond to the questions, draw on experiences from your jobs, internships, academics, extracurricular activities and community service. Make sure to relate your answers to the job for which you are interviewing.

**1. Behavioral questions provide interviewers with a pattern of behavior or performance to judge your fit for a job.**

The best predictor of future performance is past performance under similar circumstances. When answering questions, you should strive to provide examples that demonstrate that a particular positive behavior is customary. For example, you may be asked questions such as the following:

- *“Tell me about a time when you...”*
- *“Give me an example of a problem you solved...”*

**To prepare, do the following:**

- Carefully review the job description and skills required, and construct answers based on these items. For example, if leadership and quantitative skills are required, construct stories describing how you exercised these skills.
- Make sure that your stories follow the Situation, Task, Action, Result (STAR) format. First, describe the problem or situation you faced. Then describe the tasks that you felt needed to be accomplished.



Third, describe the actions you took. Finally, discuss the results you obtained. Use only enough detail so that the interviewer can understand the degree to which you exercised your skills.

- c. Develop stories to illustrate your different skills.
- d. Make sure your stories are about specific situations.

## 2. Open-ended questions require detailed responses.

### For example:

- Discuss two or three factors that are most important to you in a job.
- Describe your ideal job.
- What are your short-term goals?

## 3. Common probing questions verify or confirm information and can be answered with brief responses.

### For example:

- Are you open for relocation?
- Why did you decide to attend this college?
- How would you evaluate your last boss?

**4. Technical or case interview questions.** These are used with high-tech companies requiring specific technical skills or with consulting companies who prefer the case scenarios or brainteaser type questions. For example:

- What software program would you use to solve this problem? Why?
- How many gas stations are in L.A. County?



**Come to OCS  
for books  
and handouts  
to help with technical  
and case interviews.**

## Questions You Could be Asked

### Tell me about yourself

Keep your answer brief and concise (60–90 seconds). Highlight your academic background, work experience and personal attributes that are relevant to the position. Express your enthusiasm for the position and your desire to work for the company.

### What is one thing you need to work on?

Be honest, but put a positive spin on it. Recognizing your limitations shows maturity. Tell the employer what you have learned from your experience and how you already worked to improve this shortcoming.

### Where do you see yourself in five years?

Your answer should reflect your interest in staying involved with the company so the employer knows that you are a good investment. Having future goals demonstrates motivation and focus. You do not have to use specific job titles, but communicate your desire for additional responsibility.

## **Why would you like to work for us?**

Tell a story about how you first became interested in this type of work. Point out how your previous experience shows a long-term interest in this industry. Express your passion for your work. Illustrate how your background and interest match the company's need. Here's where your research pays off.

## **What qualification(s) do you have that will make you successful in this position?**

Be specific. Remember to use examples of how you have demonstrated two or three skills in your previous experiences.

## **Why should I hire you?**

The most important information you can offer is a reiteration of how you will use your best skills to perform the job. Realize that your enthusiasm and desire for the position can be convincing.

## **How long would you stay if we offered you this position?**

For those of you considering graduate school in the near future, use some caution when answering this question. Hiring someone who will leave after a year or even two for graduate school is not a good choice. Do your homework to see if they offer support for continuing education.

## **What kind of grades did you have?**

This can be a difficult question if your grades were not stellar. The best approach is to explain the circumstances for your academic performance. Show improvements in upper-division courses if relevant.

## **What salary are you looking for?**

Delay salary negotiation until they make you an offer. Ask to discuss salary when you are both certain you are right for the job. If pressed for an amount, it is best to talk about a range, which you should know from doing your research.

## **Questions You Could Ask**

1. To whom will I report? Will I have the chance to meet this person?
2. What kind of projects might I expect during the first year?
3. What qualities/skills are you specifically looking for in the candidate?
4. How would you describe the corporate culture?
5. With what types of people will I be working? Which people seem to do well in this organization?
6. What growth opportunities do you foresee opening in the next three years?
7. What are the challenges that may arise in the near future?
8. What do you (the interviewer) like about working for this organization?
9. How would you compare this organization to others in the industry?
10. How does the company promote personal and professional development?

—————→ **good luck!**



## WHAT TO WEAR

If you want to make a professional first impression, take what you wear to the interview seriously. How you look is often as important as what you say. When in doubt, simply ask, “What’s appropriate to wear?” Each industry has its own dress code. Fields like finance and consulting usually have a stricter or more conservative code than engineering or high tech. However, when in doubt, making a conservative choice is the safest. You will probably dress differently once you get the job.

