

EY Center for Careers in Accounting and Information Systems Orientation Guide for Career Planning and Recruiting

Welcome to the EY Center for Careers in Accounting and Information Systems

When you first begin your college career or start a Masters program at - or - transfer from another college or university into CSUN, there is a period of adjustment and a learning curve about academic requirements and planning, semester registration, university offices and services, location of buildings on campus, student clubs and activities, etc., and often students do not feel ready to take on the additional effort of engaging in career planning and preparing for the recruiting process.

As a freshman or sophomore, you have much time to learn about academic majors and careers, so take advantage of the opportunity to start your career exploration process. The sooner you start exploring, the more you will learn, and the better decisions you will make. However, be aware that there are firms that are already recruiting for freshmen and sophomores, typically well before you know what you want to do long-term.

As a transfer or Masters student, the effort to focus on your career planning process should start as soon as possible. There are already internship, part-time and full-time opportunities offered in the Fall semester with a variety of employers, so the recruiting process can start immediately. And, in the Spring semester, there are other opportunities available. You can get caught up in the wave of recruiting without knowing what are your career goals, what is important to you, what are the career paths and opportunities available, and how to pursue them. Instead, it is to your benefit to focus on the long term and engage in a more beneficial career exploration process (before jumping into recruiting without preparation).

What is career exploration and career planning? It is the process of figuring out who you are (including your personality, education, experience, strengths), what you want (including your career values, interests, and strengths you want to use), and what is available (career paths, employers and opportunities). Then, you can evaluate your choices based on mutual fit

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and feasibility (how hard or easy is it to pursue a given path and what is your tolerance for risk). You can make an informed choice and determine the steps to pursue a career path. (It is like using a GPS/map program to get directions, based on what is your starting point and what is your destination, so you know how to get there.)

Your primary resource for career exploration, career planning and recruiting, as an accounting, IS or CIT student, is the EY Center for Careers in Accounting and Information Systems.

What is the EY Center for Careers (EYCC) in Accounting and Information Systems?

- **The EYCC is uniquely dedicated in providing a broad range of career exploration/planning and job-search related services to Accounting, Information Systems (IS) and Computer Information Technology (CIT) students and alumni.**
- **The EYCC is managed by Stuart Fried, Director, who has more than 30 years experience in Career Coaching, Corporate Human Resources, Recruiting, Counseling and Workshop Facilitation.**
- **The EYCC also has a staff of student assistants who are experienced with resume and cover letter preparation as well as the recruiting process.**
- **The EYCC's services are FREE.**
- **The EYCC is located in Bookstein Hall (BB), Room 2224 (2nd floor). The EYCC office phone is 818.677.2979.**
- **EYCC Office Hours vary, so it is helpful to read emails and check the EYCC website.**
- **Students can make appointments (except for resume and cover letter reviews) to meet with the EYCC Director (for career-related discussion) or come into the EYCC office on a walk-in basis to meet with the Director or student assistants (for resume and cover letter reviews).**

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- The EYCC website - <http://csun.edu/acctis/ey-center> - provides a wide range of career planning and job search tools, information about events and workshops, a list of key dates for the upcoming semester, and links to the student organizations, AIS Department, Meet the Firms, Awards Banquet and main campus Career Center websites.

What services does the EYCC provide?

- **Career Planning** – This is the most important and first step before you start recruiting and applying for “jobs”. Start with a self-evaluation: Who are you? What is important to you? What are you looking for? What are your long-term goals?
 - “Who are you?” consists of identifying and understanding your personality type, the values that provide the primary motivations for you within a work setting (see the Career Value Assessment on the EYCC website), the work activities you enjoy doing (see the Interest Profiler on the CSUN Career Center CareerLink website), and the skills you possess and can develop. It also includes your education, GPA, work experience, student and volunteer involvement, and other relevant experience and skills.
 - Start to identify factors (related to your values above) that are most important to you in a job and career path (i.e., challenge, teamwork, helping others, recognition, growth, autonomy, creativity, income, variety, work/life balance, etc.).
 - Then prioritize the key factors and determine if any factors are requirements (vs. preferences). Begin to research the market (career paths, industries, companies, location, and the long-term outlook) and compare career options with your list of factors.
 - Finally, weigh the feasibility of each choice with your level of desire (passion) to pursue a specific path. Your choice(s) will depend on the feasibility and your level of risk tolerance. In other words, the more you can handle risk, the more likely you will seek your ideal path; whereas, the less you can handle risk, the more likely you will seek a realistic (more feasible) path.
 - Career planning is like creating a map or set of directions to get from Point A to Point B and beyond. You have a starting

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point and you want to reach a destination. Career planning is an on-going and ever-changing process as you learn more about yourself, learn more about the market, and the market itself continues to change.

