

Graduate Student Career Planning Guide

*University of North Texas Career Center, a Division of Student Affairs
Toulouse Graduate School*

Welcome!

The Career Center, in partnership with the Toulouse Graduate School, recognizes that with your graduate education you are gaining mastery of subject matter, garnering advanced knowledge and skills, and generating knowledge. But we also recognize that being a graduate student is not, and should not be, a career in and of itself. Instead, your graduate education is preparing you for your greater contributions to come. This guide is intended to help you to chart the future career(s) in which you will put your UNT graduate degree into action. Consider this your guidebook to your subsequent career success. You are working hard to earn your graduate degree. You need also to take the time to decide where you can best put it to work. This document will provide you with resources as you actively navigate the journey.

You can access the following sections to discover strategies to support your career success. You can start at the beginning and move through each section as a suggested pathway for your planning or choose individual sections you are interested in investigating further.

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Self-Reflection:

Career planning is a process that begins now, while you are a current graduate student pursuing your degree. It is important to consider what goals you want to accomplish with your future degree and gain knowledge in the steps that are part of that process. Envision a graduate degree as an important achievement to support your next career steps and professional interests. This is a process that should continue throughout your career journey, as you evolve personally and professionally and gain experience and skills. Your faculty advisors and career educators are here to support you explore options that you are interested in, including research, academia, industry, corporate, government, and nonprofit career paths.

Questions & Reflection:

Why did I choose to pursue a graduate degree? What did I hope to accomplish? How could my future career help accomplish my goals? What impact would I like to make and what is most important to me regarding my work and professional life?

Explore Options

Exploring your work values, interests, skills, and strengths can identify potential paths and options that align with your academic program. You can learn more about careers that align with your skills, strengths, and goals by utilizing the following tools.

ImaginePhD is a FREE online career exploration and preparation tool for doctoral Humanities and Social Science students and postdoctoral scholars. Designed by PhD students and faculty, this interactive site offers career skills, interests, and values assessments, career guidance resources, and a goal setting platform and mapping system. Check out this comprehensive tool to explore career paths and identify options to utilize your educational experience.

StrengthsQuest™ is a program created by the Gallup Organization, which focuses on developing strengths rather than fixing weaknesses. By developing their strengths people can achieve higher levels of academic, personal, and professional success. The StrengthsQuest™ assessment assesses and ranks your themes of talent and gives you a report of your top 5 talent themes. UNT is committed to helping you discover and develop your talent themes. We provide access to the assessment and StrengthsQuest™ workshops through the UNT Orientation and Transition Programs office. Learn more about this opportunity and [request access](#) to take the StrengthsQuest Assessment.

MyPlan is a package of FREE assessments that consider your personality, skills, values, and interests. MyPlan allows you to explore options and bring clarity and insight into figuring out what is right for you. Whether you are choosing a major, planning for your first career, or thinking about making a career change.

My Next Move, released by the U.S. Department of Labor is an interactive tool for job seekers and students to learn more about their career options. The site has tasks, skills, salary information, and more for over 900 different careers. Users can find careers through keyword search; by browsing industries that employ diverse types of workers; or through the O*NET Interest Profiler, a tool that offers personalized career suggestions based on a person's interests and level of work experience. They also are designed for use by students who are exploring the school to work transition. Each of these tools is based on a "whole person" assessment concept. The tools will help individuals identify their work-related interests, what they consider important on the job, and their abilities to explore those occupations that relate most closely to those attributes. Users of the tools may link directly to more occupations described by the [O*NET](#) database, as well as to occupational information in [CareerOneStop](#), thus, making a seamless transition from assessing their interests, work values and abilities to matching their job skills with the requirements of occupations in their local labor market.

Credit/source: [O*NET](#) | [U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

Identifying Your Skills:

You may have heard the terms hard and soft skills. Hard skills refer to specific technical knowledge or training and soft skills include your people skills. The following article from Indeed Career Guide, [*Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills: What's the Difference*](#) by Jamie Birt shares information on the difference between hard and soft skills and how to highlight them on resumes and in interviews.

It is important to identify the transferable skills you have gained through work, education, and community service. Transferable skills refer to skills that employers find valuable in any job or industry. Review the article [*Transferable Skills: 10 Skills That Work Across Industries*](#), by Jennifer Herrity from Indeed Career Guide to learn more.

The [*Graduate Student Transferable Skills Handout*](#) created by **University Career Services at Northwestern University** provides several examples of skills and competencies and prompts to help you evaluate your experience and articulate your strengths. *Credit/Source: University Career Services, Northwestern University*

There are numerous templates and documents that can help structure and organize your academic development and progress. Staying organized is helpful when meeting with your faculty advisor. One such tool is the Individual Development Plan (IDP). This is a plan you can create for self- assessment and to help with staying on track with academic and professional goals.

Cornell University's Graduate School Professional Development site describes the Individual Development and Plan and presents links to further research. Ideally, these plans are created together with your faculty advisor. Check with your advisor for suggestions on developing and using an IDP. Here are examples and support to help you learn more about an IDP.