### Men—Classic Wear

- Matching suits or coordinated trousers and blazers in dark colors such as navy, black or dark gray
- Several long-sleeved shirts
- Conservative ties (avoid whimsical styles or bright colors)
- Dark, well-polished shoes with a belt to match or to complement shoes
- Lots of dark socks to match trousers, over-the-calf

### Men—Business Casual

- Separates (coordinated slacks and sport coats)
- Several ties in solid shades, stripes or geometric prints
- Cotton or blended shirts and polo shirts with collars
- Pullover, cardigan or turtleneck sweaters
- Slides, loafers or lace-up shoes in brown and black with matching belts.
- Lots of socks to match trousers

### Women—Classic Wear

- Suits or separates (skirts, jackets and pants) in neutral colors
- Several silk, blended or cotton blouses and knit tops in solid colors. Avoid plunging necklines
- Dress shoes (navy, black and taupe), low and well-polished with matching purses and belts, if appropriate
- Panty hose in basic colors or knee-highs with pants

### Women—Business Casual

- Separates (skirts, jackets and pants) in neutral colors
- Casual dresses or pantsuits
- Several silk, blended or cotton blouses, and knit tops – no exposed midriffs
- Pullover, cardigan or turtleneck sweaters
- Lower pumps (navy, black and taupe) with matching purses and belts
- Lots of hosiery, including color-coordinated knee-highs for pants

### What if things don’t go your way?

Try not to lose sleep over this. You will not hear “yes” as often as you would like, and that is a guarantee. Be persistent. Explore a wide range of options. Don’t take a rejection call or letter personally. It’s not about you as a person, but more about your background and experience. For example, there could be another candidate with just a little more experience. You will eventually find a match that is right for you. Interviewing is a subjective process. It is not about finding the smartest, nicest or coolest candidate. It IS about finding a match, or a composite of skills, background and personal traits that together meet an organizational need.



## The OCS Can Help

- Consider touching base with a staff member by appointment for quick questions you might have about an upcoming or recent interview.
- Schedule a mock interview prior to the important date and allow enough time to practice.

### Valuable Tips:

- Invest in clothes that fit your body and budget
- Make sure clothing is clean and pressed
- Sport your best haircut and keep brushed away from face
- Keep jewelry to a minimum and keep it conservative
- Have neat, well-kept fingernails, and nail polish should either be worn well or not at all
- Go easy on makeup, cologne or perfume
- Camouflage any visible tattoos
- Pay special attention to personal hygiene
- Use an antiperspirant
- Keep breath mints handy



## Summary of Interviewing Hints

- **Know yourself.** Be ready to sell your skills. Your resume cannot talk for you.
- **Be on time.** Give yourself 10 to 15 minutes to relax and get composed. Be late, and lose the job.
- **Be friendly to everyone.** Acknowledge all individuals with a smile and a firm handshake.
- **Research the company.** Know who, what, when, where.
- **Dress for the interview, not the job.** If you know the standards of the organization, please dress appropriately. If not, be conservative.
- **Bring a resume.** Bring any pertinent recommendations.
- **Go alone.** Leave friends and relatives at home.
- **Remember the interviewer's name.** People like to be recognized. Use his/her name as often as possible. Do not use his/her first name only, unless you have been authorized to do so.
- **Be a good listener.** Do not think of your response while the interviewer is talking. You want to make sure you hear the question correctly.
- **Stand until invited to sit.** Follow the interviewer's lead. If he/she removes his/her jacket, you can ask if it's OK to do so.
- **Be aware of body language.** Appearance is 55 percent of the first impression; 35 percent is body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, mannerisms, posture; what you say is only 10 percent.
- **Remember your manners.** Look the interviewer in the eye (this builds trust).
- **Show your enthusiasm.** Eighty percent of success in the workplace is based on attitudes; 20 percent is job skills.
- **Be positive.** Don't criticize others or put anyone down.
- **Express yourself.** Do not use slang, ramble or mumble.
- **Be yourself.** It is extremely important to be genuine and sincere.
- **Maintain your health.** Get a good night's sleep. Think positive thoughts.
- **Follow up.** Always send a thank you letter.

# PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL ETIQUETTE

You've perfected your resume. Your cover letters are persuasive. Your interview skills are polished. You are ready to pursue career opportunities. However, before you do, make sure you understand the importance of social etiquette. Your behavior during meals and receptions can advance or hurt your candidacy for a job. Take a look at the following common-sense tips that will serve you well in your job search and in life.

### **When an employer invites you to an event:**

- Be on time
- RSVP whether you are able to attend or not
- Do not cancel without a good reason
- Dress with care; clarify appropriate attire
- The person who extends the invitation pays the bill
- Place your nametag on the upper-right side of your clothing
- Avoid inappropriate language
- Learn to discuss any topic including those that do not interest you
- Tell jokes only if they are appropriate
- Always send a thank you note within 24 to 48 hours

### **When you are at an employer reception and don't know anyone:**

- Be the one to start the conversation
- Look for a shared or common interest
- Be a good listener; ask open-ended questions
- Avoid controversial or unsuitable subjects
- Make sure that your cell phone or pager will not interrupt the conversation
- Don't gossip or preach
- Avoid fidgeting and extreme nervousness

- Smile; shake hands firmly; have good eye contact; send out positive signals
- Don't repeat; don't ramble; modulate your voice
- If all else fails, bring up the weather

### **Topics for starting a conversation with a stranger:**

- Great new restaurant, movie or book
- Success stories
- Interesting classes
- Hobbies
- Sporting events
- What you'll do with your vacation break

### **How to introduce people:**

- Introduce the most important person first
- Introduce a younger person to an older person
- Introduce a peer in your own company to a peer in another company
- Introduce a nonofficial to an official person
- If you are not immediately introduced, introduce yourself when appropriate
- Responding to introductions—shake hands, make eye contacts, and say “hello” or “nice to meet you”

