At Lutron, we’ve been designing and manufacturing energy-saving light control solutions since 1961.

Our success depends on your success. Join Lutron’s Innovation Leadership Program and you’ll develop the skills and knowledge needed to win in the world of innovation.

- Immediately join an engineering development team
- Hone innovation and product design skills
- Receive formal mentor support
- Collaborate regularly with business unit managers and directors
- Acquire real-world experience through field assignments
- Foster relationships with Lutron’s global customers

Key opportunities include:

**Engineering**—Electrical, Mechanical, Computer, Software, Manufacturing, Industrial, Architectural

**Science**—Physics, Chemistry, Math

Opportunities are also available in sales leadership and field engineering leadership—**hiring all majors**.

To learn more about how you can be a part of our future visit [www.lutron.com/careers](http://www.lutron.com/careers)
Dear Student,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Center for Career & Professional Development (CCPD). We want to share more information with you about our career programs and resources for students. Our goal is to provide outstanding career services.

The CCPD will assist you with setting career goals, writing your resume, connecting with employers, developing networks, sharpening your interviewing skills, and learning other skills that will help you prepare for a lifetime of career success. Whether you are just curious about what you can do with your major, or you are seeking information about internships, Cooperative Education, or you are seeking full-time employment, the CCPD can assist you.

There are many programs and services offered by the CCPD that are summarized throughout this Career & Professional Development Guide. We want to encourage you to become familiar with these programs and services, and to take full advantage of them.

We look forward to your visit and the opportunity to assist you with your career needs. We encourage you to ask questions—we are here to help!

Best wishes for a successful year.

Warmest regards,

The Staff of the Center for Career & Professional Development
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the RPI Center for Career & Professional Development

Meet the CCPD Staff
Jennifer Walters, Director
Dawn Cairns-Weaver, Director of Cooperative Education
Meaghan Johnson, Career Counselor
Stephanie Perry, Recruiting Coordinator
Sherry Bearup, Senior Customer Service Associate
Anita Brown, Marketing Assistant

Location
RPI Center for Career & Professional Development
Darrin Communications Center, Suite 209
110 8th Street
Troy, NY 12180-3590
Phone (518) 276-6234
Fax (518) 276-8787
www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc

Mission of the Center for Career & Professional Development (CCPD)
The mission of the Center for Career & Professional Development is to be a catalyst in the development of Rensselaer students to become world leaders in a technologically based global economy.

Our goals are to provide programs and services to assist students in discovering and clarifying career choices, and to teach them to manage their careers effectively.

The Center for Career & Professional Development is committed to cultivating and advancing partnerships with students, faculty, staff, alumni and employers to carry out our mission. We’re dedicated to continuously improving our customer services and to assuming leadership in the profession of career development.
The Center for Career & Professional Development and You

Some students will go through all four years of college without ever setting foot in their college’s Center for Career & Professional Development. Yet, outside of the academic realm, job seekers will pay hundreds, even thousands, of dollars for the very same services that are included free in their tuition. Don’t overlook the CCPD at Rensselaer. Take advantage of the many programs and services listed below. Attend programs; get to know a counselor. Let us help you plan your future!

Career Counseling and Assessment

Making an appointment to speak with a CCPD counselor is often the best way for students to review current career goals, begin the job search process and discuss future plans. For students seeking further clarification regarding their personal career development, the CCPD offers various self-assessment instruments including the Strong Interest Inventory, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and the FOCUS 2 Career Planning Service.

Job Search Skills

The CCPD offers resources and assistance to students looking for summer jobs, internships and co-op opportunities. For graduating students, the CCPD helps those going onto graduate school or looking for full-time employment after graduation. This includes information about gathering resources, job search strategies, resume writing and interview preparation, negotiating skills and relocation suggestions. Graduating students are eligible to participate in on-campus recruiting/interviews within two semesters of graduation.

Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:30 am - 4:45 pm

Walk-In Hours (For quick resume critiques and career-related questions; intended to be brief—five-minute appointments)

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Schedule an Appointment—Career counselors are good listeners, problem solvers, information and resource providers and motivators. Schedule an appointment with a career counselor in the CCPD by going to www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc. They can provide help with a job search, assist in discovery of your skills and interests, provide resources for exploring options and researching industries, interviewing tips and mock interviews, information about RPI’s Co-op Program, and more.

The Co-op Program at Rensselaer

Cooperative Education has been a major offering at the university since 1945, and it was one of the first 40 programs of its type in the United States. Since that time, co-op has helped to launch the careers of thousands of Rensselaer students, often propelling them into positions of higher responsibility than those for typical graduates.

Co-op programs vary by university. At RPI, undergraduates will work full time for one semester and one summer. While those terms can be separated by a semester of study, most students will work one of two rotations: January through August or June through December. Many co-ops also add on an extra summer co-op term before graduating. Graduate students have the option of working one term (summer or semester) or they can work the same “semester and summer” rotation as an undergraduate.

What Co-op Can Do for You

There are many reasons to participate in the Co-op Program! Here are just a few:

- **Apply what you are learning in the classroom.** Co-op is an excellent way to confirm your academic major and to explore potential career paths that you might like to work in after graduation.

- **Network with professionals in the field.** It’s often said that it’s not what you know but who you know. Co-op is a great way to meet leading professionals in your major; people who can open up doors for you or teach you new things.

- **Earn money to help with college expenses.** Co-op students earn great pay, and you can save money to put towards living expenses or just to buy things that you want.

- **Gain the edge at graduation.** Typical co-op students will have at least a year of work experience when they graduate. These students are highly competitive against other students when it’s time to get invited for interviews; further, they usually interview exceptionally well because of their technical knowledge and professional experience.
Planning for Co-op
The time to be thinking about co-op is in the freshman or sophomore year. While co-op jobs are competitive, and you can’t be guaranteed a position, it’s important to plan ahead and talk to your advisor about how you would arrange classes to accommodate a co-op opportunity. Some students can graduate on time because of AP credits. Other students may choose to go to summer school to get ahead and graduate on time. Still other students push off graduation by one semester or even one year. Most students will start co-op in the spring semester of their sophomore year, during their junior year, or even as late as the summer into the fall of their senior year. All participants must first finish their freshman year or have at least 12 credits remaining in the program of study. A minimum 2.0 GPA is required.

Getting Started
Most students apply for and obtain a co-op job the semester directly before they start working. You should indicate your interest in co-op on JobLink. Then review the online Co-op Webshop for more information. Inquire about co-op opportunities with employers through JobLink, the Career Fairs, and by researching opportunities online.

Questions?
For more information, contact the CCPD or write to the Director of Cooperative Education, Dawn Cairns-Weaver at cairnd@rpi.edu.

Summer Employment/Internships
Summer employment may include internships, part-time/temporary positions and research experience. Typically involving a mid-May to mid-August assignment, summer employment is an excellent way to gain valuable work experience in a short period of time. For some students, participating in a part-time internship during the fall or spring semester may be required or recommended by your academic department. Be sure to meet with a career counselor at the beginning of the semester to make certain you are prepared for the upcoming recruiting season.

Other Services, Workshops and Special Events
CCPD Spring Career Fair: In February, the CCPD hosts a Career Fair open to all Rensselaer students. Last year over 150 employers participated!

Workshops and Special Events: Go to the CCPD website for a listing of all CCPD events.

Career Days: Open to any student who has an interest in learning more about the visiting company or organization. Career Days are most often scheduled as half- or full-day events and are held in the DCC Great Hall or CCPD Lounge.

Information Meetings: Generally used by employers to provide more detailed information on their products/services; to discuss position descriptions and career paths; and to talk about the social, cultural, educational and housing opportunities in their geographic area. These are typically scheduled around a recruiting visit or on-campus interviewing day at Rensselaer.

Sophomore Career Experience (SCE)
The Center for Career & Professional Development has identified the sophomore class as a special population of students receptive to new support systems on campus that are strategically designed to build on their first-year experiences. The goal of the Sophomore Career Experience program is to engage students in a growing partnership with the staff of the Center for Career & Professional Development and major employers in order to cultivate and advance their professional development. Through collaborative activities and workshops with key employers, students will be taught the fundamentals of career exploration and job search skills.
JobLink
The CCPD’s premier online career management tool, JobLink, allows students to participate in On-Campus Recruiting (OCR), search for job postings, register for the CCPD Spring Career Fair, learn about important upcoming events and have their resume included in the Online Resume Book. Visit our website at www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc to activate your account today!