IDPs (Individual Development Plan) for humanities and social science fields:

- [Imagine PhD](#)
- [University of Wisconsin-Madison](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [University of Southern California Postdoctoral Office](#)

IDPs for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields:

- [ScienceCareers myIDP \(all STEM fields\)](#)
- [University of Wisconsin-Madison](#)
- [University of Southern California Postdoctoral Office](#)
- [American Chemical Society](#)
- [Stanford University Biosciences](#)

Credit/Source: [Create Your Plan : Graduate School \(cornell.edu\)](#)

Questions and Reflection:

- *What qualities and traits do you utilize to be a successful team member, student, and professional?*
- *Think about specific examples of when you have demonstrated these skills. Who or what was involved? What did you do? What was the outcome and what did you learn?*
- *Write down any expected or unexpected ideas. Are there pathways you would like to explore further? Have you been alerted to gain more information?*

Action Steps:

- *Check in with your faculty advisor to help you create academic and professional goals.*
- *The [Career Center](#) provides a full range of services to support graduate students and alumni at all points along the employment path. You can make an appoint with your college [Career Coach](#) to help you learn more about UNT Career Center services.*
- *Use the fillable [activities table](#) to help you identify your current strengths and abilities in various areas of your life.*
- *Connect with your faculty mentor and advisors in your department to discuss your findings. It is important to have regular meetings to stay on track with your academic and professional plan.*

Research Careers:

If you do not know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else. Research has three parts 1) knowledge of self 2) knowledge of the world of work 3) putting self-knowledge and work knowledge together so that you can communicate clearly to prospective employers.

Knowledge of self helps to reveal skills, interests, and work values. Knowledge of work helps to reveal the expectations of employers and perhaps as importantly it helps you to find out about things – jobs and opportunities – that you did not know even existed. It helps to know these things enable a targeted job search that will be much more efficient and better match your skills, interests, and values. Career research starts early (think “what do you want to be when you grow up?”) and really never ends. We should be constantly thinking about our own skills development, new interests, etc. And we should be learning about trends and new opportunities that match our personal growth.

There are abundant resources for career research and various strategies to employ.

- Online resources
- Print resources
- “Human” resources – in other words getting into networks and taking advantages of opportunities to talk with people about what they do and how they got to do it.

Sample of Career Research Resources:

O*Net

O*Net is a US Department of Labor website that contains information about hundreds of career paths. It also has tools such as career assessments to gain self-knowledge.

Industry websites

Most industries have trade organizations or associations that sponsor websites with specific information about careers, education, etc. that can lead to work in the industry.

Professional organizations

There are thousands of professional organizations that also provide information specific to careers in their specialties. It is important to understand what the mission of the organization is. Some organizations are career focused and others are more research driven. Think about which type is the best fit for what you are looking for.

Employer websites

Employers have their own websites containing career and employment information and job postings. The websites can be particularly useful for getting a sense of the organization’s culture; particularly looking at Mission, Vision, and Values.

Interesting job titles

In doing research one often runs across new job titles, roles, and even key words that may not have been obvious or even known. As with any research project, learning the new key words to search on can be helpful.

Networks

Talking to people in fields of interest may be as productive as any research tool available. The people doing the actual work can point out latest trends, “pain” points, new directions for the profession. All of which may not be written down anywhere but may in fact be where the real opportunities lie.

Handshake and other job boards

Handshake is the UNT Career Center’s job board. It is tied into a network of over 1000+ schools. Every job in a student’s Handshake feed is designated to show up at UNT so you know the employer is interested in students from UNT.

Handshake and all job boards are not simply good for job applications. You learn and see trends such as skills being sought as they relate to specific roles. The roles being recruited also provide an indication of where the opportunities may be and who the major recruiters may be at any given point in time.

There are hundreds of job boards. We recommend using those that curate opportunities efficiently. If you find jobs linked to a job board are expired, it indicates that the service is not efficient.

UNT Career Center Website

- [What Can I Do with This Major](#)
- [Career Readiness Competencies](#)
- [Candid Careers](#)
- [Practical Career Advice](#)

Grow your Network and Professional Presence:

Networking for career exploration & relationship building

Networking is the single most important research and job searching tool. Research shows that gaining an internal referral within an organization increases the chances of an interview by 60%. As mentioned earlier, talking with people who work in roles of interest increases your understanding of roles and opportunities by someone who works directly in the field or for organizations of interest.

Mentors

Related to networking is Mentorship. A mentorship is usually an ongoing relationship with someone who has a mutual interest and is in a field of interest. Usually, a mentor is someone with a lot of experience and resources that can be used to provide knowledge and support to a mentee.

Mentorships can be part of a formal program. Usually, the mentor is assigned by someone. You may have a graduate degree mentor and this person is someone with experience to guide you through graduate school but not through a professional pathway.

Mentorships can be informal. One may find someone that they have “chemistry” with and who has an expertise, knowledge, and wisdom to tap into. In this case both parties would agree to an informal relationship and make themselves available for ongoing discussions.

Online Mentorship

UNT has an online mentoring platform called [Mean Green Mentors](#). It is available to all students. You can complete a profile and fill out a short “mentor match” Mean Green Mentors will then suggest mentor matches to reach out to. Learn more about [Mean Green Mentors](#).

UNT Alumni

There are over 200,000 UNT alumni and they can be a powerful networking resource. A terrific way to engage is through the [UNT page on LinkedIn](#).

Professional Organizations

In addition to providing information, professional organizations also are a great resource for finding personal contacts with people who are working in fields of interest.

Your Peers and Other Students

Other students may be a great resource. At UNT, we have many students working. They may be working in fields of interest, or they may have their own networks they can link you to.

Informational Interviews

An Informational Interview is an “interview” initiated by you with someone who has information or expertise in a field of interest. It is not a job interview but is purely informational. It is a fantastic way to introduce yourself to someone who works in a role of interest or for an organization of interest.

Sample Request – 2 scenarios

1. Learn more about a role or being a professional

- a. Identify someone who may have knowledge you are seeking
- b. Craft a message requesting a meeting (perhaps “can we meet for coffee to discuss/learn more about _____?”)
- c. Reach out to contacts through email, LinkedIn, or call them on the telephone
- d. Be clear about the purpose for the call/meeting
- e. Be respectful of their time. If you ask for :30 minutes, plan the meeting out so that it will be 30 minutes.