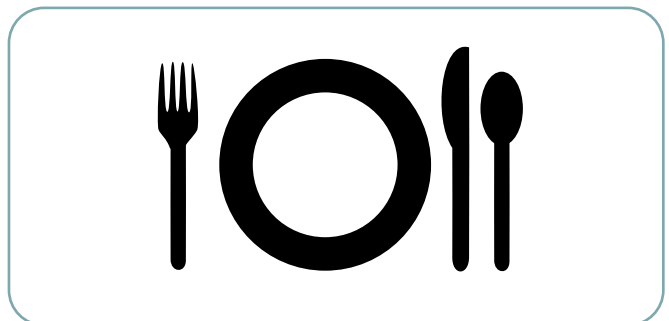
### Dining with Success:

- Place your napkin onto your lap immediately; if you leave your chair, place your napkin onto your chair not onto the table
- Silverware is used from the outside moving in
- Once a utensil is used, it should not rest on the table again
- When resting a knife on your plate, the blade should always face you
- If you drop a utensil, ignore it; if it is obstructing a walkway, use your foot to move it
- Keep purses, brief cases, cell phones, keys, etc., off the table
- The bread and butter plate is placed to the left of dinner plate and drinks are placed to the right (remember that “b” [bread] comes before “d” [drink]—left to right)
- Break bread into two pieces and then into bite-sized pieces; each piece should be buttered, then eaten individually
- Sugar packets should be opened and remain in one piece
- Fold empty sugar packet in half and place it underneath the service plate or the bread plate
- Food, condiments, etc. are passed in a counter-clockwise direction around the table
- Salt and pepper shakers always travel in a pair; do not salt and/or pepper your food prior to tasting as it is considered rude to do so

- If you spill a drink, use your napkin to protect yourself and then ask the wait staff for assistance
- Do not start to eat before your host/hostess begins, unless you are told to do so
- Do not apply lipstick or comb your hair at the table
- Do not use a toothpick to remove something from your teeth at the table
- Do not stack your plates after you’ve finished your meal

### The Most Common Business Etiquette Mistakes:

- No advance preparation
- Inappropriate dress or grooming; unprofessional image
- Late arrival
- Negative body language or poor posture
- Dishonesty
- Lack of self-confidence
- Inability to communicate strengths
- Embarrassing dining skills
- Poor telephone or Netiquette skills
- Failure to follow up or express gratitude



# JOB OFFERS AND NEGOTIATING YOUR SALARY

## Evaluating a Job Offer

When you receive an offer, you have an important decision to make. You may be tempted to accept the first job offered, but it is important not to make a decision in haste. Give yourself at least a day or two, and in some cases, you might need a week or longer. Here are some points to consider:

### The Job

- Is the position interesting and challenging?
- Do you know specifically what you'll be doing? Are your duties reflected in the title?
- Does the job offer advancement opportunity for the future?

### The Organization

- Is there a high turnover of personnel?
- Has the company experienced recent growth? Does it have future growth potential?
- Does the organization have a strong reputation in the industry?

### Compensation Package

- Is the salary satisfactory?
- Does the organization offer an attractive benefits package?
- Are training programs offered or pay for continuing education?

### Lifestyle Considerations

- Will the job allow adequate time for interests?
- Will I be required to travel? How much? Where?

- Will I need to relocate? Do I like the lifestyle the location offers?

## Top 5 Criteria that were most important to graduates choosing an organization. \*alpha order

- 1 Colleagues
- 2 Geographic location
- 3 Intellectually challenging work
- 4 Job duties/responsibilities
- 5 Starting salary

## What if I like the offer, but I'm still waiting to hear from other employers?

On average, an employer will allow one to two weeks for you to evaluate and sign an offer. Depending on the job, the company size and the job market, this time frame may be negotiable. Occasionally, an employer will pressure you with a "short fuse" deadline. These are sometimes called "exploding" offers that have a signing bonus contingent upon accepting in 24 to 48 hours.

### **Your courtesy will serve future HMC students and will earn you respect in your professional life.**

The reason employers want an answer is they cannot make another offer until you've turned them down. Each day they wait for an answer, they lose ground with other potential candidates. Come into the OCS to discuss the offer and how to negotiate if you need more time to make a decision. Some employers will extend the time, but others will not.

**Tip:** ALWAYS get an offer in writing. A formal offer should include: salary, job title, start date, eligibility for benefits and a signature from the organization's representative.

### **What if I don't like the offer and want to turn it down?**

Make sure you've given yourself enough time to evaluate. If you determine it isn't a good fit, make sure to show your appreciation and respect for the organization by turning it down as quickly as you can. Call the employer to verbally decline the offer or write a brief, concise letter releasing the position. (see Cover Letter Guide, Page 27)

### **How do I find out what the salary range is?**

As with everything, research, research and research. Generally, salary ranges are not the easiest data to uncover. To find the median salaries offered to previous Mudd students, you can view the Post-Graduation Reports on the OCS website. Also, under the Resource section of the website, you'll find the following excellent resources:

[NACE Salary Calculator Center](#)

Provides compensation information from the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

[Glassdoor](#)

Gives an inside look at company salaries for more than 26,000 companies.

[PayScale Salary Calculator](#)

Provides accurate, real-time salary information.