- On-Campus Interviews
- Open Job Postings
- CCPD Spring Career Fair
- Events
- Online Resume Books

JobLink Activation
To gain access to open job postings and On-Campus Recruiting (OCR), all students must activate and update their JobLink accounts annually. Activation will not take place until:

1. Your User Profile is updated online.
2. You have viewed the JobLink online tutorial.

Note the you must have a resume uploaded to participate in OCR and our online Resume Books.

When activating your JobLink account, you can make your resume available for employers to review (option is under “Privacy Tab”). You can also choose to receive career-related messages by answering “yes” to the question under your Privacy Tab regarding CCPD email notifications. There will be information on opportunities, CCPD presentations, and special career events every time you log into the system under the “Announcements” section.

The CCPD strongly encourages you to monitor and read posted notices and reminders about CCPD events, so that you do not miss important career opportunities.

Your JobLink account is for your personal use only. Sharing your account is not permitted and may result in loss of privileges.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
During your application process, you may or may not be asked by an employer to answer the following questions:

1. Are you legally authorized to work in the United States for any employer?
2. Will you now or in the near future require visa sponsorship?

Students are encouraged to ask employers at the earliest opportunity if the position being applied for has any citizenship or other restrictions based on the laws of the United States relating to national security or export controls.

At the time of actual hire (not application) for a position in the United States, successful applicants will be required to demonstrate to the hiring employer the applicant’s work eligibility status using appropriate documentation. The hiring employer will inform successful applicants what documentation is required.
**ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING (OCR)**

**Selection Process for Interviews**
Pre-selection means employers decide which students will be invited to interview. In order to increase your chances of being pre-selected, preparation, first impressions, and your resume on JobLink are important. JobLink will allow you to submit resumes and sign up for interviews for fall and spring recruiting. View the online tutorial to discover all that is available to you through JobLink. Do not submit resumes and sign up for interviews to practice. You will be taking up an interview spot that someone is serious about. The CCPD offers mock interviews and counseling to help you. Appointments with counselors can be made online.

**The Dynamics of the Job Market and On-Campus Recruiting (OCR)**
Whether you have a technical or non-technical major, understanding the dynamics and trends of On-Campus Recruiting nationally are important. These dynamics and trends are the same at all universities.

Although much is made of relationships that define and shape On-Campus Recruiting goals, whether or not an employer recruits on campus is largely determined by:

1. The job market. Some degrees and majors are in higher demand than others.
2. The number of students represented in degrees and majors that warrants consideration by employers for a campus visit.
3. Past hiring history from the campus.
4. Present interest by students evidenced by how many attend employer events.
5. Faculty interest and contacts with employers.
6. Relevance of the curriculum to the needs of employers.

All of these factors are considered when employers decide on what campuses they wish to recruit. Many employers from the communications industry, the arts, government, and education do not recruit on campus. This has to do as much with the costs associated with on-campus interviewing as it does with the unique and boutique nature of their hiring needs. In many cases, students are directed by employers in these industries to apply directly to the organization or agency.

The CCPD continuously stays in touch with alumni and employer contacts in the non-technical recruiting areas. The result of these contacts can be seen by monitoring the job postings in JobLink. By activating your account with the CCPD you can also elect to receive CCPD messages that will inform you of employment opportunities when they become available.

The CCPD also maintains links to critical sites that are relevant to recruiting. These links are available on the CCPD website and can be found by reviewing the Job Search link under the "students" section.

Use the Career Fairs and Employer Information Sessions as teaching moments to inform employers about your major, your skills and your interest in working for them. This is especially true for non-technical majors. The CCPD provides information on all degrees and majors to employers, but what convinces employers to hire you is your participation in recruiting events.

In addition, employers will occasionally have openings on their schedules and may add students from other degrees and majors. Whether or not you are added to a schedule depends on who the recruiter is, what his/her area of expertise is, and the position in the company.

The job market for technical and non-technical majors continues to largely be a networking-based market. This means that many opportunities are available through connections you make through faculty, alumni, friends, relatives, and direct communication with employers. The CCPD has many resources dedicated to networking, and you are encouraged to make an appointment to discuss how your search for employment can begin.
Deadlines
All deadlines for submission of resumes are strictly adhered to. Deadlines are posted well in advance on the OCR job postings—usually two to three weeks prior to interview dates. Once deadlines have passed, you are responsible for sending your resume to employers if time permits. Last minute changes or additions to schedules cannot easily be accommodated, given time constraints of employer visits.

Professional Conduct
It is the expectation of the CCPD that you will conduct yourself in a professional and positive manner at all times when interacting with staff, employers and other students involved in the OCR process.

Keeping Commitments
OCR will demand a commitment of time from you. The CCPD makes every effort to schedule events and recruiting at times that are convenient for students. However, the CCPD must also schedule recruiting events for the convenience of employers. Employer Information Sessions, Career Days, the CCPD Spring Career Fair, and CCPD Special Events are a means for you to meet with employers in a way that is less formal than on-campus interviewing. The interview, however, is a formal meeting that you will schedule with an employer through the OCR process. Like other meetings and your classes, you are expected to show up for your scheduled interviews. Employers are counting on you to be there. Because of the limited number of interview slots available on each schedule, other students expect you to show up for your interviews too.

Cancellations
If you sign up for an interview, you are making a commitment based on your qualifications and interests in the job and in the employer. If you cannot keep your commitment, you must go through the OCR system to cancel your interview(s) two business days prior to the interview(s). This will allow the CCPD time to open the schedule for other students to sign up in your place. There are only two acceptable reasons for canceling an interview once you have scheduled it:

1. You have an emergency or are ill.
2. You have accepted another job offer.

All cancellations less than two business days prior to the interviews are considered no-shows.

No-Shows
Students who do not appear for a scheduled interview will be considered a no-show. No-shows will have their access to OCR deactivated and will lose all interviewing privileges. After the first no-show, to reactivate OCR, students are required to write a letter of apology to the employer and hand the letter, with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, into the CCPD. The CCPD will place the letter in the mail and reactivate students’ OCR privileges.

The second time a no-show occurs will result in the loss of all JobLink privileges.

Job Offers
If you are given an offer, you are expected to notify the employer of your decision to accept or reject the offer within the time specified by the employer.

If you accept the offer, you will be expected to cancel any remaining interviews and withdraw from OCR. Please report your acceptance to the CCPD.

Dress for Interviews
The dress code for all on-campus interviews is a business suit for men and women. The only exception is if the employer contacts you in advance and advises you otherwise. In this case, the CCPD policy is that you come to the interview dressed business casual. Jeans, t-shirts, hats and other casual attire are not appropriate for interviewing. Details on all CCPD policies concerning OCR are available on the CCPD website and in the CCPD Office (DCC 209).

Last Minute Helpful Hints
Arrive at the CCPD Interview Center (DCC 345) about 10 minutes early for interviews to compose yourself and tend to your personal needs. Have a seat in the lobby area. Employers will come out to greet you at your scheduled time. Bring extra copies of your resume, transcripts, and other documents that you think may be helpful to employers to assess your interests and skills. If you have waited past the time when your interview was scheduled to start, see the receptionist in the Interview Center for details. We do our best to keep employers on time, but sometimes they may be running over with a previous candidate.

First impressions are important so make sure you are groomed neatly, practice your handshake, and smile. Direct any questions to the receptionist in the Interview Center or stop by the CCPD for assistance.

Activate JobLink at: https://rpi.csm.symplicity.com/students
Self-Assessment
It’s never too early for you to explore and investigate occupations and career paths of interest, paying particular attention to your values, interests and abilities. For many students, this is also a time when choosing and confirming an academic major correlates with identifying and securing internships and co-op field experiences that serve to narrow your career focus, or oftentimes, rule out specific jobs based on observed duties and responsibilities.

Perhaps one of the most important questions you can ask yourself: “What would I do if making money were not a concern?” Answering this question may assist you in solidifying your unique interests, and ideally shed some light on ways you may be able to integrate making a living with doing what you love.

The Center for Career & Professional Development believes in the value of self-assessment as a means through which students can seek clarity in career goals and aspirations while also learning a little bit more about themselves as individuals and members of a team. We currently offer three assessment tools that are available to you at no charge: the Strong Interest Inventory (SII), the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) and the Focus2. It is important to keep in mind that these are not tests, and there are no right or wrong answers!