2. Learn more about an organization

Craft a message requesting a meeting (perhaps “*can we meet for coffee to discuss/learn more about _____?*”)

Reach out to contacts through email, LinkedIn, or call them on the telephone

Be clear about the purpose for the call/meeting

Be respectful of their time. If you ask for :30 minutes, plan the meeting out so that it will be 30 minutes

Sample questions – have some specific questions about things you want to learn

What got you interested in this field of work?

What challenges do you face daily?

What motivates you to go to work every day?

What do skills would I need to get into this field?

Review additional information regarding [informational interviews](#).

Job simulations

A job simulation is a way to gain experience and develop skills using resources specifically set up to provide a pathway to gain greater understanding and skill development, usually by doing a project. UNT has several resources that students can use to gain additional experience.

[LinkedIn Learning](#)

A free resource provided by UNT to students. Use your UNT SSO to access thousands of trainings

[TheForage](#)

Build real world skills direct from leading organizations through Virtual Experience Programs

[Parker Dewey](#)

Micro Internships

Career Advising and Coaching

Check-in with a career coach designated for your major or program to gain more insight and to plan “next steps”

Action Steps:

Ask your faculty mentor and advisors for recommendations about potential alumni and employers to connect with.

Access the Career Center Resource, [Networking and Professional Relationship Development Rubric](#) as a quick check in and self-evaluation of your understanding of professional networking and the support available to you.

The Job Search Process

Now that you have become more knowledgeable about yourself and gained networking skills, it is time to craft your career documents, prepare for communicating with employers, and locate opportunities.

Handshake

UNT has a powerful and easy to use system to keep you aware of all our career events. The platform we use is Handshake. Handshake is the Career Center's recruiting management system that hosts fulltime and part-time jobs, internships, on-campus positions, and on [campus employer events](#).

Once you create your Handshake account, you will be able to have access to thousands of employer's postings of full-time and part-time jobs utilizing tailored search filters, internships, on-campus positions, and [campus employer events](#). Watch this video to learn how to [Create a Handshake Account](#).

For campus employer events, you can search for events by clicking the EVENTS link. For Career Fairs, you can search for upcoming fairs by clicking the FAIRS link.

By using the different filters, you can narrow your research for specific events based on your major, type of event (in person/virtual/hybrid), location, or industry.

Once you have identified events and fairs that interest you, you can sign up for them. You can also activate email reminders so you can keep track of what you have signed up for.

By taking advantage of the employer events on campus, you are getting valuable exposure to insightful information that will help you accelerate your networking skills and strategically prepare for your career.

Elevator Pitch

An elevator speech (or elevator pitch) is a 30 second commercial about you. A good speech should last no longer than a short elevator ride, hence the name. It should be interesting, memorable, and succinct. Because networking can happen anywhere, you should always be prepared to introduce yourself and talk about who you are and what you want to do. You never know when that conversation can lead to a new contact or even an invitation to pass along your resume.

An ideal time to share your elevator speech is during introductions at career fairs, expos and recruiting events. When preparing for an event, be sure to research the companies you are interested in and tailor your speech, so it is relevant to your audience. For example, if you are talking with a smaller company, you do not want to say that you are interested in working in a large corporate environment.

Watch these two videos to get an employer's perspective about an elevator speech:

- [Simple Can Be Effective](#): Program Manager, Campus Philly
- [Conveying Passion in an Elevator Pitch](#): Grant Rawdin, Founder and CEO (Chief Executive Officer), Wescott Financial Advisory Group

Now, you are ready to write your elevator speech. Use the steps below to help you get started, but keep in mind that you will need to change your approach depending on who you are speaking with and what you are trying to accomplish. Start by thinking about the objective of your speech. For example, are you planning to use your speech to introduce yourself at a networking event or career fair? Are you seeking an internship or a job? Your objective will influence how you craft your speech.

Steps to Writing an Elevator Speech:

You can use these steps to help you draft your elevator speech. Keep in mind, your objective will impact the specific elements you include in it.

1. Your name, major/degree, and classification.
2. What you do or what you want to do.
 - Prepare a single sentence that gives insight into what you are interested in and the value you bring.
3. Why you are the best at what you do or why you want to work in the industry you have chosen.
 - Prepare a single sentence that differentiates you from others.
 - It might be a technique you have developed, your specific experience, or even your personality that sets you apart. What makes you special?
4. Call to action.
 - What are you trying to achieve here? Are you trying to build your network, obtain a job or internship, learn more about a specific career field or company?

This is an example of how your elevator speech might sound:

Hi, my name is _____. I am currently a _____(classification) majoring in _____. I am interested in _____(internship, full/part time job) for the _____(fall/spring/summer) semester. I am interested in working for your company/organization because _____.

Now that you have an outline of what you would like to say, you can finalize your speech. Connect your sentences so they flow together and sound natural. Avoid using words that people from a different field might not understand and cut out any unnecessary words.

Watch this video for tips on how to improve your elevator speech and make it more interesting:

The Elevator Pitch: Tips for Your Elevator Pitch

Action Step:

Practice your elevator speech.

It can take some time to get your speech right. One of the best ways to improve your elevator speech is to practice it in front of a mirror until you are comfortable with what you have to say. Once your elevator speech sounds good to you, consider practicing it with someone else to get their feedback, such as a classmate, roommate, friend, or family member. You also might find it helpful to video your speech so you can watch the recording of yourself. Do not be surprised if you rewrite your speech several times before you find a version that is compelling and sounds natural.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 500+ million users. For a college student, LinkedIn can be an effective way to connect with UNT alumni, learn about potential career paths by reading articles or posts and a terrific way to find up to date jobs and internship postings.

