

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

A photograph of three students walking on a paved path on a university campus. In the background, a large bronze eagle statue is perched on a pedestal. The students are smiling and looking at each other. The student on the left is a Black woman with braids, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. The student in the middle is a Black man wearing a white t-shirt and khaki pants. The student on the right is a white woman with long dark hair, wearing a yellow t-shirt and blue jeans. All three are wearing backpacks. The path is made of grey and red bricks, and there are green bushes and trees in the background.

2026 - 27 CAREER SERVICES
CAREER GUIDE



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Talent Acquisition Specialist
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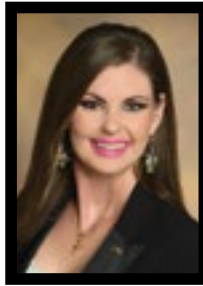
MEET THE STAFF

Career Services assists Southern Miss students in finding a career they love and building the professional skills employers value. Through career exploration, career-readiness coaching, job search skills development, and connections to real-world opportunities, students are ready for the next step!

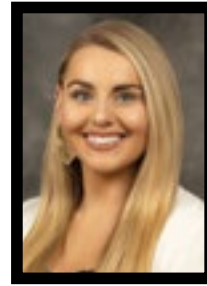
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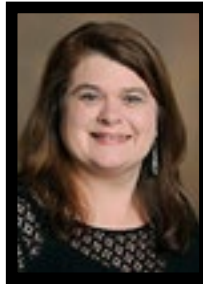
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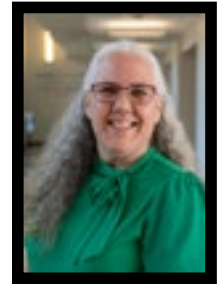
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SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY:
usm.edu/career-services

CONNECT WITH CAREER SERVICES

Take the Next Step

Students who use Career Services feel more confident, explore better options, and receive more job offers. The sooner you start, the better your outcomes.

BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT IN MINUTES

- Go to usm.edu/career-services
- Click Schedule an Appointment
- Choose in-person or virtual (Teams)
- You'll receive confirmation and a reminder by email.
- Appointments are scheduled for 45 minutes.
- Contact the office if you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN AN APPOINTMENT

- Explore your options
 - Choose or confirm your major
 - Identify career paths
 - Take career assessments
 - Build your job search skills
 - Develop your resumé and cover letter
 - Practice interviewing
 - Learn networking strategies
 - Gain real-world experience
 - Find part-time on- and off-campus jobs
 - Find a Pathway experience, such as an internship or co-op
 - Plan your next step
 - Get assistance with graduate school preparation
 - Create a job search strategy
 - Get salary and offer guidance
- ✱ Not sure what you need? That's okay, we'll help you figure it out.

FOLLOW AND CONNECT

Stay updated on events, opportunities and tips:

 @USMCAREERSERVICES  USM CAREER SERVICES

 CAREER SERVICES THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY; YOUR FUTURE DOESN'T WAIT.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Tools to Explore, Apply and Get Hired

You have access to powerful career tools; now it's time to use them. These resources help you explore careers, find real opportunities, and stand out as an applicant.

EXPLORE CAREERS

WHAT CAN I DO WITH THIS MAJOR?



Explore career paths, employers and strategies for any major. Start here if you're unsure about your direction.



Assess your interests, explore majors, and plan your next steps. Learn more about yourself and your options.

Contact Career Services for the required access code.



O-NET OnLine

Learn about careers, salaries, skills and job outlook. Research careers before committing.

SEARCH AND APPLY FOR JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS



Search jobs across multiple platforms in one place and track your applications. Use this to expand your job search. Contact Career Services for the required access code.



Search and apply for federal government positions. Need help? Meet with our certified federal advisor.



Practice interview questions, record your answers, and get feedback.



Find internships, part-time jobs and full-time opportunities. Think "Indeed" for Southern Miss students. Scan here to log in, complete your profile, and start applying today.



HANDSHAKE QUICK GUIDE

If you already have a profile, now take action:

- Log in at usm.joinhandshake.com
- Upload your resumé
- Complete your profile - Set your profile to "Community" so employers can find you.
- Start applying for jobs and internships

TAKE ACTION

Log in. Build your profile. Start applying. These tools only work if you use them. Need help? Schedule an appointment with Career Services.



