

Career Development

Center for Servant Leadership

Phone: 507-933-7272

Email: career@gustavus.edu

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm



Seeking Career Opportunities and Interviewing Booklet

Seeking Career Opportunities

Searching for Opportunities

The most difficult part of starting a search for career opportunities – is getting started! It is difficult because it can feel overwhelming, especially for college students who have to learn how to conduct the search.

Many candidates find it useful to think of the search as a project that can be broken down to manageable steps. Start by:

1. Identifying what you want by when (i.e. an internship by summer).
2. Schedule time to work on your search (specific times each week).
3. Identify the steps you need to take: make an appointment with Career Development, write a résumé, identify websites, etc.
4. Prioritize what needs to be done first.
5. No excuse – do it!

30 Ways to Job Search – Starting Now!

1. **Engage in your Education:** Ultimately YOU are responsible for what you learn!
2. **Take full advantage of College:** Go to things! Get involved! If you only go to class, you leave half of what you paid for on the table.
3. **Get Good Grades:** Because this is a rare opportunity in life to focus on learning!
4. **Get to know faculty, supervisors, coaches:** Because it is not who you know, but who knows you well enough to refer you to opportunities.
5. **Take Risks:** Make mistakes in college where there are safety nets. Better to make them here than later when it may cost you a career.

6. **Try New Things:** You may not like everything, but you will be able to say “been there, done that” a lot!
7. **Practice Difficult Skills:** Justify, persuade, speak in public, write, edit, analyze, negotiate, mediate, initiate, know and use technology, work with a team, lead a team, evaluate, assess, recommend, manage a project, motivate, manage time and resources, navigate across boundaries, embrace diversity, embrace change, tolerate ambiguity, etc.
8. **Keep a Victory Log:** This is a journal of your peak experiences – those times when you feel really good about what you did or accomplished. You will need this to be able to offer specific examples of your past experience and successes (the best predictor of future success is past experience and success).
9. **Identify your Career Interests:** Strong Interest Inventory and StrengthsQuest are great tools. Web resources like www.iseek.org, www.explorehealthcareers.com and Spotlight on Careers, and an appointment with a Career Counselor are great places to start.
10. **Attend Career Events:** Attend events on and off campus where there are professionals talking about careers: Gustavus Careers Possible, Nobel Career Mentoring Lunch, Government Job and Internship Fair, Pathways to Careers, MN Private Colleges Job and Internship Fair, Gustavus Internship Fair, Gustavus Health Professions Fair. Every time you attend such an event you will learn more about careers and gain confidence in meeting and interacting with employers.
11. **Identify your Personal Brand:** What do you want people to remember about you? What are your strengths? What is your role on teams?
12. **Develop a Positive Professional Personal Brand:** Everyone will Google you, so manage what they will see! Manage your security settings, professional photos, etc.

4 Seeking Career Opportunities

13. Learn to use Social Media for Career Management: Start by “liking”, or following Gustavus Career Development – a great way to practice and get great career info too!

- a. **Facebook:** Check security settings, photos, and wall posts; “like” organizations/employers/people who you are interested in working with or learning about (facebook.com/GustavusCareerCenter)
- b. **LinkedIn:** Create a profile, join the Gustavus Alumni group, see career paths of other Gusties, see the Skills section, see the Jobs section, follow companies, look at learn.linkedin.com
- c. **Twitter:** Follow organizations/employers/people you are interested in, start by reading, make comments, re-tweet, tweet your own messages (@gustavuscareer)
- d. **Pinterest:** Follow organizations/employers/people of interest to you (pinterest.com/gustavuscareer)
- e. **Blogs:** Find blogs on topics or by people of interest to you (gustavuscareercenterblog.blogspot.com)

14. Get Experience!: Classes with projects or consulting components, student employment, summer jobs, information interviews, job shadows, career explorations, internships, research, study abroad, community service, service learning, clubs/organizations, leadership, teams/groups

15. Join Professional Associations: Join associations connected to your career interests, student memberships are much less expensive than professional memberships. These organizations have great opportunities to learn career/industry specific information; meet people who are willing to provide information interviews, job shadows, internships and hire for career positions; attend meetings and conferences; volunteer to work on a committee; read the website for info and job posting; put memberships on your résumé; find out if they offer scholarships of any type.