- **Resume and Cover Letter Reviews** - The EYCC staff review resumes and cover letters and provide feedback to students to improve the layout and content for both the resume and cover letter(s).
 - The EYCC provides two Resume Templates (and Resume Guidelines) - one for Accounting and one for IS and IT. We recommend that you use the EYCC Resume Template as it is designed for a CSUN student, and employers support the use of this template. It presents the information that they are looking for, and in a format that is easy and quick to review.
 - The EYCC provides two Cover Letter templates as well. One is for the public accounting firms but can be tailored for other employers who hire from CSUN. It explains why you are interested in the employer and position and shares your unique story and/or provides one or more examples of your experience that demonstrate the skills that employers are seeking. The second template is for online applications when you closely match the position requirements, and it demonstrates to an employer that you customized the cover letter for that specific company and position, as well as matched the requirements as closely as possible.
 - Students are encouraged to come to the EYCC and work with the EYCC student assistants for one-on-one assistance. Resume and cover letter reviews are done on a walk-in basis only (no appointments).
 - The EYCC Director reviews resumes that are uploaded to Handshake (the campus online system), and provides feedback, when possible. **All accounting and IS resumes uploaded to Handshake require approval by the EYCC Director.**
 - **** Do not use the VMOCK resume review application.**
- **Networking** - Networking is the process of building and maintaining relationships with professionals. Networking is a key component to exploring and selecting a career path as well as

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landing in a career position (vs. a “job”) with an employer of your choice.

Networking is the process of learning about career options, employers, industries, positions, and the career paths and decisions that professionals have made. Networking provides you with the opportunity to conduct direct research. Employers want to know that you have some ideas about what you would like to do with your career and what is important to you. It is in both your and the employer’s best interest that you match your career goals with an employer and what the employer offers. You are more likely to enjoy your work and co-workers, perform better, stay longer, and grow, a win-win for you and the employer.

**** In addition to learning how to network with professionals, it is very important to know how and to use LinkedIn, the largest professional networking site. Recruiters and professionals will look for you on LinkedIn, so it is essential that you have a profile and that your profile is filled in thoroughly and appropriately. In addition, there is great benefit to building your LinkedIn network with students, professionals and others you know, and to learn how to use LinkedIn to find and connect with professionals to network.**

- **Networking Guide - There is a Networking guide on the EYCC website to provide guidance about networking.**
- **LinkedIn Guide - There is a LinkedIn guide on the EYCC website that has detailed steps to complete your LinkedIn profile, grow your network, and search for and connect with professionals, especially CSUN alumni. The EYCC Director also preents LinkedIn workshops each semester to demonstrate the actual use of LinkedIn including the profile, how to build a quality network, and how to find professionals using the search function, without paying expensive fees for LinkedIn Premium.**
- **Coffee Chat Guide - There is a detailed step-by-step Coffee Chat guide on the EYCC website. A “coffee chat” is a phone conversation or face-to-face meeting/discussion with a**

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professional. You or the professional may initiate the “coffee chat”. *Obviously, you do not need to drink coffee!* The guide takes you through each step of planning and preparing for the discussion. It can occur on the phone (do not ignore phone “coffee chats” as they can lead to follow-up in-person meetings and/or introductions to other professionals with whom to network as well). Also included are sample questions to ask of all professionals, staff/seniors, and managers and above. Students often ask, “*what questions should I ask?*” - ask what is important to you, what you want to know about the professional, their background and experience, their career decisions, the employer, the work, culture, etc.