WHAT'S IN YOUR HANDSHAKE?

Explore jobs, internships, employers and career resources in one place.

Handshake Navigation Guide

Explore

- Use the Explore tab to discover opportunities and resources tailored to you. Here, you'll find personalized recommendations for jobs, internships, employers, events and career content based on your profile, interests, and engagement on Handshake.

Jobs

- Use the Jobs tab to search and apply for on- and off-campus opportunities, including part-time jobs, work-study positions, internships, co-ops and full-time roles.
- You can also explore Collections, which groups opportunities into categories, such as industry, employer, career interest or opportunity type, making it easier to find roles that align with your goals.

Inbox

- Your Inbox is where you'll receive important messages from employers and your Career Center, including interview invitations, employer outreach, event reminders, application updates, and other career-related communications.

Feed

- The Feed is a shared space for professional engagement and visibility.
- Students can post accomplishments, such as certifications, graduation updates, class or research projects, portfolios, internships, and leadership experiences to build a professional presence and stand out to employers.
- Employers, the Career Center and Handshake share job and internship opportunities, employer spotlights, career tips, event updates and important announcements.

AI Showcase

- The AI Showcase highlights student-created AI projects, allowing students to build a visible portfolio, explore how peers apply AI across majors and industries, and participate in AI-focused challenges designed to showcase real-world skills and innovation.

Events

- The Events tab allows you to browse, register for, and attend career-related events, such as career fairs, employer information sessions, workshops, networking events and on-campus interviews.

People

- The People tab helps you connect with students, alumni and professionals on Handshake. You can explore career paths, see where others have worked or interned, and build professional connections that support networking and career exploration.

Employers

- The Employers tab lets you explore organizations actively recruiting through Handshake. You can learn about employers, follow companies of interest, view open positions, and stay updated on events or opportunities they share.

Career Center

- The Career Center tab connects you directly to Southern Miss Career Services. Here, you can learn about available services, access career resources, discover workshops, and stay informed about deadlines, policies and Career Center announcements.

Final Tip for Students

The more complete and accurate your Handshake profile is, the more personalized your opportunities, recommendations and connections will be.

Explore Handshake Today!



Create and Complete Your Handshake Profile

All registered, degree-seeking students already have a Handshake account. You simply need to log in and complete your profile.

1. Go to usm.joinhandshake.com and select **The University of Southern Mississippi**. Log in using your university credentials: **w + student ID number @usm.edu** (example: w12345678@usm.edu) and your **SOAR password**.
2. If prompted, select **"Or log in using your Handshake credentials"** and sign in with your **@usm.edu** email address and SOAR password.
3. Upload a current resumé and select **"Build Profile From Resumé"** to automatically populate your education and work experience.
4. To edit or add information, click your initials in the top right corner, select **My Profile**, and use the **Edit (pencil) icon** next to each section. Be sure to include organizations, student activities, relevant coursework, projects and skills.
5. In **Settings**, select **Community** under Privacy to allow employers to find and connect with you.

Tip: Uploading your resumé when you create your profile is a great start, but be sure to keep it updated as you progress in your education. A current resumé helps employers see the most accurate version of you and your skills.

YOUR FOUR-YEAR CAREER-READINESS PLAN

Build skills. Gain experience. Launch your future.

YEAR 1 DISCOVER

Focus: Communication and Critical Thinking

- Meet with a career counselor
- Explore majors and career options
- Research careers (What Can I Do With This Major?)
- Use campus resources
- Activate Handshake

Goal: Explore your options and build awareness.

YEAR 2 GAIN EXPERIENCE

Focus: Career and Self-Development

- Create a Career Development Plan
- Narrow career interests
- Gain experience (jobs, internships, pathways)
- Explore study abroad
- Update your resumé
- Attend career events

Goal: Build skills and gain experience.

YEAR 3 MAKE CONNECTIONS

Focus: Leadership and Teamwork

- Take leadership roles
- Gain hands-on experience (internships/research)
- Build your LinkedIn profile and start networking
- Attend career fairs
- Meet with Career Services
- Prepare for graduate school (if applicable)

Goal: Build connections and deepen experience.