16. Explore job titles of interest to you: www.indeed.com, www.simplyhired.com, www.idealists.org, www.usajobs.gov and www.minnesotanonprofits.org are all great places to get started reading job titles and position descriptions.

17. **Go to employer websites:** When you know employers you are interested in, go to their websites and look at position openings. This is the best place to get information on positions and application processes.
18. **Connect with employers on-line:** Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are great places to start connecting with employers. Go to Gustavus Alumni group on LinkedIn and find alums working at employers of interest to you. Connect with them to learn about opportunities (this is called networking!).
19. **Develop a Language to Talk about Yourself:** This is one of the most difficult things for new grads to do. By the time you graduate, have a list of 150 positive skills and qualities you have to offer. More words help you to be more articulate. If you can't talk about it – it doesn't count! Focus on what you demonstrated and gained – not just what you liked.
20. **Create a Résumé:** This is more difficult to think about doing than it is to do! Get help from Peer Career Advisors in the Center for Servant Leadership.
21. **Learn to Write a Cover Letter:** Demonstrate that you know how to write a business letter! Another tool to show how you connect with the position for which you are applying.
22. **Learn to Interview:** Use InterviewStream (on Career Development webpage) to learn how to interview and record practice interviews (email to anyone you like for feedback), You could send your recorded response to "Tell me about yourself" to employers as an intro to your résumé. Go to www.bettertalking.com to prepare for phone interviews.
23. **Be a Candidate:** Apply on-line, attend internship and/or job fairs, send letter of application and résumé, follow up with a call or email asking: Did they get it? Do they need anything else? When will they make a decision?

24. **Participate in Campus Recruiting:** Use GustieJobs to find position notices, to submit résumés to employers, to schedule campus interviews, and to attend employer info sessions.
25. **Learn how to be effective at Career Events:** Attend Fair Prep Party and other events on and off campus to learn and gain experience as an effective candidate.
26. **Go to Job/Internship Fairs:** Prepare for these events so that you can get the most from them: MN Non-Profit/Government Job and Internship Fair, MN Private Colleges Job and Internship Fair, MN Education Job Fair, MN Private Colleges Virtual Job Fair.
27. **Network:** Tell everyone you know that you are looking and what you are looking for, ask them to: refer possible jobs and/or employers to you, forward your résumé to others who may be interested in hiring you, for names of others for you to talk with, for websites you should be looking at, for employers you should be looking at, and ask if you can say that they referred you to the employer. Say thank you for all the help and let them know when it works! Connect with them on LinkedIn.
28. **Be Professional:** Learn and use professional behavior, attend etiquette dinners on-campus, attend campus events to watch and learn how others do it!
29. **Be Persistent!:** It takes time to find the right fit! So plan on it! Job search takes at least as much time as a full Gustavus course.
30. **Be Thankful:** When you find the opportunity you are seeking, be sure to thank the many people who helped you along the way. You want them to be eager to help you again in the future!

Interviewing

Interviews are two-way conversations. Both the interviewer and the candidate are trying to understand if there is a fit between the opportunity and the candidate.

Interviewers are looking for the candidate to have:

- The skills, knowledge, and experience for success
- The motivation and enthusiasm to learn and develop for the opportunity
- The characteristics to work well with the organization

Candidates are looking to:

- Understand the opportunity
- Show how their skills, knowledge, and experience connect with the opportunity
- Show motivation and enthusiasm for the opportunity
- Answer the questions needed to be able to make a decision if offered the opportunity

Types of Interviews

Screening

These interviews are usually 20-30 minutes long. The interviewer is looking for general fit with the position and basic qualifications. Be prepared to show how your background fits and your enthusiasm for the opportunity.

Phone

Screening interviews are often done by phone. On the practical side – use a landline phone if you can. Take the call in a place that is quiet and where you are not going to be interrupted. The challenge is you will not have visual cues to guide you. Keep your answers short and ask if they want more information or examples. Ask if you are answering their question. Practice by going to www.bettertalking.com – this site offers free practice phone interviews.

Hint: Dress professional for phone interviews. It will make you feel more confident and professional in your conversation than wearing pjs or sweats!