When it comes to creating your profile, you want to have a clear and professional picture. This does not mean your picture must be professionally taken, but it does mean you should be wearing professional attire. Make sure your entries for the Experience and Education sections are up to date. Recruiters on LinkedIn filter their searches based on majors and previous work experience. Use the LinkedIn [checklist](#) for students to learn more.

Pro tip:

Your headline (directly under your name) will default to your most recent job title. Use this entry to brand yourself.

Instead of Sales Associate at the local retail chain, consider adding:

Marketing junior with 2+ years of customer service experience. Interested in digital marketing internships.

By customizing your headline, you will increase the likelihood of being found in a campus recruiter's search results. LinkedIn offers limitless opportunities to grow your professional network and build your professional brand.

Action Step:

Meet with your Career Coach to learn how to create or improve your LinkedIn profile. Follow this [guide](#) to make sure you are maximizing LinkedIn features and your presence and periodically review and update your profile to make sure everything is current and reflects academic, work, and community service you would like to highlight. This is especially important when making any kind of career pivot or when seeking a new opportunity.

Portfolios/Website

It may be a good idea to create a website or portfolio to display your skills, academic projects, and examples of your work. Your field of study will have norms and standards, so check with your faculty, advisor, and Career Coach for guidance. Make sure you are thorough, detailed oriented, and authentic with your digital presence.

Resource:

[10 Portfolio Website Builders and Why They're Important](#)

CV/Resume/Cover Letter

A resume or a CV (Curriculum Vitae) is required to apply for almost any job, and you will typically need to submit a cover letter, too. While a resume is typically used for industry or corporate positions, The curriculum vitae, also known as a CV or vita, is a comprehensive statement of your educational background, teaching, and research experience. It is the standard representation of credentials within academia. In addition, it is important to write a thank you letter following an interview. It is important that your specific qualifications and experiences that relate to the position are clear, concise, and show your value as a potential hire. Below, you can access multiple resources, tools, videos, and personalized assistance to help you craft these important documents.

Personalized Assistance

For assistance with your resume, CV, or cover letter, schedule an in-person, virtual, phone or email appointment or meet with us without an appointment during Drop-Ins. To find your Career Coach and for times and locations, go to [Connect with the Career Center](#). Business majors should access [Connect with the Career Resource Center](#) for times, location, and Drop-In information.

Resume Writing Tool

- Resume Builder – Resume writing tool that's part of [Big Interview](#) and provided by the Career Center. This video explains [how to access Resume Builder and get started](#).

Resume Writing and CV Resources

- Getting Started Writing Your Resume
 - [How to Construct Each Section of Your Resume](#)
 - [Action Verbs for Your Resume](#)
 - [Common Resume Mistakes](#)
- Resume Templates and Samples
 - [Basic Chronological Resume Template](#)
 - [Basic Functional Resume Template](#)
 - [Resume and CV Samples](#) – Specific examples based on your college, area of interest, and experience.
 - [Business: Approved Resume Format](#) – Information about the required format for all Business majors plus examples.
- Curriculum Vitae – standard representation of credentials within academia.
 - [CV Basics](#)
 - [CV Guide](#)

Videos to Help with Writing Your Resume or CV

- [Resume Basics](#) – A UNT Career Coach explains the types of resumes, sections, formatting, and other rules.
- [Resume Development](#) – Career Development Specialist
- [Resume Tips](#) – Get advice from a UNT Career Coach on how to write an effective resume.

- [How Applicant Tracking Systems Impact Your Job Search](#) – Covers the basics of applicant tracking systems (ATS) and how to approach job applications and your resume with ATS in mind.
- [Disney College Session – Resume 101 & Interview Tips](#) – Learn effective ways to formulate resumes and excel at interviews when applying to Disney opportunities and other positions.
- [Graduate CV Workshop](#) – Amy Hicks, Career Coach for graduate students, explains how to write a CV, when it is used and more.

Cover Letter Resources

- [How to Write a Cover Letter](#)
- [Cover Letter Example](#)

Thank You Letter Resources

- [Thank You Letters](#)
- [Post-Interview Thank You Messages](#) – Video with tips on how to express appreciation following an interview.

After drafting a resume, we strongly recommend setting up a time to talk with a Career Resource Center staff member to work on improvements. In addition, you can use the [Resume Review Request Form](#) to submit your resume for review. Upload your resume in the approved format to [Handshake](#) using the [instructions found here](#).

Action Step:

Your application documents are a critical first step to advance to an interview. They demonstrate your written communication skills and attention to detail. Your discipline and career goals will determine specific formatting and style. Meet with your advisor in your department and mentors with professional experience in your area to learn more about recommended standards.

Pro tip:

Remember, your resume and CV are living documents that will evolve and grow as you gain experience, develop professionally, and make career changes. Stay up to date on current norms and industry standards. Keep track of the details of your projects and work/academic highlights so you can incorporate them into your application documents.

Job Application Process

When starting the application process, first you need to identify your desired industry, subindustry, work environment, etc. Research different areas such as academia, government/public sector, non-profit, private industry, etc. Once you have a better idea of each area, you can narrow your view and focus on finding resources and tailoring your application materials for those jobs.

Remember: It is not just the salary or the subject material that is important when considering potential work settings. Different places will prioritize different values, needs, and wants for their employees – you need to make sure that the companies you are applying to match what you value, need, and want in a career path.