YEAR 4 LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

Focus: Professionalism and Technology

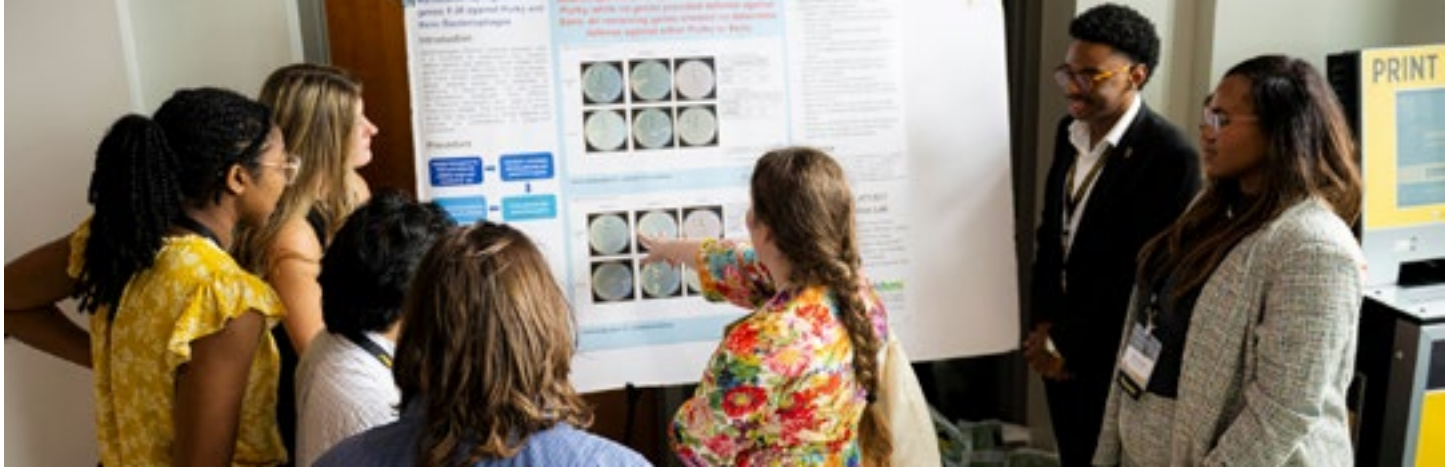
- Apply for jobs (6-9 months before graduation)
- Use Handshake and Careershift
- Interview with employers
- Attend career fairs
- Complete First Destination Survey
- Celebrate your achievements

Goal: Secure your next step.



ARE YOU CAREER-READY?

Build the skills employers look for. Being “career-ready” means developing the skills, knowledge and habits needed to succeed in your first job and throughout your career. These career-readiness competencies help you stand out to employers and prepare for life after graduation.



Communication

Share ideas clearly and confidently.

- Speak up in class, presentations and group work
- Practice at the Speaking Center and Writing Center
- Ask for feedback and improve your delivery



Career and Self-Development

Take ownership of your future.

- Set career goals and create a plan
- Meet with Career Services regularly
- Build relationships through networking



Critical Thinking

Make thoughtful decisions and solve problems.

- Break down problems and evaluate information
- Consider different perspectives
- Use data and evidence to guide decisions



Global and Intercultural Fluency

Work effectively with people from different backgrounds.

- Attend diverse events and engage with new perspectives
- Participate in study abroad or service opportunities
- Build cultural awareness and adaptability



Professionalism

Show employers you are dependable and prepared.

- Be on time, meet deadlines, and produce quality work
- Build a positive reputation
- Develop a professional online presence



Technology

Use tools and systems to succeed in your field.

- Learn tools relevant to your career
- Build digital and data skills
- Use platforms like Coursera to gain certifications



Leadership

Take initiative and guide others.

- Get involved in student organizations or work roles
- Lead projects and take responsibility
- Seek opportunities to grow your leadership skills



Teamwork

Work effectively with others to achieve shared goals.

- Contribute your ideas and listen to others
- Communicate clearly and respectfully with team members
- Complete your responsibilities and support the group's success





As America celebrates its 250th anniversary, Cooperative Energy remains deeply committed to powering the values of freedom, opportunity, and self-determination that make our nation strong.