Site

These interviews are at interviewer's location. These can be 1-8 hours long and may include: aptitude tests, tours, meals, case studies, group projects, presentation(s) by you, one-on-one interviews, panel interviews.

- Respond promptly to invitations to interview

- Ask how much time you should plan for the interview

- Ask who you will meet

- Ask what the schedule is

- Ask if there is anything you should prepare or bring with you

- For interviews at a distance, ask how you should make travel arrangements

Skype/Video

With the power of technology, interviewers may suggest an interview by internet. The first thing on this is being sure you have access to the technology they are requesting you use. Again, be sure that you are in a place for the interview that is quiet and that you will not be interrupted. And, be sure that what they see is professional in appearance – that you and what is in the background is appropriate. Sometimes there is a delay with signals, so speak slowly and wait a few moments after they stop talking before you start talking.

Hint: InterviewStream is an awesome way to prepare for these types of interviews!

Preparation for Interviews

Know Basic Information

Visit the organization's website, LinkedIn page, Facebook page and/or Twitter to learn their:

- Mission/Purpose/Values
- Products, services, programs, types of clients/customers
- Locations
- Size (employees/students, volume of sales, etc.)
- Position description and required qualifications

What you really need to focus on is:

- **What you have to offer the position (skills, knowledge, experience)**
- **Why you want to work at this place with these people**

This is what the interviewer does not know, but needs to know about you!

Exceptional Candidates

- Consistently read current news and/or use internet and social media to learn about recent events which may impact the interviewing organization, industry or profession.
- Seek out the organization or individuals conducting the interview(s) on the internet (www.linkedin.com, www.google.com) to learn about issues/reputation.
- Follow the organization on Twitter, Facebook, blog – comment on tweets, posts, or blogs.
- Contact alumni (www.linkedin.com) or others in personal network working with the employer to learn what to expect in the interview and how to be well prepared.

Know What You Can Contribute

- Identify three or four categories of skills, qualities, and experiences that make you a good candidate for the position.
- Identify specific examples and stories for each category that prove or demonstrate your ability.
- Prepare an introductory statement of 20-30 seconds that mentions the three or four categories. Use this to respond to questions such as: "Tell me a little bit about yourself." and "Do you have anything else to add?"
- Prepare to tell what you have demonstrated or gained from past experiences (saying that you had fun or enjoyed an experience is not enough).
- Prepare questions that show you are seeking a partnership to benefit both you and the employer.

Interviewing Ideas

Passion!

Many people have the skills – show you have the excitement and enthusiasm.

“It’s Not Bragging if it’s True”

Promote yourself. Give enough information so that interviewers can make a decision.

Leadership

The ability to look around, see what needs to get done, make something happen.

Maturity

The ability to suspend your own agenda to meet the agenda of others.

Success Patterns

The greatest predictor of future success is past experience and success.

Demonstrated/Gained

You are not rewarded for your positions or degrees; you are rewarded for what you have demonstrated or gained from experience.

Skills and Qualities

Both are important. Skills are activities you can do – like tying your shoe.

Qualities are what you are like – enthusiastic. ***Make a list of your 150 positive skills and qualities.***

Professional

How you conduct your search is a demonstration of how you will do your work. Attend to details, follow-up, be courteous to everyone, be someone they want to work with! Dress professionally, arrive on time, stand to shake hands, say “thank you” in the first 12 words of meeting someone, use names, listen carefully, learn and use professional etiquette.

Conversation

Interviews are two-way conversations, not oral exams. It is OK to ask for clarification or more information. Give short answers and ask if they want more specifics, examples, or details.

Fact/Opinion/Behavioral

Fact questions are easy – “What computer applications have you used?”

Opinion questions are common – “What are your strengths?”

Behavioral questions use past situations to predict what you will do in the future – “Tell me about a time when _____.”

Expect 10% of questions to be fact, 30% to be opinion, and 60% to be behavioral.

The Interview

Three Questions

In some way, employers will ask three basic questions:

1. What do you want to do?
2. What do you have to offer us?
3. Why do you want to work here?

100% Responsibility

If you leave the interview and the interviewer does not know something important about you, it is your fault, not theirs – even if they don't ask the right questions.

