

JOB APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

Due: July 14, 2009

Value: 200 points (20%)

Deliverables: Résumé, Cover Letter, Interview Follow-up Letter, Practice Interview Questions

Save as: jobapplication_lastname.doc

SCOPE

One of the most important things you will have to do when graduating from Clemson is apply for a job. Because this can be a stressful and somewhat complicated (and even political and rhetorical) process, it is important that you practice and have a good grasp on what potential employers expect.

OVERVIEW

To begin, you will search for a job, internship, or graduate program that you are both interested in and feel that you will qualify for by the time you graduate. **DO NOT** choose a job that you will not qualify for by graduation (such as a CEO of a corporation or a physician's assistant). After selecting the job, you will write a résumé, cover letter, an interview follow-up letter, and answer several practice interview questions. Each of these assignments are designed to help you prepare for the job application process in different but important ways.

****Use information from Chapters 12 and 13, and handouts to assist you in creating these documents. The handouts provide a lot of great information the book does not.****

ASSIGNMENT

1. Search for a potential job, internship, or graduate school program that you are qualified to apply for.
2. Once you have found one or all three of these, you need to decide which **one** you would like to “apply” to. (Please note: you are not *actually* applying for the job).
3. After choosing the job or graduate program, research the organization or school and find out as much as you can about the position or program as you can. Learn as much as you can **before** beginning to draft your documents. This is a **VERY** important part of creating successful application documents.
4. Create a résumé, cover letter, and interview follow-up letter tailored towards this specific job, internship, or graduate program.
5. When you turn in this assignment, you need to turn in the job, internship or graduate program description and any research you found out about the company or school to which you applied. Do this by copying the description for each of the three into a Microsoft Word document. As far as turning in the research, copy the links that you found about the company/graduate school.
6. On page 345 of your textbook, there are 12 practice interview questions. You need to answer each with careful thought as though you were actually being interviewed.
7. To turn these assignments in, remember that all of the documents need to be contained in one file or Word document saved as “jobapplication_lastname.doc.” (To put all documents in one, use page breaks between each document.) The résumé, cover letter, and follow-up letter should be no longer than one page each. The interview questions may go on to two or three pages, depending on how you answer each question.

Important Considerations

Résumé

- Do not use a Microsoft Word résumé template. If you do, you will not do well on this assignment. Create your own format that is attractive and easy to follow. Design of a résumé can make a huge difference when being considered for a position.
- Make sure your résumé uses the full page. If it does not, it looks as though you have little experience, are underqualified, or don't care enough about the position to complete your résumé.
- Be sure that you have **NO** errors on your résumé. Even the slightest spelling, formatting, or grammatical error can be enough to turn some employers away. While there are some employers who are less annoyed by such errors, you just never know. Remember, complete professionalism is key.
- Avoid any personal information. Employers do not need to know anything about your age, sex, marital status, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. While some of this an employer will be able to determine in an interview, don't give them a reason to "prejudge" you before even getting the interview.
- When listing your duties on your résumé, try to quantify some of them. (*For example, if you worked a part time job during school, let the employer know how many hours you worked. "Worked an average of 30 hours per week" gives a much clearer description. If you managed a team, let them know how many people. (Managed a team of 6 people)*)
- Use action verbs to describe what you did in your various experiences. (For example, use words such as *managed, oversaw, delegated, reviewed, trained, assisted, etc.*)
- Also if you have jobs that are not related to the job you are applying for then you can put what you learned while doing the job instead of the actual duties. (*For example: if you waited tables, you could put that you learned teamwork and time management skills.*)
- Be sure to include as many forms of contact information as you feel comfortable with (email, home address, and phone number are usually good). If, for the purposes of this assignment, you don't wish to reveal this information to me, feel free to just make it up.

Cover Letter

- Be sure to look at many examples of these. The one in your textbook (on page 332) is good, but not great. Get a good feel for what makes a good letter before writing your own.
- In your introduction, be sure to let the employer know what position you are applying for and briefly why you are a good candidate. Elaborate, then, in the body of the letter with specific experiences.
- Be sure to refer to your résumé in the letter. (For example, "as you can see on my résumé, I have worked for multiple engineering companies...")
- For your body paragraphs in your cover letter, make sure to make a strong connection between your skills and this job. Tell them how/why that skill will help them in this job. Be **very** specific. The more specific experiences you can refer to, the more prepared and qualified you will sound.
- Show the employer that you know about the organization or school. Let them know you have done your research by making specific references to the organization itself and you and your skills fit into their organizational goals.
- In your conclusion, request an interview and let the employer know you are available. Consider including contact information in that paragraph.
- Use business letter format and be sure to sign your letter. Make sure there are no typos or other errors.

Practice Interview Questions

- When answering your interview questions, you want to make sure that you provide specific examples to support your answers. You can use examples from school, your extracurricular activities, or your work experience.
- Also, when answering your interview questions you want to seem flexible. So when it asks if you would prefer to work by yourself or with a team, you need to appear as though you can adapt to both situations. It is okay to say what you prefer, but then you need to go on and explain that you can be effective in either situation.
- You must walk a fine line here between confident/capable and arrogant/self-aggrandizing. Employers want to know that you can do the job and do it well, but few will want someone who acts like they already know more than the boss. Thus, be careful with your tone and choice of words. On the flip side, be careful not to come across as a pushover. Humility is often a good trait, but don't let it get in the way of you sounding confident enough to get the job.
- Be sure to relate the questions back to the job for which you are applying. It can be easy to get on a tangent and forget your ultimate purpose—to make the employer want to hire you!

Interview Follow-up Letter

- Remember the purpose of this letter is to show cordial professionalism. Your tone is very important in this letter and may make or break the employer's decision between you and other candidates.
- Use the example in your textbook (page 350) as a guide, but be sure to make specific references to the actual interview and company you are applying for. Don't make it sound like a form letter. Because you won't actually have an interview with someone, feel free to "make up" a bit of your response, as if you were actually thanking a real person for a real interview.
- Again, use business letter format and be sure that there are no errors on the page.

GRADING

Résumé : 75 points	Design, Organization and Format: (20 points)	
	Fit of your resume to the job description and ability to sell yourself: (35 points)	
	Grammar, spelling, mechanics: (20 points)	
Cover Letter: 75 points	Format: (15 points)	
	Persuasiveness: (30 points)	
	Content: (15 points)	
	Grammar, spelling, mechanics: (15 points)	
Interview Follow-Up Letter: 20 points	Format: (5 points)	
	Content/Tone: (10 points)	
	Grammar, spelling, mechanics: (5 points)	
Interview Questions: 20 points	Well-supported (10 points)	
	Tone/Content (10)	
Grad. School, Internship, or Job Description: 5 points	Format: (5 points)	
Research: 5 points	Format: (5 points)	
	Total 200 points	

CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	Find a graduate school program, internship and job
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy and paste the description for each into one MicroSoft Word page
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resume
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cover letter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interview Follow-up letter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interview Questions, see following page in syllabus