- **Job Search** - Whether looking for a part-time, internship or full-time position, the EYCC can help you use the campus job site - Handshake - as well as online sites such as Indeed.com. While searching on sites like Indeed.com appears to be easy and straightforward, you will save a lot of time and effort learning how to use the Advanced Job Search function using targeted search strings and Filters to narrow down the search results list. In addition to working with the EYCC Director, there is a Job Search guide on the EYCC website with step-by-step instructions to help you navigate these sites, as well as how to work with recruiting firms.
- **Interview Prep** - After networking, and preparing and submitting your resume and cover letters, resulting in interviews, it is important to be as prepared for your interviews as possible. While you have successfully navigated step one, the next step is even more competitive. You should be prepared:
 - To be confident, but not cocky - learn how to share your experiences and accomplishments in a factual and humble manner without “selling”
 - To answer challenging questions including the multitude of behavioral questions - there are specific questions and certain types of questions that you can anticipate (“Tell me about yourself” “Why are you interested in our firm?” “Why are you

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interested in-----?" "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" "Why should we hire you?" "What are your short and long-term career goals?" "Tell me about a situation when ..." "How would you handle ...?") We provide guidance as to how to best prepare for these and similar questions, without practicing and memorizing hundreds of sample questions! (What if they don't ask a question you've memorized?) Preparing and remembering (not memorizing) your stories is the key to answering behavioral questions effectively. **** Do not prepare rehearsed answers - you will sound robotic and not be genuine.**

- To ask good questions - don't ask questions you think they want to hear. Ask questions that actually are of interest to you. If you have done your self-exploration process and researched the field and company, you will know what you want to learn, and that leads to your asking excellent questions. You usually do not have a lot of time to ask questions, so knowing what is most important to you will help you prioritize.
- What will you do if an interviewer sits back and says, "So, what would you like to know?" instead of grilling you for 30 - 45 minutes? Will you freeze? Will you panic? Or, will you be ready to take advantage of the opportunity to ask good questions and learn more about the employer, the position, the professional, the career path, and the expectations?
- The EYCC presents Interview Prep workshops during the week following Meet the Firms and prior to the start of on-campus interviews (OCIs).
- There are also an Interview Prep guide and a Behavioral Interview guide on the EYCC website.
- Discussion of Offers - whether you recruit during the on-campus interview process or through other means (job posting announcement from the EYCC, networking at Meet the Firms or other events, application through Handshake and other online sites such as Indeed.com, referral, or other), you may want

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to discuss your offer(s) with someone who is objective and will not try to influence you one way or the other. The EYCC Director will listen, ask you questions, discuss your options, brainstorm negotiation strategy (timing, offer, start date, etc.) and help guide you through the decision-making process without directing you toward a specific decision. When discussing your offer(s) with others (students, professors, family, friends and professionals), be aware that, while they can definitely be helpful, they may have a preference or bias, based on their own pre-conceptions or goals for you, and therefore, may not be objective.

- **Handshake** - All Accounting and Information Systems students should set up a Handshake (<http://csun.joinhandshake.com>) account and fill in their profile. Handshake is the job site that the EYCC and the other campus career centers are using, and numerous employers are posting accounting, IS, IT, and other positions on Handshake for CSUN students and alumni. The EYCC staff will help you with your Handshake account. We have two computers for students in our office, so you can setup your account at the EYCC and ask for help directly.

**** Use your CSUN email to activate your Handshake account.**

Key fields to complete in your Handshake Account:

- Under “Account”, fill in the correct School Year - Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Masters, or Alumni
- Under “Profile”, use the Primary Education box with California State University Northridge, and select the correct college (do not create a separate CSUN listing) - fill in Degree program (Bachelors or Masters), Major (Professional Accountancy, Pre-Accountancy, Information Systems with various options), and Dates (Started and Expected Graduation)
- **** These fields need to be filled in to match many job requirements**
- You can choose to have your profile “private” (cannot be found and contacted) if you are only using Handshake to apply - or “public” (can be found and contacted) if you want employers to find you

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With Handshake, you can search for and apply for a wide variety of job opportunities. All of the accounting firms who conduct on-campus interviews (OCIs) post open positions on Handshake, and many use Handshake for interview scheduling. Thousands of other employers post on Handshake as well for students and alumni.

