

# EY Center for Careers

## Key Factors for Career Success



CSUN is located in a large metropolitan area (southern California) where there are numerous students enrolled in your major across many colleges/universities, creating a large pool of candidates from which employers can select to fill internship and full-time positions. Therefore, you have a lot of competition, and this guide will help you better understand the key factors that will support your career success. It usually takes much more than a good resume to get hired at the employer and in the position of your choice.

\*\* The better your decision as to what you do and where you start your career, the more likely you will perform well, grow and develop with your employer, and advance in the organization, on the path to achieving your goals, including: gaining more responsibility, more challenge, more opportunity to contribute, more growth, and more income.

*[Use this guide in tandem with the Career Success Roadmap and Planning Guide on the EY Center website (<http://csun.edu/acctis/ey-center>)]*

### **Five (5) Key Factors for Career Success**

#### **1. GPA**

Your overall and your major GPA are extremely important. Many employers target a minimum GPA of 3.2 or 3.0, and may only consider candidates who are below the minimum under special circumstances. If your CSUN GPA is higher than your overall GPA, it is beneficial to note it on the resume, include it in your cover letter, and share it while networking. A higher CSUN GPA shows a positive trend, especially if you had previously pursued a different major, had challenges in your life, or did not take school seriously. \*\* With all else that you have to do for networking and recruiting, a focus on school and grades should be your first priority.

#### **2. Resume**



A well-prepared, accurate and properly formatted resume is a key to success. This is the document that employers, especially recruiters, will often use to make an initial assessment of you. Include your Education, Experience (work experience does not have to be in your profession), Professional/Student Involvement and Volunteer Activities (include leadership roles and contributions you have made), and Skills (technical and language skills only). Do not list soft skills (e.g., communication, detail oriented,

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customer service, leadership, team player, organization and time management, multi-tasking, etc.) - instead demonstrate them in the specific descriptions of your responsibilities and accomplishments in the Experience and Professional Involvement/Volunteer Activities sections. Include Interests (i.e., hiking, travel, music, swimming, art, piano, etc.) only if you are applying with a Big 4 and/or mid-tier public accounting firm.

In the Education section, IS and CIT students should include IS and IT courses (it is not necessary for accounting students to include accounting and business courses, as they take the same core courses; however, accounting students can include IS courses if they are relevant to their career direction). IS and CIT students should create a Technical Skills section (operating systems, hardware, security, applications, programming languages, databases, etc.) and place it between the Education and Experience sections. IS and CIT students can also include an IS/IT Projects section for actual projects completed during their coursework.

There are Accounting and IS/IT Resume templates (in Word doc form) on the EY Center website (<http://csun.edu/acctis/ey-center>). You can come to the EY Center for a resume review and also attend the EY Center Resume & Cover Letter workshop.

- Cover Letter** - Most employers require a cover letter with your application. Your cover letter should be tailored for the specific position and employer. The purpose of the cover letter is to express your genuine interest in the position/career path and employer, and provide examples of your relevant experience and/or skills. A generic cover letter is ineffective because it is obvious, it is not genuine, and it shows a lack of effort; a generic Cover Letter may remove you from serious consideration for an interview. There is a Cover Letter template for the large public accounting firms on the EY Center website (<http://csun.edu/acctis/ey-center>). If you are applying for full-time, internship, or part-time positions outside of the on-campus interview (OCI) process, there is another Cover Letter template on the website that allows you to directly tailor your relevant education, experience and technical skills to the requirements of the position. You can come to the EY Center for a cover letter review and attend the EY Center Resume & Cover Letter workshop.

- Interview**



You have invested in preparing a professional resume and customized cover letters, done your online research and networking, and now you have been invited for an interview. Prepare for your interview! The purpose of the interview is for you and the employer to determine if there is a mutual fit based on what you and the employer are each looking for. The interview should be a two-way discussion. To prepare for an interview, you can anticipate certain questions (“Tell me about yourself”, “What are your strengths and weaknesses”, “Why are you interested in [firm/practice are]...”), and the dreaded behavioral questions. Prepare and practice, but do not memorize any responses. The better prepared you are, the more relaxed (less nervous) you are likely to be. You can come to the EY Center for interview prep assistance and attend the EY Center Interview Prep workshop to help prepare you for questions you can anticipate, including behavioral questions; a streamlined and

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effective approach is provided to help you prepare your examples so that you are ready for the majority of anticipated behavioral questions. There are also the Interview Prep Guide and the Behavioral Interview Guide on the EY Center website.

In the EY Center Interview Prep workshop, you will also learn the importance of and how to ask meaningful questions to the professionals. Asking questions increases your learning, helping you to evaluate and compare each employer and opportunity. Asking questions also makes the interview a two-way (interactive) process and demonstrates your genuine interest in the opportunity.

### 5. Professional Etiquette



Throughout the networking and interview process, professional etiquette is essential. You are being observed and evaluated on your behavior in every encounter with professionals. Etiquette includes how you communicate, how you dress, and how you behave. Remember that you represent both yourself and CSUN.

With all communications, express yourself appropriately - do not use abbreviations, do not be too informal, and do not be rude or demanding. With written communications, always check your content, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and do not use emojis. You are all pursuing careers that require an attention to detail, so demonstrate the attention to detail with your communications, especially those that are written.

Dress appropriately for each activity, event or interview. Dress code for interviews is typically business professional. The dress code varies with other activities/events - ask the employer (or student organization) in advance about the expected dress code.

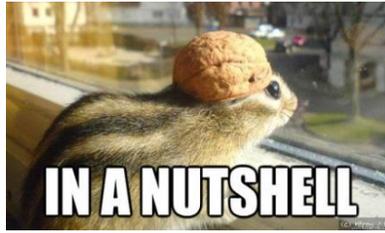
If you apply for a position, respond to all interview invitations (either accept or decline). When you schedule an interview, show up. If you are feeling ill or running late, definitely call in advance. Never blow off an interview - it reflects poorly on you and on CSUN, and you will probably burn your bridge with that employer.

Send thank you emails within 24 - 48 hours after coffee chats, Meet the Firms, interviews and other significant conversations with professionals. It is proper etiquette, displays your genuine appreciation for their efforts, and it might make the difference for a 2<sup>nd</sup> interview, or between an offer or a rejection.

If you receive offers for both a winter and a summer internship, or a winter internship and a full-time position, you need to discuss the offers openly and honestly with both firms. In most cases, a Big 4 or mid-tier accounting firm hires you for an internship with the anticipation of extending you a full-time offer upon successful completion of the internship. Therefore, they should know that you are in a similar process with another firm. **\*\* Do not take any chances by not communicating with employers openly and honestly - people talk, employers will find out, and you put your offers at risk. Ethical behavior is expected.**

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### Summary



- Start your career learning and exploration process as soon as possible as it takes time and effort - there are several tools on the EY Center website (<http://csun.edu/acctis/ey-center>) to help you navigate the career exploration and planning process including:
  - Career Success Roadmap and Planning Guide
  - Career Values Self-Assessment
  - Life Career Rainbow
  - CSUN Career Center CareerLink Resources Guide (includes additional assessments and numerous resources)
  - Career Opportunities in Accounting
  - Career Opportunities in IS/IT
- Get to know yourself, and then research the profession, career paths and employers and evaluate each based on who you are, what is important to you and what you want.
- Utilize the resources available to you at the EY Center for Careers, the student organizations, Meet the Firms and other networking events, and the main campus Career Center.
- Do not expect that having a good resume and GPA will automatically land you in the role and employer that you most want.
- *The more effort you invest, the more likely you will achieve a successful outcome.*