For example:

If you highly value independence, and you find when researching a company/industry that management tends to micromanage or be extremely strict on processes/decisions – make sure to take that into account when deciding whether you would enjoy working at that company.

Other things to consider are the company/institution culture.

For example:

Does the institution or company demonstrate an identifiable culture – values, beliefs, behaviors? Do these align with your values and ethics? Can you think of potential problems stemming from that situation?

Finding postings:

Once you have decided which industry/area you want to go into, you need to find postings that you are interested in applying to. There are many general job searching sites, some of which you may already know, like Handshake, LinkedIn, Indeed, SimplyHired, and Glassdoor. Additionally, there are other job searching sites that are good to know depending on what area you want to go into. Check with your academic discipline professional organizations for additional job boards and career resources.

Here are just a few examples:

- Academia/Higher Ed: Higher Ed Jobs (<https://www.higheredjobs.com/>)
- Educational Organizations: [The Chronicle of Higher Education Jobs | jobs | Choose from 34,287 live job openings](#)
- Federal: USA Jobs (<https://www.usajobs.gov/>)
- Local Government: [Job Center | icma.org](#)
- National Association of Human Resource Professionals: [National Human Resources Association - Job Postings](#)
- Technology: Dice (<https://www.dice.com/>)
- National Council of Nonprofits (<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/nonprofit-jobs>)
- [The Chronicle of Philanthropy Jobs | jobs | Choose from 458 live job openings](#)
- Nonprofit Volunteer, Internship, and Job Opportunities: [Jobs, Volunteering, Grad Schools, and More - Idealist](#)
- Public Relations Society of America: [Public Relations Jobs - PRSA Jobcenter](#)
- LinkedIn Jobs: [Jobs | LinkedIn](#)
- Indeed: [Job Search | Indeed](#)
- Monster: [Monster Jobs - Job Search, Career Advice & Hiring Resources | Monster.com](#)
- Glassdoor: [Glassdoor Job Search | You deserve a job that loves you back](#)
- Glasstire, Texas Visual Arts: [Glasstire | Texas Visual Art News & Reviews](#)
- Science & Technology: [Science Careers | jobs | Choose from 1,280 live job openings](#)
- Science: [Nature Careers | Science jobs | Choose from 1,858 live vacancies](#)
- National Council on Public History: [Jobs Archive | National Council on Public History \(ncph.org\)](#)
- Employers Building Diverse Teams: [Employers Building Diverse Teams – Career Center | University of North Texas \(unt.edu\)](#)

Crafting your Application Materials

For jobs in private industry, you will need a resume, cover letter, and list of 3-4 references for each job application. For jobs in higher education, you will need a curriculum vitae, cover letter, research statement, teaching statement/philosophy, teaching portfolio, diversity statements, and recommendation letters. It is important to tailor your application materials to each job posting to get past the “resume gatekeepers” – human and technological alike.

If you are looking to apply to federal positions, a federal resume is different from a resume for private industry. The length limit does not apply, and experience/qualification/accomplishments need to be written more specifically and in detail.

The technological “resume gatekeepers” that are mentioned above are called Applicant Tracking Systems, or ATS. These systems read each applicant’s resume and rank them according to keyword matching. They also have some other functions, such as writing a summary for each applicant based off the resume and acting as a database for employers to search through using keywords.

Pro tip:

Here are some resources/websites that will simulate an ATS platform and give you an approximate percentage match when you upload your resume and a job posting. They also give details about things like formatting tips, missed keywords in both technical skills and soft skills, and recruiter tips. Both websites have some free scans and premium services for a price.

JobScan: <https://www.jobscan.co/>

SkillSyncer: <https://skillsyncer.com/> (1 year free for students/military – use your UNT email address when signing up)

The Interview

Knowing proper job interview etiquette is an important part of successful interviewing. How you dress, what you bring to a job interview, greet the interviewer, and how you communicate can make a significant difference in the interview outcome.

- Review the posting in detail.
- Research the company and find out as much as possible about the employer.
- Prepare relevant answers to typical interview questions.
- Anticipate any red flags from your resume and know how to deal with them.
- Memorize good examples that demonstrate the key behaviors required for the job.
- Consider your strengths and how they can add value to the job.
- Prepare several good questions to ask the interviewer.
- Visit the location in advance so you arrive stress free and on time.

Employers practice behavior-based interviewing, where questions focus on actions & behaviors, not subjective impressions. This is designed to minimize personal impressions that can affect the hiring decision and is based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior.

Here are the three most common question types:

Theoretical – Place you in hypothetical situations and are used to evaluate your critical thinking skills. For example: How would you organize your friends to help you move into a new apartment?

Leading – The interviewer hints at the answer they are seeking by the way the question is phrased. For example: Working on your own does not bother you, does it?

Behavioral – Seek demonstrated examples of behavior from past experiences that concentrate on job-related functions and are usually open-ended questions (not yes/no). For example: Describe a time you had to be flexible in planning a workload. Why did you decide to major in this program at UNT, rather than a small private college?

How to best answer behavior-based interview questions:

When answering questions, use the **STAR Method** to recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions.

1. **Situation** – Use specific details about a situation or task.
2. **Task** – Tell what led to it.
3. **Action** – Discuss what you did and who was involved.
4. **Result** – What was the outcome? Resolve the story and reflect on what you learned.