[Vault](#)

Offers an exclusive insider's report.

If you are relocating, you might want to use a cost-of-living calculator.

- Salary.com
- Sperling's Best Places - [www.bestplaces.net/col/](http://www.bestplaces.net/col/)
- CNN's money - <http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/costofliving/costofliving.htm>

### **As a new college graduate, should I negotiate my salary?**

Once an offer has been received, you have the opportunity to discuss the terms of your employment. The definition of negotiation as it relates to employment is: a series of communications (either oral or in writing) that reaches a satisfying conclusion for all concerned parties—you and the employer. You are not expected or obligated to negotiate salary. In fact, you should not negotiate simply for the sake of it. In most cases, employers hiring undergraduates for entry level positions offer salaries that are pre-determined and not negotiable. However on occasion, an employer may be willing to come up with more money or additional benefits to accommodate particular skills and abilities. Remember employers have a range and they rarely exceed it unless you are an exceptional candidate.

**There are some factors that play a role in your ability to negotiate as a new graduate. Assess your position among the below questions.**

- What is the job market like upon your graduation?
- Are there more applicants than jobs?
- How much relevant experience do you have?
- Have you had an internship that is applicable to the position?
- Have you displayed leadership in an organization on and off campus?
- Does HMC carry a strong reputation in the industry that you are hoping to gain employment?

Take into account differences in the cost of living which may be significantly higher in a large metropolitan area than in a small city. Before relying on salary data, you need to check whether it is current and know if it is from a reputable source.

**Additional tips:** Be realistic. Do not be the first to mention salary during the interview. Do not worry about what your friends are making. Never lie about your salary history.

## Handling Salary Questions

It's generally inevitable that you were asked about salary during the interview process or before on an application. If you were able to defer the topic, you can start negotiations, if any, with a clean slate. However, if you agreed upon a specific salary or a very narrow range,

you have very little room for negotiations, unless the final offer came in below that amount. There are other elements to the offer, such as benefits. (See below.)

### 1. What are your salary requirements?

An appropriate response might be that you understand the current rate in Los Angeles for this job is \$60,000 to \$62,000. Another approach would be to summarize the requirements of the position as you understand them and then ask the interviewer what the company's normal salary range is for that type of position.

### 2. How much did you earn in your last job?

Tell the interviewer that you would prefer to learn more about the current position before you discuss compensation. Explain that you are confident you will be able to reach a mutual agreement if there is a good match between your qualifications and the company's needs.

### 3. The salary range for this position is \$50,000 to \$60,000... is that what you expected?

Tell the interviewer that it does come near your expectations, then offer a range that places the top of their range into the bottom of your range, e.g., "I was thinking in terms of \$60,000 to \$70,000." This keeps you within their price range but shows you are interested in somewhat more compensation. It is important that the range you were thinking about is consistent with what you learned about the market rate.

## Benefits

It is important to remember that your total compensation is more than the money in your paycheck. Other benefits may be worth at least one-third of your compensation. Some benefits are considered standard. They come with the job and are not subject to negotiation. However, an increasing number of companies offer flexible benefit packages which give employees a variety of choices and perks.

### Most entry-level employees can expect the following basic benefit package:

- Medical insurance is the most basic (and probably the most important) benefit you can receive. Health coverage limits your financial liability in the event of illness or injury.
- Disability insurance provides an income to you in the event of a long-term disability.
- Dental insurance provides basic dental coverage.
- Life insurance.
- Prescription drug plan is particularly beneficial if you require medicine for an ongoing condition. Often you will pay a fixed co-payment.

### Here are some other comprehensive benefits being offered:

- Meals, i.e., lunches, snacks, etc.
- Cell phone
- Company car
- Computer equipment

- Cost-of-living adjustments
- Gym membership
- Education and training programs
- Flexible work schedule
- Relocation expenses
- Retirement and 401k plans

## What Other Items Can I Negotiate Besides Salary?

- **Start date**—you might want to take a vacation before you start since it may be months or an entire year before you'll get time off.
- **Vacation**—while employers are quite generous with vacation days, you may lack seniority regarding length and timing.
- **Signing bonus**—this is a one-time cash bonus received when you start.
- **Early performance review and salary review**—If your employer is unable or unwilling to raise your base salary upon hiring, ask for an early review of your performance. Usually these reviews take place once a year. An early evaluation period might take place at the six-month mark. If you've demonstrated your skill level and contribution to the organization, the employer may adjust your salary level at this time.
- **Relocation expenses**—these may be reimbursable.
- **Flex time**—non-standard work hours can help lessen commute time and accommodate other interests.
- **Performance bonus**—generally a percentage of your

base salary that is received at the end of the year and is based upon your performance or the organization's performance.

- **Professional development**—if you want to stay current or advance in your field, ask your employer to fund professional dues, conference fees or continued education costs.

### If I Decide to Negotiate, How Do I Go About It?

First of all, do it in a professional and non-confrontational manner. Most likely you will be talking to the HR person who made the offer. Call and express your gratitude for the offer and how much you'd like to work for the organization. Mention that you have a few things you'd like to discuss before signing the offer.