The SII is utilized to help you understand your work interests and highlight various types of work that may be appealing to you.

The MBTI is one of the most widely used personality assessments, which aims to help students learn more about their innate characteristics and how they may be both positive and challenging attributes.

The Focus2 is a new, state-of-the-art tool that assesses the career interests of individuals and compares them to the interest profiles of various career fields. You are encouraged to set up an appointment with a CCPD career counselor to take an inventory (or all!) to begin to learn more about yourself, how you work on a team, and how you perceive the world around you.

Values Clarification
Students often underestimate the role values play in an individual’s degree of happiness and satisfaction in the workplace. The following are all examples (though not an exhaustive list) of values that students have identified as being important factors in their job search:

- Interpersonal work relationships
- Work/life balance
- Praise/recognition by supervisor
- Flexible schedule
- Equality/fairness in the workplace
- Freedom of self-expression (e.g., appearance, opinions)
- Benefits package (e.g., vacation time, stock options)
- Professional development/continuing education
- Challenging work
- Money

Incorporating your values in any position, whether part- or full-time, is essential to achieving the greatest sense of fulfillment in both your personal and professional lives. If you don’t appreciate the fact that a company asks that you remove your nose ring before your first day on the job, this probably isn’t the company for you! Remember—when it comes to job searching and the interview process you are looking for the best fit, for the company and for you.

Choosing a Major
Following self-assessment and values clarification, there are a few more steps to choosing a major. You may have a better idea of which direction you would like to head, but there may still be too many choices to pick from! Talking to professors, faculty advisors, mentors, Rensselaer alumni and your fellow students is often the preferred method to learn more about academic majors and courses.
But only you can decide what major is right for you; don’t expect your advisor or a career counselor to make the decision for you.

Have fun reading course descriptions within academic departments and track patterns in keywords that always seem to stand out. For example, do you always tend to look for courses that have programming in the description? Or perhaps you look for courses that allow your creativity to flow and that seem “fun.”

College is a great time to experiment, to take risks and indulge individual interests that you may have been forced to ignore in high school. Take the time to explore majors of interest before declaring your major sophomore year.

**Researching Potential Career Fields**

There are a few different ways to begin to narrow potential occupations. First, one of the best ways to learn more about specific career paths is to talk to people in those careers. This is what we call informational interviewing, allowing the student to “interview” a professional (typically a Rensselaer alumnus/alumna or employer) to gather information on different job descriptions, related education and training, and relevant career advancement.

Second, pursuing a summer job or internship, or a co-op is highly recommended for those students seeking to gain work experience while learning more about the world of work. Often the best way to identify fields of interest is by ruling out occupations that aren’t appealing. Sometimes what an occupation appears to be on paper or on a TV show (think CSI, ER) is not always what it seems … this is where you come in!

Taking time to research and explore occupational titles and career paths can be exciting. In addition to the books in the CCPD lounge, there are also some great online resources to investigate career fields:

- **Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH), U.S. Department of Labor**
  www.bls.gov/oco/

- **The Riley Guide’s A-Z Index**
  www.rileyguide.com/atoz.html

- **Sloan Career Cornerstone Center (for science and engineering disciplines)**
  www.careercornerstone.org/

Reading, talking and doing are three key words to keep in mind when spending time thinking about both major and career options. And don’t forget to speak with a CCPD career counselor along the way … we are here to help!
The Career & Professional Development Plan
... A Comprehensive Four-Year Plan for Undergraduates

The Center for Career and Professional Development’s comprehensive four-year plan for undergraduates includes specific professional, career and personal activities to support a range of competencies for future individual success. Each class year has a theme to help guide the types of activities and events to be offered and supported during that year. In addition, anticipated achievements for each class year are also included to help students build on their success from year to year.

For a more detailed plan by class year, please go to http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc or stop by the CCPD to pick up a copy.

Freshman Year:
Focus on Self Awareness

- Time Management & Prioritizing
- Communications
- Key Professional Skills

Sophomore Year:
Expand Career Awareness

- Problem Solving
- Teamwork
- Personal Integrity & Ethics

Career & Professional Development Competencies

- Time Management & Prioritizing
- Communications
- Key Professional Skills
- Problem Solving
- Teamwork
- Personal Integrity & Ethics
- Working in Diverse Environments
- Critical Thinking
- Navigating Across Boundaries
- Embrace Change
- Life-long Learning
- Work/Life Balance

Senior/Fifth Year:
Implement Career Decisions

- Embrace Change
- Life-long Learning
- Work/Life Balance

Junior Year:
Gain Experience

- Working in Diverse Environments
- Critical Thinking
- Navigating Across Boundaries

Supporting individual skill development is accomplished through a variety of strategies including: individual career counseling and coaching, small groups and workshops, special programs & events, on-campus recruiting activities and campus-wide collaborations.

Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD)
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
DCC 209 * 518/276-6234 * www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc
CHAPTER 3

Designing a Great Resume

General Guidelines
A resume is a document that helps you to market your education, work experience and skills to prospective employers. The goal of the resume is to get you an interview. Typically, an employer will spend 15 seconds or less reviewing your resume. Therefore, it has to be well written, well organized, and absolutely free of mistakes. Follow the general guidelines below:

- As an undergraduate, limit the length to one page.
- Include an objective and tailor it to fit every job to which you apply.
- Use section headings and rank them in order of importance.
- Don’t over-rely on templates when designing a resume.
- When printing, use good quality bond paper (white or off-white).

Resume Content

Contact Information. This section includes your name (typically bolded but the size should not overwhelm the resume), college and home addresses, phone numbers, email and website if relevant (for portfolios). As a word of caution, make certain that your voice messages and website sound and look professional.

Objective. While some employers may disagree, the CCPD recommends that you use an objective. Your objective may be more general for a sophomore; such as “Seeking summer internship to explore career paths in media arts.” Junior year, you will want to narrow the objective, such as “Pursuing co-op position in mechanical engineering involving design and development or manufacturing.”

Education. Include all colleges and universities where you have worked toward a degree. State the name of the degree, when you did or will graduate, minors and GPAs. With respect to the GPA, it is acceptable to include your GPA in your major if higher, but also include the overall GPA. If you have any concerns about how to state your GPA, see a career counselor. Never round off your GPA, even by a small amount. Until your sophomore year, you have the option of including your high school education; if you use it, drop it in your junior year.

Projects. This is an optional section and is typically used by students if they have no relevant work experience or simply want to highlight classroom work. If using this heading, include the name of the course and the semester you took it. Typical examples include “Introduction to Engineering Design,” or studio classes.

Experience or Employment. Either of these headings is permissible; sometimes students will even break them out into “Relevant” and “Other” experience/employment. List your job title, the name of your employer, city, state, and dates of employment. Use action verbs when writing about your past employment and include your accomplishments when possible.

Skills. This is a standard section for students and includes computer hardware/software, laboratory, language and artistic skills. List less important things like MS Word at the end of a section.

Leadership and Activities. As a freshman and sophomore, you can include leadership and activities from high school, but list Rensselaer first. Junior year, you will only focus on the things you are doing in college. Include all key positions held, including heading up a committee, as well as fraternities/sororities, volunteer work, intramural sports and so forth.

Honors and Awards. Once again, you can cite honors and awards from high school. However, except for high honors, such as “Valedictorian/Salutatorian” or other major awards, drop these references when you enter your junior year.

Additional Sections. Depending on your background, you may want to include other headings; for instance: Interests, Volunteer Work and Hobbies.

Electronic Resumes
There are three typical ways to get your resume to an employer: In person (for example at a career fair or other event); via a website (the company’s or possibly JobLink); and finally, through email.
When handing an employer your resume, make sure the format is attractive and pleasing, but also make sure that you follow the second path, too, and submit your resume at their website. Before doing so, you want to follow “uploading” instructions carefully as many software systems will not accept bold, bullets and so forth. In those frequent cases, you should save your resume in Notepad, which will convert your document into ASCII text and change any characters that are not readable. Make necessary changes and then paste the document into an email and send it to yourself to see how it has converted.

Finally, regarding email, a large percentage of employers still do not want you to send your resume as an attachment due to concerns about viruses.