Career Outline

Identify three to five key ways that show you are fit for the position – interests, skills, experiences, qualities, preparation, etc. For each area, have a story that provides proof or evidence.

S.T.A.R.

Most people are visual and remember best what they see. Create word pictures with stories. To create concise useful stories, give the **S**ituation, the **T**ask, your **A**ction, and the hopefully positive **R**esult. Be specific and be prepared to give details.

Summary Statement

Write and practice a 20-second statement that summarizes your three to five key points. Use this to answer: "Tell me a little bit about yourself." and "Do you have anything to add?"

Good Questions

Your questions may be more important than your answers. Show your interest, understanding, and desire by asking about the position, expectations, and opportunities.

"What characteristics do successful people in this organization share?"

"What is the most challenging? Rewarding?"

"What are the goals/direction/commitment of this organization?"

What to Bring to Interviews

Bring a portfolio. In the left-hand pocket, bring extra copies of your résumé, a copy of your academic transcript, copies of letters of recommendation, and a list of your references with phone numbers and e-mail addresses. On the notepad on the right, list your three to five key points and your questions.

End

Summarize your three to five key items, let them know you want the position, and ask when you can follow up on the interview. "I would appreciate the opportunity to work with you." "I would appreciate continuing in your selection process." "This is what I want to do, please offer me this position."

Thank You

Write a thank-you note within two working days of the interview.

5 Point Agenda

“... a predetermined analysis in which you select your five most marketable points and repeatedly weave these points throughout the interview process.”

Example

Events Planner

“The association needed a person with strong computer and desktop publishing skills and previous events planning experience. As a new college grad, the applicant created her 5 Point Agenda from her internship and part-time jobs:

Point 1 – Proficient IBM and Macintosh computer skills.

Point 2 – Desktop publishing using PageMaker, creating brochures, programs, invitations, flyers, press releases and training materials.

Point 3 – Assisted with numerous special events, conferences, lunches, and receptions.

Point 4 – Responsible for catering, food preparation, audiovisual set up, transportation, budget and expense reimbursements.

Point 5 – Acquired service bids from several contractors, caterers and hotels.”

60 Second Sell

Summarizes and links together the 5 Point Agenda for use in interviews.

Events Planner Example

“I have assisted with numerous special events during the last two years – planning conferences, receptions, lunches, and dinners. I’ve been responsible for all the details, the facilities, catering and lodging arrangements, equipment and food set-ups, taking care of the transportation needs, plus handling expenses and vouchers. I have learned to make any budget work. By being resourceful, I was able to work within budget limitations. I have had a great deal of experience comparing and selecting service contractors such as caterers and facilities.”

“My computer strengths have been most beneficial to my previous employer. I have extensive IBM and Macintosh experience and easily use PageMaker to create brochures, flyers, program schedules, invitations, and training materials. It is both the experience in event planning and my computer skills that would be assets to you in this position.”

From *60 Seconds & You’re Hired* by Robin Ryan. Available in the Career Library in the Center for Servant Leadership

S.T.A.R.

Prepare to talk about skills and abilities using specific examples. Most people are visual and remember best what they see. Telling a story makes it visual!

S is for **Situation**—the event or circumstances of the story (I wanted to study abroad).

T is for **Task**—the specific goal you were working toward (I needed to pay for the travel and other costs of the program).

A is for the **Action** that you took (I got a part-time job during the spring semester and worked up to 70 hours per week at two jobs during the summer in order to earn the money I needed).

R is for **Results**—what happened. Hopefully this is a positive thing (I earned enough for my trip and was able to stay for an extra week of travel)!

Practice

Common themes sought in interviews include: motivation, logical thought, leadership, maturity, preparedness, open-mindedness, sensitivity and compassion, goals, and strengths. Practice by selecting one of these themes and creating a **S.T.A.R.** story to be used in an interview.

Caution

Employers may not always ask for positive examples. They may ask to hear about your worst class, most difficult customer, or a conflict situation.

Suggestion

Whenever possible, offer concrete or qualitative results or outcomes. Numbers give an idea of the size and scope of a project.

Difficult Interview Situations

What is Your Greatest Weakness?

They are not asking for your deepest character flaw! Reframe the question to “What is your greatest weakness for this position?” Your greatest weakness is that you will have a lot to learn fast, because it will be new for you. Then share experiences (college, study away, internships) where you demonstrated your ability to learn quickly to be effective in new environments.