- Don't negotiate everything. Decide on the one or two things that are the most important to you.
- Have a salary amount in mind—decide what you want and what you will accept. This means knowing three important figures: your dream salary, your bottom line and your goal. It will be helpful to construct a basic budget by listing your expected monthly expenses.
- Emphasize your skills and abilities, not your needs—employers do not care if you have loans and need to buy a car; talk about how you will benefit the company and the contributions you will make.
- Ask if the organization has any flexibility to increase the offer. Remember to keep it impersonal.
- Seek creative alternatives. If the salary is not what you want, perhaps a bonus could be arranged or other perks, such as starting a graduate program or going to

a professional conference. Consider flexible hours or telecommuting part of the week.

- Be ready to compromise to reach a solution. After all, this is a beginning of a working relationship.
- Stay cool, calm and collected—do not make this an adversarial process, but rather a friendly, open dialogue.
- Keep things in the proper perspective—salary has nothing to do with your value as a human being. It is simply an economic issue.

If these discussions result in any changes to the offer letter, ask for a new letter or be prepared to meet in person so you and the company representative can manually make the changes and initial them.

### What If I Accept an Offer and Then Decide that I'd Rather Accept a Different One?

If you are offered a position that you feel you "should" accept because you fear that you will not have other options, think carefully before you accept. Do not accept before you are ready. If you are being pressured and the employer needs to know before you are ready, seriously consider listening to your hesitancy and turn the offer down. Acceptance of an offer should be made in good faith and with the serious intention to honor the commitment. It would be viewed as unprofessional and unethical should you renege on your acceptance. Furthermore, once you accept an offer, you should stop all other interviewing. If you find yourself in an ethical dilemma because you now realize that the position you accepted wasn't the best decision, please discuss this with a staff member in the OCS.



## WHY GRADUATE SCHOOL?

Before you begin filing applications, you should evaluate your interests and goals, know what programs are available, and be clear about your reasons for pursuing a particular degree. If an advanced education or specialized knowledge is required to obtain your career goals or attain personal satisfaction, then graduate school is for you. If you don't know what else to do with your life and you want to prolong a career decision, then you should rethink the idea of going to graduate school at this time.

### Before going any further, you may wish to carefully consider some important questions:

- What do I want to accomplish in my lifetime?
- What are my long- and short-range professional goals?
- Is graduate study necessary for me to achieve these goals?
- Do I have the interest and ability to be successful in a graduate program?
- By going to graduate school, am I simply delaying my career decision-making?
- Am I willing to invest the time and money to take on another academic program?

Two of the reasons most frequently given by students who have dropped out of graduate programs are a dislike of concentrated academic work and a realization that they had not defined their goals clearly enough. By answering the above questions honestly, you can avoid similar problems.

Through research, you should be able to get a solid idea of whether or not you would benefit from graduate study. In the process, however, be aware that further education is not absolutely required for entry into every career field. Of course it is required if you are planning to enter traditional professions such as law, medicine, dentistry and college-level teaching.

### When to Go

There are no absolute guidelines about when to go to graduate school. It is highly advisable to speak with faculty advisors and with people currently pursuing programs of interest to you. Their perspectives on immediate entry versus delayed entry are valuable. What you hear from others is advice, not fact. Ultimately, you must make your own decision.

There are pros and cons, both with immediate entry and delayed entry. Many professional schools, particularly those with well-known programs, tend to be more selective in their admissions process. Preference tends to be given to individuals with a few years of life/work experience. The argument given in favor of this selection process is that work experience tends to give people more knowledge on which to base their graduate studies.

On the other hand, many feel that going directly into graduate school after obtaining a bachelor's degree is somewhat easier because there are many sources of information on graduate programs available on campus while an undergraduate. Also, faculty members will be more likely to remember your achievements for recommendation purposes.

Likewise, study habits are generally well developed and this will help ease the transition into advanced course work.

### Consider the following questions to determine if this is the right time to pursue graduate school:

- Do you have a clear sense of what you want to pursue?
- Is an advanced degree needed to enter into your field of interest?
- Do you want to study a certain discipline just for the love of it?

### You may want to reconsider if...

- You aren't sure what career you want to pursue. A common and acceptable reason for a high school student to pursue college is to find another identity. Graduate school is not the place to find yourself.
- You are getting pressure from family and friends.
- You are going simply to avoid job search.

For some applicants, choosing a graduate school is an exact science of GPA and test score comparisons, searching through many websites and contacting students, faculty, administrators and alumni at schools of possible interest. For others, it is merely a matter of applying to a few schools and taking their chances. Most applicants fall between the two extremes and require a bit of logical soul searching in order to match personal needs with school offerings.

Below are some questions designed to help you discover exactly what schools fit your needs. This information should make your search for the "right" school a bit easier. Remember, you are the one going to graduate school, not your family or friends. Be sure to plan carefully for this investment of time and money.

- Do you care whether the school has a national, regional or just local reputation?
- Do you have geographical preferences?
- Are there opportunities for work experience?
- What size student body do you require? What is the composition?
- What is your optimum faculty/student ratio? How accessible should your faculty be?
- What method of teaching do you prefer? Is the curriculum structured or flexible?
- In what specific research projects do you wish your faculty to be engaged?
- What is the attrition rate?
- Is there a good library in your field?
- Is it important that you have the choice of many or very specific types of internship opportunities?
- What are the graduates doing? Would you want a job with the types of organizations that recruit this school's graduates?
- Are your GPA and test scores compatible with your choices? What criteria are used? What type of students does the program attract?