Always ask them if they want the resume sent as an attachment or in the body of the email. In the latter case, again copy your resume into Notepad, make adjustments, and send it to yourself for a final review. Then insert it in an email, at the end of your message. As a final note, if you are told to send your resume as an attachment, ask what format they would like to receive it in. Not all employers have updated software.

**Format of a Resume**

There are three different types of resumes used: Chronological, Functional and Combination. Most undergraduate students should use the chronological format. These resumes are written in reverse chronological order, with your most recent education and experiences listed first.

### Power Verbs in Writing

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DESIGNING A GREAT RESUME

www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute 13
Yolanda Quintez
quiny@rpi.edu

College
2 Academic Lane
Troy, NY 12180
518.276.8496

Home
Discovery Road
San Diego, CA 92030
760.398.2222

OBJECTIVE
To obtain a summer-fall co-op position in Biomedical Engineering involving engineering design and development.

EDUCATION
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Troy, NY  May 20XX
B.S. Biomedical Engineering  GPA: 3.12
Related Classes: Materials Science and Dynamic Systems for Biomedical Engineering

PROJECTS
Undergraduate Research Project, RPI  Fall 20XX
• Assisted with data analysis of 3-D images taken on C-Elegance worms.
• Composed family tree and cell lineage based on images.

Introduction to Engineering Design, RPI  Fall 20XX
• Member of 12-person team that designed and constructed fully projectile machine.
• Participated in numerous meetings regarding designing and fabricating prototype.
• Installed and tested limit switches on the machine.

COMPUTER
Applications: CAD, Maple 9.0, Matlab, Minitab, Microsoft Office XP
Related Classes: Materials Science and Dynamic Systems for Biomedical Engineering

SKILLS
Programs (Access, Excel, Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, Front Page),
Adobe InDesign
Programming Language: HTML Coding; C

EMPLOYMENT
Work-Study, Archer Leadership Center, RPI  Sept. 20XX–present
Administrative Assistant to instructional staff.

YMCA of San Diego  Summer 20XX
Camp Counselor. Planned activities for 7-12 year-olds.

High–Tide Restaurant, San Diego  Summer 20XX
Waitress. Provided outstanding customer service in fast-paced environment.

HONORS/
AWARDS
Rensselaer Medal for Excellence in Mathematics and Science  Fall 20XX–present
Dean’s List of Distinguished Students, RPI
Salutatorian of Class of 20XX, Hillside Central High School

LEADERSHIP
Biomedical Engineering Society  Sept. 20XX–May 20XX
Event Coordinator

Best Buddies, Hillside Central  Sept. 20XX–May 20XX
Vice President: Planned and managed events

Girls Varsity Volleyball, Co-Captain, Hillside Central  Sept. 20XX–May 20XX

INTERESTS
Classical guitar; scuba diving; travel
Stella B. Lookin

School Address:  Permanent Address:
123 15th Street  57 Millard Road
Troy, NY 12180  Melrose, CT 25698
(456) 222-1234 Cell  email@rpi.edu

Objective
A summer internship in the field of management, with special interest in finance.

Education
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Troy, NY
Bachelor of Science, Management  May 20XX
Concentration: Finance  GPA 3.2/4.0

Relevant Coursework
Accounting for Decision Making, RPI  Spring 20XX
• Developed income statements, balance sheets, depreciation schedules, and profit projections in Excel
Introduction to Management, RPI  Spring 20XX
• Worked in teams of four to develop business presentations on topics including marketing, entrepreneurship, and corporate strategy.
Computer Information Systems, RPI  Fall 20XX
• Designed databases and studied data mining with Microsoft SQL.
Statistics, RPI  Fall 20XX
• Studied variation and standard deviation applications in real-world business situations.

Experience
Assistant Operator – Work Study
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute – IT Operations, Troy, NY  Fall 20XX – present
• Support operators in maintaining computer labs
• Monitor major printers/plotters
• Ensure working order of equipment in labs

Customer Service Associate
Hannaford Supermarket, Melrose, CT  Summer 20XX, 20XX
• Developed and perfected customer service skills
• Worked extensively with inventory tracking system

Skills
Excel, Access, Word, Microsoft SQL, Autocad
Fluent in Spanish
Piano, 14 years

Leadership
Red & White, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
• Selective admissions student group sponsored by the university development office.
• Student Ambassador for RPI at high profile alumni events.
UPAC Cinema, Publicity Co-chair, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
• Fulfilled weekly duties of informing public about events.
• Produced ideas to increase attendance.
MHS Varsity Field Hockey, Captain

Honors
Dean’s List  Emily Roebling Scholarship
Rensselaer Medal  Bausch & Lomb Award
Objective:
To obtain a challenging position in the Mechanical Engineering field that utilizes the skills learned in undergraduate coursework and presents the opportunity to make a contribution to organizational goals.

Education:
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Troy, NY  May 20XX
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Minor in Electronic Arts
Mechanical Engineering Major Rank: 33/221; GPA 3.70/4.0

Mechanical Engineering Academic Experience:
• Used linear algebra and statistics to emphasize engineering applications.
• Applied free-body diagrams, vector algebra and calculus, and computer simulations to model and solve problems for particle and rigid body systems.
• Utilized Newtonian Dynamics, kinematics and kinetics, as well as energy and moment methods, including LaGrange’s Equations, to understand dynamic forces and their effects on dynamic balance and operation of machines including the stresses of individual components.
• Made use of basic design techniques of mechanical components and integrated assemblies that focused on loads, stresses, strains, failure phenomena and material selection.

Selected Design Projects:
Introduction to Engineering Design, RPI  Fall 20XX
• Created working elevator model, web-based simulation, and lab manual.

Intermediate Digital Imaging, RPI  Spring 20XX
• Produced interactive artwork that was a critique/satire of Engineering at RPI for public display.

Computer Skills:
BASIC: Windows ME/XP, Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat
ENGINEERING: SolidWorks, Basic C Programming, IsoDraw, MatLab
IMAGING: Adobe Photoshop, Basic Adobe Suite (Flash, Dreamweaver, Illustrator)

Related Experience:
Lockheed Martin, Owego, NY Mechanical Engineering Intern  Summer 20XX
• Implemented IsoDraw and Corel Draw to revise and create Illustrated Parts Breakdown, Remove/Install, Weapons Replaceable Assemblies, and Control & Indicator graphics for maintenance and operations manual.
• Updated and maintained database of completed, in work, and demanded graphics.
• Communicated with technical writers in an effort to complete graphics in a timely fashion.
• Co-Chaired company-wide volunteer Bottle & Can Drive for local Humane Society.

Pratt & Whitney, East Hartford, CT Mechanical Engineering Intern  Summer 20XX
• Created avionics box demo interface using Adobe Flash and HTML.
• Researched Engineering Services in effort to expand P&W aftermarket.
• Used Access to implement database for market research.
• Worked on other projects to help the diagnostics and engine health management programs.
• Created environmental health & safety posters for office use.

Awards/Activities:
Dean’s List; Rensselaer Medal Award; School Newspaper (The Polytechnic) Editorial Cartoonist; Intramural Soccer; College Republicans
Michael Jones  
111 1st St, Apt. 5, Troy, NY 12180 555-555-5555 MJones@rpi.edu

OBJECTIVE  
To obtain a marketing position with a business that has a fast pace and challenging environment.

EDUCATION  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Troy, NY  
**Bachelor of Science in Management with a Minor in Economics**  
- Cumulative GPA: 3.06/4.0; In-Major GPA: 3.57/4.0  
- Dean’s List; Rensselaer Leadership Award

ESADE Business School Exchange Program, Barcelona, Spain  
- January 20XX-May 20XX
- Adapted to a new culture and way of life in a foreign country without any contacts.
- Created and managed social, cultural, and travel events for a group of 150 exchange students from 25+ countries.
- Gained familiarity with numerous cultures around the world through personal interactions.

RELATED COURSEWORK  
Marketing Principles, RPI  
- Applied marketing theories and practices and applied them to real world problems.

Managerial Finance, RPI  
- Spring 20XX
- Created and analyzed financial statements (current and pro forma).
- Created and managed budgets for simulated companies.

Computer Information Systems, RPI  
- Fall 20XX
- Created and managed a MS SQL server database and used it in direct support of real business processes.

SKILLS  
Languages  
- Native English, proficient in Spanish, and a working knowledge of French and Catalan.