You could also use this question to demonstrate that you are a lifelong learner. Identify a skill you wanted to develop and then be specific about how you demonstrated that you worked to develop that skill. Example: “I wanted to develop my public speaking skills so I took a course, volunteered to introduce a speaker at an event and now I still need to work to prepare, but I am confident that I can present to groups.”

Be Positive

No matter how bad the job, employer, class – be positive! Negative comments make you look immature and unable to accept responsibility. Talk in terms of challenges and what you have demonstrated or gained.

That’s Not Fair!

Interviewers may ask illegal questions – usually unintentionally. If the question is of such a nature that you are uncomfortable responding, be assertive and say, “I could answer this question better if I understood how it connects with this position.” This may get to their real question/concern, which is often easier to respond to. (i.e. How long is this person likely to stay in this position? Answer: As long as it continues to be a mutual fit.)

Drawing a Blank

You can ask for a moment to think about your answer. You can ask to come back to the question as well: “I am unable to think of an example at this moment; could we come back to this?”

Interviewing Tips

Tips to Good Interviewing

- Be on time.
- Be genuine and candid.
- Be prepared. Do your research. Know how you can be an asset to the position.
- Be focused. Know yourself and your goals.
- Be inquisitive. Develop questions before the interview.
- Be enthusiastic. Show interest in the company and industry.
- Be specific. Offer examples from your experience.
- Be honest. Admit it if you don't have an answer.
- Be concise. Organize your thoughts and get to the point quickly.

What Employers Don't Like in Interviewees

- Poor personal appearance.
- Lack of planning for a career – no goals.
- Lack of confidence and poise.
- Evasive, making excuses for unfavorable events.
- Condemnation of past employers or teachers.
- Limp handshake.
- Persistent attitude of "What can you do for me?"
- Overbearing – over aggressive – egotistical – sense of entitlement.
- Lack of interest – passive, indifferent.
- Overemphasis on compensation.
- Lack of tact, maturity, and courtesy.
- Failure to look interviewer in the eye.
- Failure to ask questions about the job.
- Lack of preparation – failure to learn about the company in order to ask intelligent questions.

A Strong Ending

- Restate what you have to offer the position. "Before we end, I would like to remind you that the things I could bring to this position are..."
- If you are interested in the position, let the interviewer know! "I would appreciate the opportunity to work with you." Or "I would appreciate continuing in your selection process."
- Ask when you can call to learn the results of the interview.
- If you did not receive one, get a business card.
- Thank the interviewer, shake hands, and smile!

Interview Questions – Preparing the Right Answer

These sample behavioral-based interview questions are followed with characteristics of good responses. Think through and write out your own answers with specific examples.

Question	Characteristics of Response
<i>Sooner or later we all deal with interpersonal conflict or personal rejection at work or school. Give me an example of a time when you had to cope with these demands.</i>	Cope through positive action or problem solving skills. Show calmness under pressure. Use criticism and other negative results to learn and show change. Show your conflict management skills.
<i>What has been your experience in working with conflicting, delayed, or ambiguous information? What did you do to make the most of the situation?</i>	Show comfort with lack of structure or creating own structure, accepting of delays, and comfort in depending on others – delegation. If frustration occurred, comment on how you learned from this experience and provide an additional example showing coping skills.
<i>Tell me about a time when you were willing to disagree with another person in order to build a positive outcome.</i>	Firm, clear directions. Concern for other's feelings. Socially mature – tactful. Able to handle conflict arising around misunderstanding or disagreement. Positive result.
<i>Tell me about a time when you had to work very hard to reach your goals and be specific about what you achieved.</i>	Specific target dates. Takes initiative in setting goals. Description of steps taken to accomplish the goal. Learning that occurred if unsuccessful. Self-motivation.

Information taken from Behavioral Technology, Inc.

Commonly Asked Questions at Interviews

Variations of commonly asked interview questions appear in many publications available in the Career Library in the Center for Servant Leadership. Here are sample questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
3. Tell me about a time when you worked with a difficult customer or team member.
4. In what ways can you contribute to our company? What do you have to offer us?
5. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
6. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company? Why do you want to work here?
7. Tell me about a major problem you encountered and how you responded.
8. Why should I hire you?