When you have an interview scheduled, one of the best ways to prepare is to practice answers to frequent questions, both general and industry-specific, either through self-practice or mock interviewing with your Career Coach, friends, or family. UNT also gives students access to some helpful online resources that you can use to practice your interviewing skills:

Big Interview (<https://unt.biginterview.com/>) is a free online tool that combines training and practice to help improve your interview technique and build your confidence. Big Interview can also help you with resume writing, how to negotiate, and how to navigate the first 90 days (about 3 months) of a new job. The system includes:

- Challenging, virtual mock interviews for all experience levels and dozens of industries.
- A database of thousands of interview questions with tips on how to answer them.
- The ability to rate and share your interview answers for feedback.
- A comprehensive video training curriculum covering all aspects of landing a job.

A step-by-step interview Answer Builder for crafting answers to behavioral questions. **LinkedIn Interview Prep** (<https://www.linkedin.com/interview-prep/>): LinkedIn has many common interview questions listed along with framework describing how to best approach the question as well as the option to record an answer with AI (Artificial Intelligence) feedback. There are some other features if you have LinkedIn Premium.

LinkedIn Learning (<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/>): UNT offers LinkedIn Learning for free to current students, and there are many courses with information about interviews for you to view.

Negotiation

Why would I negotiate a salary? Private industry has traditionally not been transparent about salary data in their job postings, although this is improving with time. Discussions about pay expectations might come up during your interview, where your potential employer will ask you about your salary expectations, or it might not come up until they are offering you a position. Researching reasonable salary amounts and negotiating your pay scale before accepting a job offer is an extremely useful skill to make sure that you are being paid appropriately.

Make sure to research appropriate salary amounts depending on your level, including both national and regional data. Examples of resources to explore that contain salary data are Glassdoor, O*NET, U.S. Bureau of Labor & Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, DICE. In a salary negotiation, one must have a **reasonable** number in mind. If you make a counteroffer for an unreasonable amount, the company will be less inclined to negotiate with you.

Debriefing & Reevaluating

The job search process can be difficult! It is easy to get emotional when a job that you are excited about does not work out. Remember that this process takes time and most people do not succeed on their first try at an application.

It is important after every application, no matter the outcome, to reflect on what did and did not go well, to improve your chances for the next time.

- *If you are not getting interviews, consider editing your resume and cover letter to better include keywords or make the format more readable.*
- *If you are getting multiple interviews, but not getting job offers, consider practicing your interview skills and answering common interview questions for your industry.*

Your Career Coach can help you with these processes!

What next? Keep going! The job search can be a lengthy & multi-faceted process, so do not be discouraged and keep working at it.

Pro tip:

Ask your Career Coach to access the latest NACE Salary Survey document, which contains reported salary data for various industries and majors.

Action Step:

Check in with your Career Coaches and Faculty Advisors for help and to schedule a mock interview before the real thing.

Opportunities for Growth, Development and Continued Learning

Research:

NACE is the National Association of Colleges and Employers. NACE is an organization made up of employers, members of career services teams, and university relations professionals. In 2015, NACE launch its career readiness initiative to establish a shared understanding of what is needed to develop a successful career. This initiative helps identify common vocabulary, common expectations and a basic set of competencies that can assist in building a successful career. At the national level, career readiness has been recognized as a critical developmental piece in securing an efficient economy (NACE, 2020). Responding to this push for enhanced college graduates' preparation for joining the workforce, and the acknowledging the economic benefits, institutions of higher education around the country have been recognizing the importance of career readiness by instituting campus-wide initiatives (NACE, 2020). NACE surveyed about 600 of its employer members to determine the importance of each competency in the workplace, identifying competencies that are considered essential. The survey results are below, and you can find the full survey results [here](#).

Figure: Career Readiness Competencies Identified as “Essential” or “Absolutely Essential”

<i>Professionalism/Work Ethic</i>	97.5%
<i>Critical Thinking/Problem Solving</i>	96.3%
<i>Oral/Written Communication</i>	91.6%
<i>Teamwork/Collaboration</i>	90%
<i>Information Technology Application</i>	72%
<i>Leadership</i>	55.9%
<i>Career Management</i>	45%

<https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/the-four-career-competencies-employers-value-most/> *Job Outlook - 2022*

In alignment with the competencies listed above, NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) identified behaviors that can be associated with each competency. These behaviors are important as they provide graduate students and recent graduates with practical steps and ways to identify skills gaps important to address during the career development process. Definitions and sample behaviors are listed below and can be found [here](#).

Getting Involved:

There are many opportunities to get involved as a graduate student. Take advantage of making connections and trying new activities to help you develop and gain confidence. Networking with other students, professors, advisors, counselors, other people in your chosen field, and hiring managers/recruiters in your field may open leadership opportunities. Organizations value

communication skills, and you can learn how to build upon soft skills in demand while you are gaining technical expertise from your academic program. Build self-confidence and social skills – get used to talking with people/being around big groups if you are not already.

Some organizations offer fellowships, grants, scholarships, and awards. Showing you have done research for your field of study and learning about the industry can increase your marketability for employers.

Professional Conferences are a fantastic way to build your network and address gaps in skills and knowledge while also engaging in leadership roles. Some organizations will support your professional and personal growth through sponsored professional development and conference attendance. Many of the conferences are based on specific areas of expertise, for example NACE (The National Association of Colleges and Employers) focuses on organizations that work to connect Colleges and Employers therefore conference topics are based around strategies and concepts related to career development and communication with the workforce.

Professional organizations also have events, workshops, conferences, journals/other publications, and other information on their websites where you can learn about & identify trends/issues in your field. Make sure you have business cards & your elevator pitch ready if you are attending an event or a conference!

Student organizations are another resource you can use to address skills and knowledge gaps. These organizations allow you to grow your network while providing leadership and communication opportunities, they are also a wonderful way to get involved with the local community. Some of these organizations are nationally based with chapters across the country. These organizations also host networking events and professional conferences that you can attend. The Toulouse Graduate school has over 40 student organizations in which you could potentially become involved.