Technical  
- Experience with C, C++, MS SQL Server, and HTML computing languages.
- Proficient with all Microsoft Office Products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access).
- Excellent troubleshooting skills with all PC hardware and Microsoft Operating Systems.

WORK EXPERIENCE  
Motor Vessel Phoenix, Newport, RI  
**Captain**  
- July 20XX-August 20XX
- Managed the safety of all passengers, maintenance of all systems, and provisioning.
- Increased judgment, decision-making, and critical thinking skills dealing with varying weather and traffic situations.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY  
**Teaching Assistant: Accounting for Decision Making**  
- August 20XX-December 20XX
- Provided outside help for 60 students during bi-weekly office hours and individual sessions.
- Responsible for the grading of all assignments and tests.

Wickford Marina, Wickford, RI  
**Waterfront Staff**  
- Summers 20XX & 20XX
- Responsible for all aspects of running the marina, including maintenance, reservations, provisioning, and dock traffic.
- Dealt with needs and concerns of all seasonal and transient customers.
Ming Le
Phone: 518-555-5555   Email: MingLe@rpi.edu
Address: 407 Sun Valley Parkway, Troy, NY 12180

OBJECTIVE
To obtain a summer internship in the field of Electrical Engineering.

EDUCATION
B.S. in Electrical Engineering  May 20XX
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Troy, NY  GPA: 3.7

A.S. in Engineering Science  December 20XX
Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, NY  Dean’s List/President’s List
GPA: 3.8

RELEVANT COURSEWORK
Laboratory Introduction to Embedded Control, RPI  Fall 20XX
• Programmed a photosensitive car to do different tasks which included following a given path and a performing a u-turn to move back to its starting location.

Introduction to Engineering Design, RPI  Fall 20XX
• Designed and managed the construction of an egg launcher device with precise targeting mechanism.
• Produced a mouse trap powered car which carried a load and optimized it to go the furthest distance in the given time limit.
• Created a car powered by a battery to go up an incline to a plateau and maintain its position against an opposing car coming up the incline from the other end.

SKILLS
Software:
• Matlab, Maple, AutoCAD, Microsoft Office, Dreamweaver, Visual Basics

Laboratory:
• Built circuits and wrote programs to utilize circuits to perform given tasks.
• Conducted experiments and verified given theories in Physics, Chemistry, and Fields and Waves Lab.
• Built a small aluminum cannon utilizing variety of machinery in Engineering Processes lab.

General:
• Experience organizing successful community events.
• Demonstrate high quality work and attention to details.
• Fast learner and dedicated to the task/job at hand.
• Able to work well in a group setting.
• Excellent problem solving skills.
• Enthusiastic and ready to learn new things.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY
Sales Associate, Target, Latham, NY  August 20XX - Present
• Assist customers with product selection and provide the best possible service.
• Named Top Performer in Sales Department with the highest sales per hour average.

Workstudy, RPI Center for Career & Professional Development, Troy, NY  January 20XX - October 20XX
• Answered office phones and attended to questions from students.
• Assisted staff on various projects and assignments on a regular basis.
• Assisted in organizing recruiting and employer sponsored events.
Overview
There are several types of letters that are important for your job search. The ones that you will use as a college student follow. Examples of each are also provided.

Cover Letter. When you apply for a job, you normally use a letter of application. The exceptions are when you apply for a job online and no cover letter is required (if you have the option, it’s always a good idea to include one), or when you send a resume via email. In the latter case, the message itself would serve as the cover letter.

Thank-You Letter. Sending a thank-you letter after an interview is an important courtesy. It shows that you are serious about the job, and it makes a very positive impression on the employer. If you are sending a letter, it should be mailed within 48 hours of your interview. While you may send a handwritten note if you prefer, the typed letter provides more space to reiterate why you want the job. Because so many recruiters are frequently on the road during recruiting season, you may want to thank them via email.

Accepting or Declining an Offer. While these letters are not essential, they make a favorable impression on employers. In the letter of acceptance, restate the terms of the offer and your starting date. This letter also provides an opportunity for you to share your enthusiasm for starting the job. The latter letter is used if you make the difficult decision to accept one job over another. It’s a positive way to “keep the door open” for future employment opportunities that you may consider.

Letter-Writing Guidelines
• Always address your letters to a specific person. Do your best to get the name of this individual, even if it means that you have to call the company. If, however, you receive instructions to write to the “Manager of College Relations,” then follow the employer’s guidelines. In the latter case, only a title would be used in the inside address, and your salutation would be “Dear Sir/Madam.”

• Keep your letters to one page whenever possible. Employers are busy and don’t have the time to read long letters.

• A letter can make a great impression, but it can also eliminate you from consideration for an interview if it’s poorly written. Practice writing letters and prepare a general format that can be modified for similar positions.

• Use spell-check to check spelling and grammar, but don’t overly rely on this tool. Always proofread it yourself to check for accuracy, and then have a CCPD counselor review prior to submission.

• If you need extensive help in writing a letter of application, consider going to the Center for Communication Practices in Folsom Library. Check their website for their hours or to make an appointment (www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc).

Corresponding with Employers by Email
As you conduct your job search, you will probably send letters by standard mail and also via email. Communicating through email dictates special guidelines that should be carefully followed.

• Use a font that’s easy to read; for example, Arial, 12-point.

• Use a subject line that clearly states what your message is about. For example: “Application for Summer Internship,” or “Thank You for the Interview.”

www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc
• Use a salutation and then address the employer by “Dear Mr./Ms. Jones.” Do not use a first name unless invited to do so by the employer.

• When sending a message through email, it isn’t necessary to attach a cover letter. The message itself serves as the letter.

• Always introduce yourself in the same way you would in a cover letter. Use a professional tone; not the casual tone you would use with friends.

• If you are sending an employer your resume, set up the entire message as “unformatted text.” Then, paste your resume at the end of the message also as unformatted text. However, attach a formatted copy of the resume. The reason for doing this is that some employers will not open attachments because of a concern for viruses or for security reasons. Also, be alert that some employers may not have the latest Microsoft Word versions. To be safe, convert your resume to Word 2003. (Please refer to the guidelines for Electronic Resumes earlier in this Guide.)

• If attaching a formatted resume, title it with your name followed by the word “Resume.”

• Prompt communication is essential. Reply to all employer messages within two days.

• Don’t use wallpaper, emoticons or quotations after your name.

• For a closing, consider something such as:
  Sophie Moore
  Electrical Engineering
  Rensselaer Class of 20____

• Proofread and spell-check the message before sending it.

---

**LETTER LAYOUT**

Your Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Today’s Date

Employer’s Name  
Job Title  
Company/Organization 
Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Employer:

The opening paragraph should catch the employer’s attention. State why you are writing and how you learned about the job. Be sure to indicate the specific position for which you are applying.

The next paragraphs should explain why you are the best person for the job. Discuss your education, relevant experience, and other qualifications. Don’t repeat the information that you have in your resume. Rather, let the cover letter provide a general overview. Point out other accomplishments and information that are important to this job. It is also a good idea to highlight any personal attributes that will enable you to be successful in the position.

The closing paragraph should set the stage for the interview. Ask for an appointment and provide full contact information so the employer can reach you. Also take the initiative to say that you will follow up with the employer. Then, always thank the employer for taking the time to review your credentials.

Sincerely,

Stephen Van Rensselaer

Enclosure

The top margin should be slightly less than the bottom margin, with the first paragraph resting above the center of the paper.

Allow about 6-8 lines between these addresses, depending on letter length.

Allow 1 blank line after salutation and between paragraphs.

Allow about 4 blank lines for your signature and include an enclosure notation for your resume.
LETTERS USED IN THE JOB SEARCH

SAMPLE LETTERS

Ms. Janelle Jameson
Director of College Relations
Animation Arts, Inc.
Salt Lake City, UT 72435

October 8, 20XX

Dear Ms. Jameson:

I was pleased to learn about the game design co-op opportunity at your company that was advertised on Rensselaer’s JobLink. This is a position that is particularly appealing to me, and the January to August opening fits in perfectly with my academic schedule. I am a junior majoring in Electronic Media Arts and Communication with a minor in Marketing and a cumulative 3.2 GPA. I have completed courses in the Fundamentals of Animation, Intermediate Digital Imaging, and Animation I. I would be pleased to send you my electronic portfolio that includes several animation clips. In addition, last summer I held an internship at Groove Digital in New York City where I had an opportunity to work alongside and assist Hyung Jing, their chief animator. I found this experience to be extremely rewarding. Finally, I have played video games since I was eight years old and have entered several local video game competitions.