- Does your program allow electives or possible joint degrees with other programs or schools?
- Consider extracurricular opportunities: what student associations, student-edited journals and newspapers, or other campus groups are there?
- Is it important that your faculty be prestigious lecturers/publishers known as recognized experts in the field? (Request to see faculty publication list.)
- What is the emphasis in the graduate program in relation to your personal career interests and goals? Does the school emphasize research, theory or practice?

There are resources available in the Office of Career Services that will help you determine where you might want to go to graduate school.

### Online resources include:

**[www.gradadmissions.about.com](http://www.gradadmissions.about.com)**

**[www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com)**

**[www.grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com](http://www.grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com)**

Talk to faculty because they will have a good idea of the better programs. Find related professional journals and note who is publishing in the areas of specialization that interest you, as well as where they are teaching. Take note of the institutions represented on the publications' editorial boards (usually listed on the inside cover). A graduate department's reputation rests heavily on the reputation of its faculty, and in some disciplines it is more important to study under someone of note than it is to study at a college or university with a prestigious name.

## timetable

### SUMMER

- Think about why you want to go to graduate school.
- Begin researching available programs and talk to people in the industry or area of study.
- Identify target schools.
- Take a practice graduate school admissions test(s). Check if you need a specific test for a discipline. Find out test dates for fall.
- Identify potential recommendation letter writers.
- Order an unofficial transcript; check for and correct any discrepancies.
- Investigate and fulfill all prerequisites for your specific program.
- Write a draft of your personal statement.

### FALL

- Participate in graduate school programs and workshops offered by the Career Center.
- Continue researching institutions and programs of study.
- Talk to faculty members about specific programs.
- Review personal statement with a faculty member, a friend, a career counselor and the Writing Center.
- Rewrite personal statement.
- Provide faculty with copy of personal statement and any forms which they must complete, and ask for letters of recommendation early.
- Register for appropriate admissions tests. Be careful to check dates on the specialty tests.
- Order official transcripts.
- Finalize personal statement.
- Investigate national scholarships and grants.
- Request and complete applications.

# THE GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

## timetable

### FALL/WINTER

- Mail applications. Even if deadlines are later or they have rolling admission, it may be beneficial to apply earlier as applications are usually evaluated as they are completed.
- Make sure to follow up with programs to ensure that your application and all supporting materials were received.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Financial Aid PROFILE, if required.

### WINTER/SPRING

- Arrange for campus visits where you've been accepted. Sit in on classes and talk with faculty and current students.
- Notify other institutions that accepted you of your decision so that they can admit students on their waiting list.
- Send thank you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters; inform them of your success.

Formal applications vary from one institution to the next. Also, requirements vary from one field to another and from one institution to another. Read each program's requirements carefully; the importance of this cannot be overemphasized.

Check out the selected school's website to determine if you can apply online or download the application material. If you want to write to a particular faculty member about your background and interests in order to explore the possibility of an assistantship, you may do so; however, do not ask a faculty member for an application as this may cause a significant delay in your receipt of the forms.

As you research each institution, you may wish to keep a record or file noting admission requirements and application deadlines. Some graduate programs require a personal interview; most require a non-refundable application fee. Sometimes this fee may be waived if you meet certain financial criteria. Check with the graduate schools to which you are applying to see if you qualify. Here are the typical things required:

## Application Forms

Most schools require only an admission application to graduate school. In some cases, however, an additional departmental application is required. Write to the dean or chair of each department to which you are applying and ask about any application requirements. Be aware of application deadlines listed in graduate school bulletins. If admissions are handled on a "rolling" basis, it is to your distinct advantage to apply at the earliest possible date in order to receive maximum consideration. Most are due

between January and March, although there are some December deadlines.

Your application is the school's picture of you. Be sure that each application and additional materials you submit are complete and accurate. Be consistent with your full legal name on all documents. The appearance of your application is just as important as the information on it, so be sure to check for incomplete sentences. Proofread everything twice.

### Transcripts

All transcripts must be “official”; that is, transcripts must be sent to admission offices directly from the Registrar’s Office.

#### GPA may be looked at in different ways:

1) cumulative 2) in major 3) last two years 4) field of interest 5) changes (e.g., improved).

Remember while grade point averages are important, they are not examined in isolation; the rigor of the courses you have taken, your course load, and the reputation of Harvey Mudd College are also scrutinized. The College sends a document explaining our grading system along with your official transcript.

### Letters of Recommendation

First, check to make sure the faculty member feels comfortable writing a letter of recommendation for you. Ask the faculty member if he/she has any preferred information to assist him/her in writing the letter. Here are some suggestions:

- an unofficial copy of your transcript
- a copy of your personal statement (if applicable)
- all necessary forms
- a copy of your resume
- addressed departmental envelopes with or without stamps depending on your department. Note: Letters are being sent electronically in some cases.