Student organizations put on events and have meetings, sometimes with professionals from the industry, discussing your chosen field and giving tips on diverse topics, such as writing resumes or what skills are needed to get hired.

Find Student Organizations at UNT (University of North Texas)

[Student Org Home](#) | [Division of Student Affairs \(unt.edu\)](#)

This site lets you search through all the student organizations on campus, including filters for categories, and has a calendar with all the events that student organizations are putting on.

Check your college or department's website, they often have a tab that lists student organizations for their majors

[College of Health and Public Service | Student Organizations](#) [College of Information | Student Organizations](#)
[College of Engineering | Organizations](#)

[Anthropology Organizations & Honor Society | Department of Anthropology | College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences](#)

[Extracurricular Involvement | Department of Psychology \(unt.edu\)](#)

[Student Organizations | College of Merchandising, Hospitality & Tourism \(unt.edu\)](#)

[Student Organizations | Mayborn School of Journalism \(unt.edu\)](#)

[Student Organizations | G. Brint Ryan College of Business \(unt.edu\)](#)

[CVAD \(College of Visual Arts and Design\) Student Organizations | College of Visual Arts and Design \(unt.edu\)](#)

Find Professional Organizations

- [Professional Association Finder | CareerOneStop](#)
- [O*NET \("Sources of Additional Information" section\)](#)
- [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Outlook Handbook \("More Info" tab, "Contacts for More Information"\)](#)
- [What Can I Do With This Major? – Career Center | University of North Texas \(Professional Associations are listed on the bottom of each major's page\)](#)
- [Check your college or department's website, they might have a list of professional organizations for their majors](#)
- [Professional Organizations | Department of Information Science \(unt.edu\)](#)
- [Use an internet search engine to see if there are local or state organizations for your field](#)

Additional Opportunities for Leadership, Networking, Training & Support

- [3 Minute Thesis](#)
- [Graduate Student Council \(GSC\)](#)
- [Toastmasters](#)
- [Center for Leadership & Service](#)
- [On campus/Student Employment](#)
- [Texas Young Professionals – statewide, 2 Chapters in DFW \(Dallas Fort Worth\)](#)
- [Student Alumni Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Program](#)
- [Writing Support](#)
- [Student Money Management Center](#)
- [Counseling and Testing](#)
- [Libraries](#)
- [Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [Toulouse Graduate School Professional Development Workshops](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [Coursera](#)

Academic and Industry Mentors

UNT [Mean Green Mentors](#) is an online mentoring platform for current UNT students to connect with UNT Alumni interested in being a mentor. Current students can connect with alumni to get advice and guidance on their career path, learn more about what it takes to be successful within the career and/or industry they are interested in, etc. Students and their Mentor can meet virtually or in person as little or as often as you like. It is up to you as the Mentee to be prepared to share with your Mentor what kind of assistance you need and were hoping to learn. You can also choose to have more than one Mentor.

The online article, [24 Reasons Why Mentorship is Important for Mentee and Mentor according to Indeed.com](#), states that mentorship can help you learn new things, build your network, and grow as a professional. The Career Coach, Jamie Birt, who authored this article states reasons why a mentor is important which are supporting growth, serve as a source of knowledge, help set goals, maintain accountability, offer encouragement, willing to listen, be a trusted ally, offer constructive feedback, provide guidelines, share relevant experience, and are a free resource.

A Forbes online article from February 20, 2022, discussed [What Makes a Great Mentor, and The Importance of Having One](#). Key points they mentioned related to finding a Mentor is to:

- Map your goals, and set clear expectations on how a mentor can help you
- Look across various disciplines and functions – Who do you look up to? Whose job would you like to have after graduation?
- Get to know the Mentor first – have an exploratory chat, follow them on LinkedIn, understand their point of view, and establish a connection before asking them to be a mentor
- Start with people who are already in your own professional network

[How to Find a Mentor as a Graduate Student – Neuronline May 20, 2015](#) - Faculty can also provide mentorship to students. The online article from Neuronline suggests using a variety of formal and informal means, such as

- Review the work of faculty to get an idea of their academic interests and methodologies
- Get involved in your academic departments academic and social activities
- Look for another Graduate Student who is more advanced in their coursework to mentor you
- Attend public presentations by faculty whose projects and research interest you

Good mentoring is based on mutual interests. You can benefit by having multiple academic mentors.

Success as a Graduate Student and Beyond

Teamwork

For most academic disciplines, graduate research has become team focused. To solve complex problems, a range of cooperative experts is needed to be innovative and recommend solutions. Each member of the team has an important part to play so the team can be cohesive and productive. Some key skills of an effective team member are emotional intelligence, motivation, relationship management, active listening, adaptability, good attitude, dependability, sharing ideas, asking questions, and providing constructive feedback.

Before starting group work, it is helpful to start with a discussion to determine what roles are needed and which group member will take on each role, determine when the group will meet and how often, develop expectations and goals to achieve, and create a timeline with set deadlines.

Within some teams, conflict will arise. This should be dealt with quickly and constructively. Share your concerns without placing blame. Use “I” statements to share what is concerning you and what you feel the effect has been and provide suggestions on how to improve the conflict.

In a June 2016 Harvard Business Review article [The Secrets of Great Teamwork \(hbr.org\)](#), the authors share “enabling conditions” which are needed for teams to thrive. They are:

- Compelling direction – having goals that are challenging, but also energizes and engages the team
- Strong structure – a team whose members have a balance of skills (technical and social) and norms that discourage destructive behavior
- Supportive context – a reward system for to reinforce good performance, an information system to provide access to data needed, offering training, and access to resources needed’
- Shared mindset

Be A Great Advisee

<https://graduate.unl.edu/connections/how-be-good-graduate-student>

Before a meeting, **make an agenda** for yourself to be sure you address all your questions efficiently. This will help you remember all your goals during the meeting, even if your conversation starts moving in different directions (as conversations often do when two people are passionate about a topic!). After the meeting, thank your advisor in an email and summarize the conversation.