I am also involved in several activities at Rensselaer. I am a member of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority where I serve as Rush Chairman. In addition, I am a volunteer tutor in my community and a Big Brother to a local high school student. I believe these experiences have taught me how to work effectively as part of a team and also the importance of leadership.

I am very interested in scheduling a phone interview at your convenience. I would like to share some of my accomplishments with you and to discuss why I would like to work for your company. I may be reached at 914.765.2323 or by email at orlann@rpi.edu. You may also expect a follow-up call from me within the next two weeks. Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Niklas Orlando

Enclosure

Hall Hall, Room 222
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, NY 12180-3590

January 12, 20XX

Dr. Nolan Guggenheim
Director of Research
Biotech Corporation
2 Mechanics Way
Boston, MA 32323

Dear Dr. Guggenheim:

Dr. Prabhu Mehta from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute recommended that I contact you regarding internship opportunities with Biotech Corporation for the summer of 20XX. I am a sophomore majoring in Mechanical Engineering at Rensselaer and am interested in a position that would enable me to explore career paths in research and development.

During my first three semesters of pre-engineering studies, I have taken 21 credits each term and have earned a grade point average of 3.72. In addition, last fall I was able to work eight hours each week for Dr. Mehta through the Undergraduate Research Program on a project related to orthopaedic biomechanics.

While I recognize that I will only have completed two years of college by next June, I am confident that I could be valuable as a research assistant. I have a strong attention to detail and am a quick problem solver. In addition, as you will note on my resume, I have been continuously employed during the summers since I was able to begin working. Finally, I am a member of ASME and the National Society of Black Engineers and have been involved in several activities in each of these organizations.

In conducting research on your company, I was very impressed by the innovative work that you are doing in designing knee and hip joints. I am aware that you are a major company making advances in this new field.

It would be exciting to have the opportunity to be a part of your company for a summer and to help you, if only in a supportive role, to carry out this exciting work.

I would appreciate the opportunity for a personal interview at your convenience. As I live near the Boston area, I would be pleased to meet with you any Friday afternoon. You may reach me at 518-222-2222 or feel free to contact me through email: moores@rpi.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sophie Moore

Enclosure
Ms. Morgan Brentwood  
Applications Group Leader  
SoSoft Company  
Denver, CO 60612

Dear Ms. Brentwood:

I want to express my thanks to you for interviewing me yesterday for the software programming co-op position with your company. I greatly enjoyed meeting you and learning about the exciting work that you are doing at SoSoft.

Talking with you only served to heighten my interest in your job opening. I believe that my education, strong programming, and teamwork skills would fit well with your job requirements. While the work seems demanding, I feel that I am up to the task and will be able to make a good contribution.

If you need any additional information to review my qualifications, please contact me by phone at 518/276-2828 or through email at rodrim@rpi.edu. I enthusiastically look forward to hearing from you and to joining your co-op team.

Sincerely,

Maria S. Rodriguez

Maria S. Rodriguez
Mr. Jonathan Woodward  
President, CyberKinetics Corp.  
24 Atomic Boulevard  
Cleveland, OH 43120  

Dear Mr. Woodward:  

I enjoyed talking to you by phone yesterday and would like to confirm my acceptance of the co-op position with CyberKinetics.  

After visiting your office over the Thanksgiving holiday, I knew that yours was the company I wanted to work for. All of the scientists on your team are enthusiastic about the work that they do. I am confident that I will learn a great deal about physics and science in general. Please know that you can count on me to work hard and to do my best.  

I would like to confirm your offer of $17.50 per hour. Also, as discussed, I will plan on reporting to work on January 8, 20XX. I understand that the full terms of the job offer will be sent to me in writing within the next few days.  

Finally, as you suggested, I will contact Yolanda Gonzales early next week to obtain some leads on housing. Thank you again for everything, and I will see you in January.  

Sincerely,  

Brian J. Brentano  
Quad IV, Room 234  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Troy, NY 12180  
April 12, 20XX  

Mr. Patrick Fitzsimmons  
Director of College Relations  
MegaTech Corporation  
Phoenix, AZ 82031  

Dear Mr. Fitzsimmons:  

I wanted to follow up our phone conversation to thank you again for interviewing me and for being so considerate throughout the recruiting process. I have only positive impressions of everyone whom I met at your company.  

Yours was a very exciting job offer, and it is difficult for me to turn it down. While I know that I would have received a wonderful exposure to the nanotechnology field, I have decided to accept a summer internship closer to home so that I can help my father with a major restructuring of his sporting goods business.  

I would like to keep the door open to employment opportunities next summer. I will have an additional year of engineering education at that time and would eagerly look forward to the challenges you would provide.  

Thank you for your time and consideration. You can expect to hear from me sometime in October.  

Sincerely,  

Alican Akeloko  
Alican Akeloko  

Letter Accepting a Job Offer  
Letter Declining a Job Offer
What Should I Wear to the Interview?

Men and Women
- Two-piece business suit in navy, gray or other dark color
- No visible body piercing or multiple earrings in one ear
- Minimal jewelry and light cologne
- Clothes pressed; shoes polished
- Leather notepad to carry resumes and other documents
- Prior to your senior year, you may wear a sports coat/blazer if unable to invest in a suit

Women
- White, off-white, or neutral-colored blouse with conservative neckline
- Skirted suit or pantsuit (skirt should be no more than 1-2 inches above knee)
- Closed-toe leather pumps
- Understated makeup and conservative nail polish

Men
- Long-sleeved shirt in white or light blue
- Conservative necktie in color and pattern
- High-fitting socks in dark color to match suit
- Belt and shoe color should match

What Is Business Casual for Less Formal Events?

Pants. Casual pants, such as khakis, are considered appropriate attire. Denim pants or shorts are not recommended.

Dresses/Skirts. Dresses and skirts are acceptable with the exception of sleeveless dresses, sundresses or denim dresses/skirts. Mini skirts are inappropriate.

Shirts/Blouses. Men may wear a collared shirt. Short- or long-sleeved shirts or turtlenecks are recommended. Women are not required to wear a collared shirt. Sweatshirts, t-shirts, or halter tops should not be worn.

Sweaters/Jackets. Generally, anything that coordinates with the outfit is acceptable.

Footwear. Any dress or leather casual shoes are normally acceptable. Athletic shoes, sandals or hiking boots are not considered business casual.

Making Contact with Employers

As a student at Rensselaer, there will be numerous opportunities for you to be in contact with employers. Employers may visit your classes, you may attend informational meetings, career days and, of course, there are the fall and spring career fairs. Always take the initiative to introduce yourself and speak to the employers.

Navigating a Career Fair

Before attending a career fair, review the list of employers to determine whom you want to talk to. Make a list of those employers and do some quick research. At the minimum, know their products and services, where they are located, and take the time to review their current student job opportunities.

Practice your pitch in front of the mirror, with a career counselor, or on the phone with a parent.

The pitch gets smoother, the more you work on it. Practice a 30-second pitch for the recruiters which includes the following points:

- Your name
- Major
- Relevant experience, including projects and classes
- Highlights of skills and strengths
- Class year
• Opportunities you are seeking (summer internship, co-op or full-time position)
• Knowledge of the company

**During the Career Fair.** Survey the set-up of the career fair and determine the employers that you want to visit. You will want to talk to as many people as time permits, so arrive early. Consider saving your most coveted employers until after you “warm up.” Finally, after speaking with a representative, ask for a business card, and thank the recruiter for his/her time.

**After the Career Fair.** Begin by asking yourself how you did. Where could you improve for the future? Next, send a thank-you note to all the recruiters from whom you received business cards. Follow up with any other documents or information that was requested.

**Preparing for the Interview**
When you are invited to an initial interview by a recruiter, it will either take place at the Center for Career & Professional Development or the employer’s site. If the interview is at the CCPD, it will normally take place at the Interview Center, which is located in the Darrin Communications Center, 3rd Floor, (DCC 345) at the far end of the building near the Biotech Research Center. There are benches outside of the interview area for you to wait to be called in. You do not need to announce yourself to the receptionist; simply be seated.

Throughout the year, you will have numerous opportunities to develop and practice your interview technique. Take advantage of these experiences, including workshops and the chance for a mock interview with an employer, for they will be invaluable.