**At least two weeks or up to four weeks before the first letter is due, email your professors with answers to the following questions. This should help as they write letters on your behalf.**

1. For what are you applying? (scholarship, graduate school, etc.)
2. List the programs to which you are applying, together with due dates. Indicate if electronic or paper letters are requested by program.
3. How many letters do you need?
4. How long has the professor known you (years/months), and what is his/her relationship(s) to you (instructor, advisor, etc.)? Have you graded or tutored for him/her? If so, for what class(es) and when?
5. For what class(es) has the professor had you (student in class, research collaboration), what final grade(s) did he/she assign you, and how did you distinguish yourself in her/his class(es)?
6. Describe the research you have worked on with the faculty member. Was it summer work, senior thesis work, other?

- Summarize the research project motivation and goals.
- When did you work on this research (what time frame)?
- What were your main contributions to the research?
- What were the biggest challenges and the biggest rewards of the research project(s)?
- What were the final results?
- Where has this research been presented (publications, poster sessions)?

7. How would you describe yourself?

8. If it isn't on your resume, what are some of your academic accomplishments as well as your non-academic accomplishments?

9. Have you listed REU's (Research Education for Undergraduates), summer research, interesting jobs, and/or hobbies on your resume?

10. What makes you particularly qualified for this program/position?

11. What are your long-term goals and will this program/position/honor/award help? If so, how?

12. Are there other issues that you want the faculty member to address, e.g., being a first-generation college student, overcoming a learning disability, GPA or low SAT/GRE scores.

Please send email reminders as deadlines approach.

### Protocol for Requesting a Letter of Reference

- The request for a letter of reference should be made in person whenever possible. Allow enough time at that meeting for discussion of your request, your background and any questions the writer might have.
- Be gracious in your request. Do not expect a letter as your right and do not negate your own right to ask.
- Ask if the potential reference can write a substantive letter in support of your application. Never press a prospective reference to submit a letter when he or she appears hesitant to fulfill your request.
- Always thank your recommenders in writing. A handwritten note is always appreciated.

### Statement of Purpose

Writing an essay or personal statement is often the most difficult part of the application process. Requirements vary widely in this regard. Some programs request only one or two paragraphs about why you want to pursue graduate study, while others require five or six separate essays in which you are expected to write at length about your motivation for graduate study, your strengths and weaknesses, your greatest achievements and solutions to hypothetical problems. They should not be taken lightly. Good grammar and writing styles are extremely important. Don't hesitate to seek help from the Writing Center if you need advice and guidance in preparing your personal essay or other application materials. Write, rewrite and review books on writing essays.

## **Suggested Content—you may want to include some of the following:**

### **Personal Background**

What distinguishes you as an individual? What experiences, events or relationships would reveal something about your value system or about the challenges you have met?

### **Development of Your Interest**

How did your interest in this type of professional degree program and career develop, and when did you make your decision to pursue an advanced degree? If there were significant role models or family members who have encouraged your career goals, describe their influence.

### **Related Experiences**

Describe experiences that helped you explore your career interests and confirm your desire to attend professional school. Such experiences may be special research or academic focuses, employment, internship or volunteer experiences related to your career goal (e.g., tutoring a child with a disability, working in a hospital operating room, participating in a political campaign, working as a biology teaching assistant, etc.). Convey what you learned from these experiences about yourself and the profession.

### **Future Goals**

What are your future goals within the profession? In what type of setting do you imagine yourself working? If applicable, what area of concentration within the program would you like to pursue?

### **Obstacles and Inconsistencies**

Be open about any obstacles you may have encountered and overcome (illness, family tragedy, unusually large workload, etc.). If there is information in your application that might reflect badly on you—low grades or test

scores—it is better not to deal with it in your essay unless you are asked. Keep your essay positive. You will need to explain anything that could be construed as negative in your application, however, as failure to do so may eliminate you from consideration. You can do this on a separate sheet titled “Addendum,” which you attach to the application, or in a cover letter that you enclose. In either form, your explanation should be short and to the point, avoiding long, tedious excuses. In addition to supplying your own explanation, you may find it appropriate to ask one or more of your recommenders to address the issue in their recommendation letter. Ask them to do this only if they are already familiar with your problem and could talk about it from a positive perspective.

### **Program Appeal**

If you are asked specifically why you want to attend a particular school, research the program and explain why it appeals to you. Highlight what features the program offers that you wish to utilize.

### **Special Expertise**

Describe any special expertise, skills (e.g., artistic, computer or language) or knowledge which relates to the admission committee’s decision to admit you.

### **Conclusion**

Summarize by uniting key elements of your statement (e.g., goals, strengths, motivation).

### **Style**

Applicants often worry that their essay will not be interesting to the admission committee. If you strive to make your essay readable using a clear, simple and precise writing style, your essay will have more impact. If you make the essay more personal, using “I,” you become familiar and interesting to the reader.



Admission committees may be trying to evaluate a number of things from your statement, which might include:

- Motivation and commitment to a field of study
- Expectations with regard to the program and career opportunities
- Writing ability
- Major areas of interest
- Research or work experience
- Educational background
- Immediate and long-term goals
- Reasons for deciding to pursue graduate education in a particular field and at a particular institution
- Maturity
- Personal uniqueness—what you would add to the diversity of the entering class

It is usually acceptable to attach pages to your application if the space provided is insufficient. Neatness, spelling and grammar are important. For samples of recent HMC graduates' essays, see the book "Graduate Admissions Essays" in the Career Resource Library.