Remember that **graduate school is training you to become your advisor's future colleague**. This means there is less handholding than when you were an undergraduate. Graduate school is when you learn to process information and make decisions like a principal investigator would, so do not expect your advisor to tell you how to do what is next or how to find resources. Keep your ears open and watch what makes the more advanced graduate students in your program successful—and what does not.

Use criticism to improve yourself. When your advisor points out a flaw or critiques your work, it is to help you be the best you can be. Do not take it personally! After you get feedback, take a deep breath. Remember that you can use criticism to your advantage.

Be compassionate. Your advisor is human too! Becoming familiar with their struggles and victories—from grading 100 student papers to applying for (and winning) a grant — will help you work better with them.

Excel at Your Work

Discover how you work best. Your learning preferences can guide the way you work. This allows you to create the best possible work environment for your learning needs.

Record your work as you go along. *This is essential.* Even if you think you will never forget the details of a procedure you repeated thousands of times when you were collecting data, the reality is that details get murky in the time between when you conducted an experiment and when you complete your write-up (whether that is for an article, thesis, or dissertation). Keeping track of details as you go along is worth the extra effort. Your records will be a valuable resource down the road and save you time and aggravation.

Find traits that you admire in the people around you. Not only will this help you build relationships because you are focusing on others' strengths rather than mulling over their weaknesses, but it will also help you aspire to those qualities. Then, look for ways to develop those traits and abilities.

Do not let your work become your whole life. It is important to have friends outside your lab and other interests to delve into. If you do not, when something goes wrong with your work or you have a conflict with a co-worker, you might feel like your world is falling apart. But when your life involves other components, it is easier to let things roll off your back and you have a realistic perspective. A balanced life leads to less drama and greater adaptability.

Looking Ahead

As you continue your journey through Graduate School and after graduation, remember that career planning is always evolving and requires evaluation and reflection. It is important to stay in touch with alumni, your mentors, and others within your network that you have built strong connections with. Continue to nurture those relationships and reconnect often. Networking is a two-way process. As someone helps you, you help them. Lastly, strive to always be curious, seek advice, ask questions, offer to help others, reflect, and be a life-long learner. As a UNT graduate student, you are and will always be a valued member of the Mean Green Family.

Academic and Career Planning Worksheet

As you progress through your academic and career planning journey, these are activities, data points, and resources that you will consistently want to have at the ready. Consider this fillable academic and career planning worksheet to be a site to gather this information and provide reminders of regularized activities that will foster your success.

Things to do:	Data or Done or To Do
Degree Type What degree type are you pursuing? If it is a Master's Degree, is it an MS or MA or MFA? If it is a doctoral degree, is it a PhD or EdD, or? These distinctions may be significant when you present your credentials to prospective employers.	
Program Name You know how you refer to your program, but what is its official name – the one that will appear on your transcript? Do you have a minor or concentration? Make sure that you are presenting yourself accurately.	
Faculty Advisor Name and Contact Information While you may be working with a professional staff advisor for crucial assistance in course planning, write down the name, title, and contact information of your faculty advisor. You will want to have this ready at hand for your references – and have discussed this in advance with your advisor.	
Faculty Advisor Office Hours/Meeting Preferences Does your advisor have regular office hours? When/where/what modality? Write these down here.	
Faculty Advisor Check in/Recommended Meeting Plan Do you have a regular check in or meeting schedule with your advisor? If not, is that something that you might consider establishing now? In the near future?	
Review Toulouse Graduate School Website The website of the Toulouse Graduate School contains relevant information regarding professional development workshops, extramural funding opportunities, and crucial degree milestones. Are you reviewing it and the Monday afternoon newsletters (delivered to your @myunt.edu email address) regularly?	See tgs.unt.edu
Identify a Professional Organization Relevant to Your Discipline Find at least one of these now and write down their details (name, website, dues, benefits, funding opportunities, meetings). Then, when you return to this document, find another, and consider joining. Student rates tend to be an excellent value.	
Career Coach Name and Contact Information In addition to your faculty advisor, you have a Career Coach embedded within your school or college. Find that person's name and contact information and how to schedule an appointment and write those down.	

Handshake Profile Have you set up this profile ? Do it now and write down the URL and login details so that you can access it regularly.	
LinkedIn Profile Have you created this yet? Does it need an update? Login now and review things. Consider attending a professional development workshop. Get feedback from a Career Coach.	
Create a Professional Resume/CV and Schedule a Resume Review Do you know the difference between a resume and a cv? Which do you have? Which do you need for your various career interests? This is a great topic for discussion with your faculty advisor and career coach. Your professional organization(s) may have standards. There is a professional development workshop for this!	
Attend a Career Center Networking Event with Employers See Events – Career Center University of North Texas (unt.edu) for those arranged through the Career Center. There may also be opportunities through your school, college, or professional organization.	
Find a Student Organization/Leadership Opportunity You Are Interested In This might be Graduate Student Council , another UNT student organization , or it may be an opportunity through a relevant professional organization. This is a way to build skills and build your network.	
Review Big Interview for Interview Preparation/Salary Negotiation & Complete a Mock Interview	
Think about what S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time) Goals you can make while a graduate student.	Goal 1. Goal 2.
What else is on your list?	

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