**First Steps.** Before an employer can get to know you, you need to know yourself. Take some time for reflective thinking and answer the following questions:

• What are my strengths and skills?
• Where do I need to develop more?
• What are my interests and what do I want to do in a job?
• What are my values?

**Researching Employers**
Expect to spend 30-45 minutes researching every employer with whom you will interview. What should you focus on? Make sure that you can answer the following list of questions:

• What are the employer’s products and services?
• Are they publicly or privately held?
• Who is the parent company? Where are their corporate headquarters and divisions? Are they international?
• What is their mission statement?

The enterprising student will not just review the corporate website; they will go one step further to get additional information (this isn’t always necessary for a summer or co-op position, but essential when seeking a full-time job). If you want to take that extra step, go to Hoovers Online, Vault, or Wetfeet. These are great resources for employer and industry information.

**Traditional vs. Behavioral Interviewing**
In a traditional interview, questions are posed to candidates that permit them to hypothetically state how they would handle a particular situation. For example: “What would you do if a team member was not contributing as much as everyone else?” You would have a few moments to think about the situation and then respond with what you think you should do. However, in a behavioral interview, the question would be rephrased as: “Tell me about a time when you had to work on a project with someone who wasn’t doing his or her share of the work.” With this scenario, you would be expected to talk about how you actually conducted yourself in this situation.

Sooner or later at Rensselaer you will have a behavioral interview. This interview is based on a very simple premise: that the past frequently dictates the future. In other words, employers will ask you questions about how you previously handled situations to get an idea as to how you might handle them again. They will design questions based on key behaviors that are critical to success in their organizations.

The recruiter selected the question above for important reasons. First, the company’s work is team-based. Second, while it’s not uncommon that some people may not have the same level of initiative as others, it is also important that you be able to work with those individuals to foster positive outcomes. The employer needs to know that you can do that.

After posing the initial behavioral question, expect the interviewer to “drill down” with follow-up questions. For example:
“What were you thinking?”
“What did you do next?”
“How did that make you feel?”
“What was the outcome?”

Preparing for a behavioral interview is not difficult, but it does require some thoughtful contemplation. Here are some guidelines:

• Think about situations where you demonstrated positive behaviors related to: teamwork, initiative, creativity, leadership, problem-solving, overcoming challenges, coursework and so forth.
• Be ready to discuss these situations and to provide details. Be specific.
• Use the “STAR” method when responding to each question: What was the “Situation”? What was the “Task”? What “Action” did you take? What was the “Result” or outcome?
• Be honest, but focus on the positive.
• While your response may mention others, remember that the recruiter wants to learn about you.

Traditional Interview Questions
• Tell me about yourself.
• Why did you choose Rensselaer and the career for which you are preparing?
• What do you see as your developmental needs? What actions are you taking to address them?
• How do you think a friend or a professor who knows you well would describe you?
• What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
• Why are you interested in the position?
• How would you compare your academic achievement to your expected employment success?
• What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
• What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
• Describe for me something that you’re really proud of.
• What one thing would you change about yourself today, and why?
• Of the jobs that you have held, which one was most satisfying, and why?
• What course have you had that will best prepare you to work for our company?
• What makes you stand out from others?
• What do you hope to gain from participation in an internship with our company?
• What skills or attributes do you feel you possess that qualify you for this position?
• Tell me about your best experience working with a team.

Behavioral Interview Questions
• Provide me with two instances in which you were innovative or introduced major change.
• Describe a specific problem you have encountered and how you dealt with it.
• Tell me about a recent team project that you were involved with.
• Give me an example of a time that you had to establish a working relationship with someone whose culture and background were different from yours.
• Describe a situation in which you were under pressure to meet a deadline. How did you react?
• Give me an example of a technical problem that you faced and how you analyzed and solved it.
• Tell me about a difficult problem that you faced in the last year. How did you handle it?
• Describe a recent project which required extensive research. How did you go about it?
• Tell me about an event when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with.
• Describe a situation where you had to coordinate the activities of other people.
• Give me an example of a goal you set and how you reached it.
• Think about a time when your plans or priorities changed by circumstances outside of your control. How did it affect you? What did you do?
• Tell me about a time when you didn’t understand how something worked, and you took it apart.
• Do you prefer to work alone or in a team?
Questions You May Want To Ask Employers

- Will I be working with a team or on my own? What will be my responsibilities?
- What opportunities are there in your company where I can build my leadership skills?
- How does this department contribute to the overall goals of the company?
- What are the major projects I will be working with? On?
- What are the biggest challenges facing your department?
- How will my performance be evaluated, and when? How would you describe the ideal candidate for this position?

The Importance of References

When you apply for a job, an employer may ask you for three to five references. Prepare the references on a separate sheet of paper, and take it along to your interview. For each reference, you should include the following: Name, title, employer or affiliation, mailing address, email address and daytime phone number.

Selecting references is important and should never be taken lightly. Contrary to what you might think, a reference can help—or prevent—you from getting a job. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- Select people who know you well. These include faculty, people for whom you have worked or volunteered, campus professional staff and coaches. Move away from using high school teachers, as you need to begin building relationships with faculty at Rensselaer. Remember that references from faculty will be particularly critical for graduate school!
- If you must choose from several people who know you well, select the person with a higher-level position.
- Never include family, neighbors, or friends.
- When asking someone to be your reference, make the request in person or by phone. Do not hesitate to ask them if they (a) feel that they know you well enough to serve as a reference; (b) can provide a strong and supportive reference; (c) have the time to do so. Most employers conduct reference checks by phone, but sometimes written recommendations are requested, and this can be time consuming. If any of their responses concern you (example: you realize they don’t know you well enough), thank them for their time and close on a positive note.
- Help your references to do a good job. Provide them with an updated resume, and detailed information about the job you are seeking. Also advise your references if they may hear from multiple employers. Finally, let them know if there are important points you feel are significant when providing information about you.
- Always thank your references. Let them know about the job you got through a short note, phone call, or email.
- Never assume that because you use a reference once, that you can use them again in the future without permission. If a year has passed and you want to use the same reference, touch base with them and let them know what you’re doing and what you’ve accomplished.

Professionalism on the Phone

As you progress through the interview process, you can expect to communicate with employers by phone. When you do, there are important points that you should keep in mind:

- Be certain that the voice messages on your phones are professional.
- If there is ever a need to conduct an interview or lengthy conversation by phone, always use a “land line” and not a cell phone. Static or dropped calls can create negative impressions.
- When answering calls that might be from an employer, use a formal greeting such as: “Good morning, this is Dana.”
- There will be many occasions when you need to call an employer. If you get voicemail, leave a brief and specific message: “Mr. Conroy, this is Dana Martin. I’m calling to follow up on my interview on October 18. Please call me at your convenience at 518-276-2424.”

Second or On-Site Interviews

Sometimes students are lucky enough to be offered a job after a single interview. At other times, they will have to go through a second round of interviews that are typically held at the company site. Employers schedule these interviews to introduce candidates to other team members, managers, human resources representatives and sometimes alumni from the candidate’s university. Site interviews are a normal step in pursuing full-time employment, but you may be invited to one as a co-op or summer internship applicant.
When going on a site visit, be certain that you have all of the information that you need: WHEN (date and time) you are expected; WHOM you will be interviewing with; and WHERE you should report for the interview (get specific directions). It’s a good idea to request all of this information in writing, just in case the employer doesn’t automatically do so.

In preparing for the site visit, remember that you will be interviewing with several people. Carry out additional research on the company and prepare 10-15 questions to ask. However, make sure that these questions are relevant to the job you are seeking. For a short-term job situation, you would not need to ask about leadership programs or advancement opportunities.

**Professional and Dining Etiquette**
On-site interviews frequently include an opportunity for lunch or dinner with your host and other employees. Even though you may be a dynamic candidate, your social graces will play a part in helping you to get a good job. Be attentive to the following suggestions and don’t be shy about asking a career counselor to help you assess some of your behaviors.