## Tips to Follow

### Be Professional

Avoid slang, informality and gimmicky writing. Focus on informing, not entertaining. Avoid using emotional language, repetitive metaphors or imagery, and conversational dialogue. Avoid discussing controversial issues and individuals.

### Be Organized

Develop major ideas in an orderly fashion by using examples where needed. Say what you mean up front. Place central point(s) early in the essay. Use transitions to tie paragraphs together.

### Be Concise

Use words economically. Avoid redundancies. Follow directions to keep your essay to the prescribed number of pages. Look at each sentence you have written and ask yourself why it is important. What does it say about you?

### Be Clear

Think about the person reading your essay. Will he/she understand any references you may make to individuals, institutions or programs? Avoid using jargon and obscure acronyms. Keep your writing style simple. Use active, not passive, voice. Put the doer (you) in charge. Use "I worked on," rather than "I was afforded the opportunity to work on." Also, use an easy-to-read font or typeface.

### Be Honest

Do not inflate your achievements, and do not underestimate your potential. Your statement should reflect introspection and be written with sincerity. If you are interviewed for admission, you may be asked to discuss what you have written.

### Be Specific

Choose specific nouns and action verbs. Avoid general and abstract terms. Document any generalizations you make with specific examples.

### Be Personal

Avoid "third person" philosophizing, clichés, quotes and platitudes about a profession or about life. Talk about you!

### Review and Revise

Proofread for grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Read your essay out loud.



## Graduate Admission Tests

Most graduate programs require scores from standardized admissions tests. Be sure you have read the requirements for admission carefully so that you are aware of all the tests necessary and the deadline for submission of the results. Most programs will not accept scores more than three to five years old. Admission test information is online. Below are the common tests.

- Graduate Record Examination (GRE)
- Law School Admission Test (LSAT)
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)
- Engineer-in-Training (EIT)
- Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)
- Dental Aptitude Test (DAT)
- Veterinary Aptitude Test (VAT)
- Optometry College Admission (OCAT)
- Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT)

**Note:** Some programs require subject-area exams.

You may wish to purchase a preparation manual for the specific test you plan to take. These preparation manuals have been published for most of the major examination programs. Some of these preparation manuals are also in the Career Resources Library and may be checked out.

In addition, private “short courses” exist to help applicants prepare for examinations such as the MCAT and LSAT. Before investing a considerable amount of money in one of these services, you can check them out thoroughly with people currently or formerly enrolled in them. Most of these organizations offer free “trial run” tests online or at other Claremont Colleges. Watch for announcements sent through the MUDDMines newsletter.

## Admission Decisions

At most institutions, your file is sent directly to the academic department. A faculty committee (or the department chairperson) then makes a recommendation to the chief graduate school officer (usually a graduate dean or vice president), who is responsible for the final admission decision.

Usually your grade point average, letters of recommendation, and graduate admission test scores are the primary factors considered by admissions committees. Normally, your total record is examined closely, and the weight assigned to specific factors fluctuates from program to program. Few, if any, institutions base their decisions purely on numbers; that is, admission test scores and grade point average.

Some of the common reasons applicants are rejected for admission to graduate schools are inappropriate undergraduate curriculum; poor grades or lack of academic prerequisites; low admission test scores; weak or ineffective recommendation letters; a poor

interview; and lack of extracurricular activities, volunteer experience or research activities. To give yourself the best chances of being admitted where you apply, try to make a realistic assessment of an institution's admission standards and your own qualifications. Remember, too, that missing deadlines and filing an incomplete application can also be a cause for rejection; be sure that your transcripts and recommendation letters are received on time.

### Types of Aid Available

There are three types of aid: money given to you in the form of grants, scholarship and fellowship money you earn through work; and loans.

#### • Grants, Scholarships and Fellowships

Most grants, scholarships and fellowships are outright awards that require no service in return. Often they provide the cost of tuition and fees plus a stipend to cover living expenses. Some are based exclusively on financial need, some exclusively on academic merit, and some on a combination of need and merit. As a rule, grants are awarded to those with financial need, although they may require the recipient to have expertise in a certain field. Fellowships and scholarships often connote selectivity based on ability—financial need is usually not a factor.

Several federal agencies fund fellowship and trainee programs for graduate and professional students. The amounts and types of assistance offered vary

considerably by field of study. The following are samples of programs available for those studying engineering or applied sciences:

National Science Foundation

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

The Ford Foundation Doctoral Fellowship for Minorities

National Consortium for Graduate Degrees in Engineering Science (GEM)

National Physical Sciences Consortium

#### • Work

Research (RA) and Teaching (TA) Assistantships

#### • Loans

All applicants for federal aid must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This application must be submitted after January 1 preceding enrollment in the fall. It is a good idea to submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after this date. You can fill out the paper form or you can apply online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). On this form, you report your income and asset information for the preceding calendar year and specify which schools will receive the data. Two to four weeks later, you'll receive an acknowledgment, the Student Aid Report (SAR), on which you can make any corrections. The schools you've designated will also receive the information and may begin asking you to send them documents, usually your U.S. income tax return, verifying what you reported.