Remember that you need to upload your resume (and other documents) into your Handshake account, and the EYCC Director needs to review and approve Accounting and IS resumes. Once your resume is approved, all other documents will be automatically approved. When you replace an approved resume, or you upload other documents (cover letters, transcripts, etc.), they do not need further review and approval. If you make significant changes to your resume or would like your cover letter(s) reviewed, come to the EYCC to meet with one of the staff.

**** Recruiting for Internships and Full-time positions:**

- **Big 4 and most Mid-tier Accounting Firms have 2 campus recruiting seasons:**
- **Fall – Hire for Winter and Summer Internships and Full-time positions for the upcoming year; Big 4 also hire for Diversity Internships for the following summer**
- **Spring – Hire for Winter and Summer Internships for next year, as well as a few Internships and Full-time positions for this year (Summer and Fall start dates)**
- **Most internships are designed for transition to a full-time position**
- **Most Regional / Local Accounting Firms hire in the Fall for the upcoming Winter and in the Spring for the upcoming Summer**
- **Some internships are designed for transition to a full-time position**
- **Some firms hire for part-time or internship without expectations to transition to a full-time position**
- **Private Industry and Government hire at various times, so it is important to do research for each employer of interest**
- **Some offer internships that can lead to full-time positions**

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- **Prior to recruiting for internships and full-time positions, network with the firm/employer in advance to learn more about the firm and career opportunities, and improve your internship options and decision - read the Networking and LinkedIn Guides on the EYCC website.**
- **Prior to starting an internship, network to learn about performance expectations and how to perform well, the feedback process, and how work is assigned, with the firm so you get the learning experience you're seeking and increase the possibility of being assigned the work and clients you desire. Also, find out if the internship work is similar to the full-time position - read the Preparation Guide on the EYCC website.**
- **Prior to starting a full-time position, similar preparation for the internship above. It is very important to network throughout your tenure at the employer to improve the opportunities to get assigned the work and clients you desire - read the Preparation Guide on the EYCC website.**
- **Job Postings – the EYCC receives numerous job postings from a variety of employers (public accounting, private industry and government, and the EYCC emails these postings to students and recent graduates; many of these positions are therefore filled by CSUN students and grads. If you are looking for a part-time, internship or full-time position, it is important to read EYCC emails.**

Key Events and Activities:

- **EYCC Recruiting Boot Camp - Prior to the start of each semester, the EYCC hosts a 2-day (FREE) program. Firm professionals from public accounting firms present on a variety of career planning, soft skills and recruiting related topics. The 100 or more students who attend learn about career planning, preparing for Meet the Firms and the on-campus recruiting process, personal branding, requisite skills, etc. They have the opportunity to learn more about firms and network with firm professionals and other students. Attending the Recruiting Boot Camp is one of the key steps to career planning and recruiting success. The program includes lunch for full-day attendees, and registration opens 2 to 3 weeks prior to the event. Check your CSUN email, Handshake and EYCC website for dates and information.**

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- **Meet the Firms** - Each semester (in September and February), the Accounting Department and the EYCC hosts the largest career fair for accounting and IS/IT students in Southern California. 70+ firms and organizations and as many as 600+ students attend in September, and 70+ firms and organizations with as many as 400+ students attend in February. Meet the Firms provides a unique opportunity to network with multiple employers to learn about career opportunities and paths, compare employers and their respective position, and build relationships. Attending Meet the Firms is a key component for the career planning and recruiting success.
 - Most large, mid-size and local accounting firms and a number of corporations hire numerous students and alumni from the connections made at Meet the Firms. These employers want to meet you, get to know you, and know what you are looking for, beyond just collecting a resume. Many of these employers do much less recruiting via online posting and resumes only. The government entities that attend want to provide you with helpful information and guidance about opportunities available and the application process.
 - The event is usually held at the Odyssey Restaurant in Granada Hills. Tickets go onsale at the beginning of each semester. You will receive emails with information as to when and how to purchase tickets.
- **On-Campus Interviews (OCIs)** – Most Big 4 and Mid-tier Accounting Firms conduct on-campus interviews each semester (in October and March at the EYCC (Bookstein Hall 2224) – you will usually apply in Handshake (and on most firm websites), and many first-round interview(s) are scheduled directly in Handshake (some firms do schedule directly with students). The EYCC posts (and frequently updates) the OCI job posting and interview schedule at the office and on the EYCC website.
 - Some firms conduct initial pre-recorded interviews prior to scheduling in-person interviews