**Introductions.** As the saying goes, you never have a second chance to make first impressions. When an employer greets you, make eye contact and have a firm (not bone-crunching, though) handshake. Practice this! Here are some other tips:

- Always stand up when introduced and smile!
- Address the interviewer with a title (Mr., Ms., or Dr.) and their last name. Never refer to someone by his/her first name unless given permission.
- Maintain eye contact throughout the interview or conversation.
- At the conclusion of an interview, again, shake the recruiter’s hand, smile and thank them for their time.
- If you later see the recruiter on campus and you are with someone, always introduce that person. Remember that etiquette dictates that you introduce the recruiter or higher-level person first. For instance: “Mr. Morgan, I’d like you to meet my roommate, Trisha Larkin.”

**Dining.** There may be occasions when you will dine with an employer. Refer to the following Rules of Etiquette as developed by Sodexho Marriott Services at Rensselaer:

- Place your napkin on your lap as soon as you are seated.
- Wait for everyone at your table to be served before beginning to eat.
- When passing main food dishes, pass them to your right and not across the table.
- Butter bite-sized portion of bread/rolls as you eat them.
- Never ask for seconds; accept them graciously if offered.
- Do not chew gum at the table.
- Use an inconspicuous motion to remove fish bones or whatever from your mouth with your thumb and forefinger. Then place on your bread and butter plate.
- Refrain from talking with food in your mouth.
- Keep your elbows off the table.
- To indicate that you have finished eating a meal, place cutlery together on your plate in a clock position of ten to four, with the handles at four.
- Apply makeup, including lipstick, away from the table.

**Formal Dinner Table Setting.** What to use and when can be confusing, so here are some easy guidelines (see illustration). Your bread plate will be to your left, above your forks. Your coffee cup will be to your right, adjacent to your knife and spoon. Always use silverware from the outside in. For example, when served a salad as a first course, use the fork to the extreme left. If ever in doubt, follow the lead of your host.

**A Simple Place Setting**
Juggling Job Offers

You’ve attended career fairs, career days and information sessions. You’ve had phone interviews, interviews on campus and site interviews. You’ve followed up with everyone you’ve been interested in and your hard work has paid off—you have a job offer! Now what do you do? Do you jump on the first offer you receive or do you continue to “shop around”? Professional communication with potential employers continues to be essential and how you handle this stage of your job search is very important.

Some Things to Keep in Mind:

• If you receive a verbal offer, ask when you can expect to have the offer in writing. Always ask for an offer in writing before you give an employer your final decision.

• Upon receipt of an offer, contact the employer to acknowledge receipt and ask when a decision is required if that hasn’t been made clear.

• Take a day or two to evaluate the offer. Make a list of questions you have about the offer and the position and get back in touch with the representative you’ve been working with and pose your questions well before your deadline date.

• Never accept an offer and then back out later! This is called reneging, and it is highly unethical. When you commit to a job offer, you are giving your word that you will follow through with this commitment. Deciding the job wasn’t for you after the fact is inappropriate, too late and very upsetting to employers. Not only will they remember what you did, they will also tell others!

• If you are waiting for word about a decision from another employer, get in touch with that employer and let your contact there know the situation. Keep the information simple, but reiterate your interest in their position and ask when they think they will have a decision. Most likely they won’t rush in with an offer, but you will have a better idea of what they are thinking and what their timetable looks like.

• If you choose to decline a job offer, do so courteously by making a phone call and then in writing. A decision to decline an offer is usually based on the fact that another offer is a better fit with your career goals and interests. Don’t hesitate to say so, but resist giving any details about the position you’ve accepted. Remember you may be in contact with this employer in the future so it is essential to be professional and courteous.

• If you ever have any questions or concerns about your job search, accepting or declining a job offer or negotiation, please don’t hesitate to contact a career counselor in the Center for Career & Professional Development.
Looking Down the Road

Chances are you will continue on with your education after you graduate with an undergraduate degree, whether full-time or part-time, immediately or after several years. Although you typically won’t make your final decision about attending graduate school until senior year, it’s never too early to start thinking about it. Roughly 25 percent of Rensselaer graduates who register with the Center for Career & Professional Development report that they go on to graduate school immediately after graduation. While many schools encourage students to get a few years of industry experience, many look to admit candidates immediately after graduation. How do you decide? There are advantages to both choices—a good idea is to get out and talk to people about the choices they have made regarding continuing their education.

Choosing a Graduate School
Some of the graduate school destinations for Rensselaer students include:

- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Johns Hopkins University
- MIT
- Franklin Pierce Law School
- Stanford
- Cornell
- University at Albany
- Pennsylvania State University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Albany Medical College
- Purdue University
- Columbia University

There are many factors to consider when making the decision to go onto graduate school. They include:

- Do you love the field enough to want to obtain an advanced degree?
- Is an advanced degree required to enter a particular profession or to obtain a certain level within a field?
- Do you have the financial resources to cover the cost of tuition?
- Are you postponing making decisions by going to graduate school?
- Do you want to attend graduate school full-time or part-time?
- Do you have the skills and qualities necessary to be successful?
- Is there a particular geographic region you are interested in?

Range of Graduate Degrees
MS Master of Science; MA Master of Arts; MBA Master of Business Administration; PhD Doctor of Philosophy; MD Doctor of Medicine; DDS Doctor of Dental Surgery; DVM Doctor of Veterinary Medicine; JSD Doctor of Science of Law; JD Juris Doctor; LLM Master of Law

Criteria to Use to Select a Graduate Program:

- Career interests and goals of the program
- Quality of the program
- Department and faculty reputation in profession
- Faculty/student ratio
- Program costs
- Quality of research facilities, labs, libraries
- Financial aid resources
- Alumni
- Graduate placement
- Internship/co-op opportunities

Applying to Graduate School
Most of the information you will need can be found on the graduate school’s graduate admissions website. This would include the application and the amount of any fees required, the average or target admission test scores and GPA, the required number of letters of recommendation, and any other necessary documents. While many graduate school applications are online, you’re encouraged to contact your colleges of choice to confirm you have all that is required turned in. Some schools have rolling admissions while others have firm deadlines. It is important to make a timeline and stick to it!
Depending on your chosen field of study, one of the following tests may be required:

**Graduate Record Examination** (general test with specific subject test)
- GRE [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org)

**Graduate Management Admission Test** (Business)
- GMAT [www.mba.com/mba](http://www.mba.com/mba)

**Law School Admission Test** (Law School)
- LSAT [www.lsat.org](http://www.lsat.org)

**Medical College Admission Test** (Medicine)
- MCAT [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org)

**Miller Analogies Test** (some Law and Graduate Schools)
- MAT [www.tpcweb.com/mat](http://www.tpcweb.com/mat)

Very often practice tests are made available for many of these tests. Don’t hesitate to take advantage of them. In addition, test-prep courses may be available. Check with a career counselor to find out where to locate one and to get more information.

The application process typically involves the following:
- Application and fee
- Admissions test scores
- Official transcripts
- Grade point averages
- Letters of recommendation
- Personal statement
- Interview

Most information about applications and fees, GPA requirements and admissions test requirements are on the prospective graduate school’s website, but if you have questions, don’t hesitate to contact the Graduate School Admissions Office.

### GRADUATE SCHOOL TIMELINE

The sooner you begin the process of researching graduate schools and programs, the better position you will be in when it comes time to make a decision. Here is a brief graduate school timeline:

**Junior Year**
- Begin researching programs by talking with faculty/alumni/current graduate students and reviewing grad school guides and publications.
- Start exploring financial aid resources.
- Sign up and take the required standardized tests.
- Identify potential recommendation letter writers.

**Senior Year/Fall Semester**
- Begin writing your personal statement and get it critiqued in the Center for Career & Professional Development.
- Request letters of recommendations from faculty.
- Order official transcripts.
- Complete and mail, or submit online applications.
- Apply for aid available through the program which might include assistantships, fellowships and scholarships.

**Senior Year/Spring Semester**
- Complete and submit financial aid paperwork and applications.
- Visit prospective graduate schools and talk with faculty and students.
- Follow-up with admissions offices to ensure applications are complete.
- Make your final decision.
- Write thank-you notes to people who helped you throughout the process.
want better health care? start asking more questions. to your doctor. to your pharmacist. to your nurse. what are the test results? what about side effects? don’t fully understand your prescriptions? don’t leave confused. because the most important question is the one you should have asked. go to www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer or call 1-800-931-AHRQ (2477) for the 10 questions every patient should ask. questions are the answer.
The only part-time, evening engineering program in the Capital District

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To speak to Robert Kozik, Dean of the School of Engineering & Computer Science, call 518-631-9881.

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