Questions to Ask Employers

1. What could I do immediately to make a contribution in the position?
2. What characteristics do the most successful people in this position share?
3. When will you make a decision regarding this position? If I have not heard from you by that date, may I call you?
4. Do you have any concerns about my candidacy for this position?

After the Interview

1. Before leaving the interview find out how follow-up will happen: "If I have not heard from you within a week, may I call to find out where you are in the decision making process?" (Asking permission to follow-up is very courteous and also makes them more willing to respond to your future call.)
2. Write a thank you note within two working days of the interview. Be sure to get a business card or write down the names of the people that interview you. Thank you notes may be handwritten. It is best to send them by mail.

If You Get an Offer

1. Thank the interviewer for the offer.
2. Tell them you are excited about the opportunity.
3. Tell them that you want to make a good decision and want to think it through carefully.
4. Ask when they need you to let them know your decision.
5. Remember that the only thing harder than not having an offer is having one!
6. If you have been interviewing with other places, contact them and let them know you have an offer and ask where they are in their process.
7. Review the offer and determine if you have all the information you need to make a decision.
8. If you need more information, contact the offering organization with specific questions
9. Compare yourself to the opportunity offered – not opportunities to each other.
10. Respond to the offering organization within the timeframe given.
11. Get information on where and when you should report for your first day.
12. Let Career Development (career@gustavus.edu) know that you have accepted an offer.

It is not appropriate to continue to interview once you have accepted an offer.

If You Do Not Get an Offer

1. Thank them for considering you and that you understand their decision.
2. If it is true, indicate that you would be interested in being considered for future positions with them.
3. You may ask what you can do to make yourself a stronger candidate for them in the future. (They may or may not have a response to this.)
4. Be professional in your attitude and communications. You want them to think positively about you for future opportunities.
5. Periodically check their webpage for positions of interest and apply as appropriate.

Interview Preparation

- Attend events to become comfortable in professional settings and talking with professional people. (Careers Possible, Employer Information Sessions, Career Panels, Internship Fair, etc.)
- Write out answers to sample interview questions.
- Read answers out loud.
- Go to www.bettertalking.com
- Use InterviewStream resources: gustavus.interviewstream.com/

InterviewStream

Access InterviewStream from the Career Development website and use your Gustavus email username and password to create your account.

This site has:

- A workshop on how to interview.
- Expert advice on how to prepare for and answer specific questions
- It has the option to record responses to interview questions using a webcam.
 - Then you may review the video.
 - Or email the video to anyone you choose for feedback.

InterviewStream has a list of hundreds of questions asked in internship, employment, graduate and professional school interviews. The questions are categorized by type. *A great resource!*

Interview Reminders

- Be on time!
- Dress appropriately – Go to Career Development Pinterest (pinterest.com/gustavuscareer) or Fashion Friday Blogs (gustavuscareercenterblog.blogspot.com) for examples.
- Give a strong hand shake and use the interviewer's name.
- Smile, be positive, polite and maintain an alert posture.
- Have extra résumés, reference lists and transcripts with you.
- Express how you fit the position and that you want the opportunity.
- Ask when you can follow-up on the results of the interview.
- Obtain business cards from interviewers.
- Send a thank you note within two working days of the interview.

Dress Code

Most professional dress is expected at all interviews – for internships, graduate and professional schools, scholarships, and employment. You want to be viewed as a professional – not a college kid. The fastest way to do that is to dress as a professional. Find information on professional and business casual dress on Career Development Pinterest (pinterest.com/gustavuscareer) or Fashion Friday Blogs (gustavuscareercenterblog.blogspot.com).

Thank You Notes

Saying thank you for the interview must happen quickly! Within two working days the interviewer should receive a thank you from you. This can be by email, a handwritten note, or a typed letter. A handwritten note should be on a professional thank-you card with good penmanship. If it is a typed letter, it should be in business letter format.

Sample Thank You

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday. I very much enjoyed learning about the new projects you are working on. I believe that the experience I have researching the impact of social media on promoting events could be an asset to those projects. Please contact me if I can provide additional information to you.

Sincerely,

Student Name