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- Some firms conduct their first-round (and subsequent) interviews virtually using WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or other apps.
- See above for the Fall and Spring recruiting seasons and the positions generally available during each.
- To be eligible for most upcoming Winter or Summer internships with Big 4 and Mid-tier firms, a student must have only 1 summer remaining prior to graduation; it does vary with each firm and internship. Check Handshake and the firm's website for grad date range eligibility.
- For early (next year) internships, it is generally required that students have 2 summers remaining prior to graduation to be eligible. As above, check the requirements with each firm and internship.
- The Big 4 diversity internship programs are offered to students with 2 summers remaining prior to graduation - check the requirements carefully as they differ amongst Big 4 firms.
- In addition to the OCIs, many regional and local accounting firms hire for internship and full-time via Meet the Firms, Handshake and email job postings.
- Check Handshake for numerous accounting, IS and IT part-time, internship and full-time positions that are posted throughout.
- **Student Organizations** - There are four student organizations within the Accounting and IS/IT domain - Accounting Association (AA), Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA), Beta Alpha Psi (BAP) and Management Information Systems Association (MISA) - you can find links for each student organization on the EYCC website.
 - The student organizations "table-sit" in the Bookstein Hall Courtyard to provide information and promote membership.
 - The first three student organizations hold lunch-time meetings, usually in Bookstein Hall (BB) 4117, during which employers present about the accounting profession and other professional topics. You are encouraged to join one or more organization, but all students are welcome to attend the lunch meetings as membership is not required (FYI - food is provided).

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- **MISA holds weekly meetings on Wednesdays or Thursdays later in the afternoon, and you do need to join MISA to attend most of the meetings after the initial start of the semester (food is also provided). MISA invites professionals from the IS/IT profession to educate students about technical topics and career paths and opportunities.**
- **The student organizations also host other activities including late afternoon meetings, recruiter and alumni panels, workshops, firm tours, technical training, charitable events, and social events (including member only and alumni events).**
- **B.A.A.M. News - the EYCC emails the B.A.A.M. News each week that provides the calendar of meetings and events hosted by the student organizations and the EYCC for the coming week.**
- **Why get involved? Joining a student organization and growing into a leadership role brings you into contact with other students, from whom you will learn about career opportunities, employers, positions, recruiting, etc.; contact with many professionals for networking and recruiting; key skill development (i.e., leadership, team work, communication, customer service, networking, and planning and organization - skills that are requisite for career success); developing friendships; and the opportunity to give back and help other students.**
- **Some of the student organizations' Directors participate in the committees that plan the Meet the Firms and Awards Banquet events.**
- **Get to know the student organizations during table sitting, join, attend meetings and other events and activities, make new friends, and get involved.**

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- **Awards Banquet** - The Accounting Department, in conjunction with the EYCC and student organizations, hosts an annual Awards Banquet during which students are awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships which are donated by employers, foundations, trusts, faculty and alumni.
 - ~400 professionals, students, faculty, staff and community members attend.
 - The Awards Banquet is held in April at the Castaway in Burbank.
 - Scholarship applications open in February, and tickets go on sale in March.
 - Students must attend the Awards Banquet to be eligible to receive one of the scholarships awarded at the event.
 - The event includes a sit-down dinner, scholarship awards, and silent auction, as well as networking with professionals and students.
- **Commencement** – The Accounting Department hosts a special graduation ceremony for Accounting graduates – Bachelors and Masters (MPAcc and MST)
 - Commencement is traditionally held at the Matadome in Redwood Hall – it is indoors
 - Graduates wear traditional graduation attire, line up and walk into the ceremony in the traditional Processional with Administration and Faculty
 - There is a special Keynote speaker and representative speakers from each of the degree programs
 - Each graduate walks on stage, the same as during the college graduation ceremony
 - ** There is a buffet reception outside the building following the ceremony
 - Graduates attend for free; graduates can invite family and friends at a nominal cost, and tickets go on sale (online) weeks before the Commencement