We deliver reliable, affordable, and responsible energy while serving as good stewards of the environment so Mississippi families and businesses can thrive and pursue their American dream.

As America looks to its next 250 years, we are dedicated to powering stronger communities and brighter futures for generations to come.

Because when America celebrates what it stands for, we're proud to power the way!



COOPERATIVEENERGY.COM



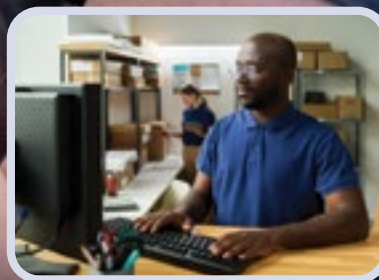
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**YOUR
FUTURE IS
HERE**

GAIN EXPERIENCE - STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Start building skills now. The sooner you start, the more experience you'll gain.

Paycheck with a Purpose

Turn your job into a career-building experience. A part-time job is more than a paycheck; it's an opportunity to grow, reflect and build skills that will prepare you for your future.

Through student employment, you can:

- Develop real-world skills employers are looking for,
- Build relationships with supervisors who can become mentors,
- Gain experience that shapes your career interests, and
- Contribute to meaningful work and see your impact.

Your workplace can become a community of support, and your role can help you discover your strengths, goals and direction. Your job is part of your career-ready journey.

Start Your Job Search

Student Employment is part of Career Services and offers support to help you find opportunities that fit your schedule, interests and goals.

Get started:

- Log in to Handshake to search for on- and off-campus jobs
- Apply for positions that match your interests and availability

Schedule an appointment for personalized support. During your appointment, you can get help with:

- Resumés and cover letters
- Interview preparation
- Job search strategies

Not sure where to start? We'll help you figure it out.

Types of Student Employment

- On-campus wage positions (up to 20 hours/week)
- Federal work-study positions (eligibility based on FAFSA)
- Off-campus jobs (hours and pay vary by employer)

Pro Tip: Always follow up after applying; employers notice initiative.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT COMPETENCY BADGES

Stand out. Get recognized. Be career-ready.

A part-time job is an experience that helps you build and demonstrate your skills. The Student Employment Competency Badges program helps you develop and showcase the skills employers want most:

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Professionalism
- Leadership

What You Gain

- Earn digital badges that highlight your skills
- Add badges to your resumé and LinkedIn profile
- Show employers what you can do
- Stand out in a competitive job market
- Get recognized for the skills you build every day

TAKE ACTION

- Search jobs on Handshake
- Apply and follow up
- Schedule an appointment for support



Scan here or visit our website at
USM.EDU/CAREER-SERVICES/STUDENT-EMPLOYMENT.PHP

Cook Library 203
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
601.266.4159

 **@USMSTUDENTWORK**

CENTER FOR PATHWAY EXPERIENCES

Connect your experience to your future career. Pathway experiences take your skills to the next level by connecting what you learn in the classroom to real-world career goals. These experiences include the following:

- Internships (paid or unpaid)
- Part-time jobs related to your career goals
- Research and creative activities
- Practicums, clinicals and student teaching
- Fieldwork and other career-related experiences

Why Pathways Matter

Pathway experiences help you:

- Apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings
- Clarify your career goals through hands-on experience
- Build career-ready skills like communication, teamwork and problem-solving

Test your interests. Build confidence. Gain direction.

What You Gain

Through pathway experiences, you will:

- Gain career-specific, hands-on experience
- Strengthen your resumé with relevant work
- Build professional connections in your field
- Stand out to employers and graduate programs

Your pathway is where your future starts to take shape.

How to Get Started

Find - Meet with a career advisor to explore your goals and identify pathway opportunities.

Fund - Apply for scholarships through the GO System to support your experience.

Finish - Complete a Pathway Reflection to showcase your experience and earn a pathways graduation cord. Start early—give yourself four to six months to find the right opportunity.

Real Student Experiences

"My preceptorship allowed me to put classroom knowledge into practice while also building my confidence. It confirmed that nursing is the right path for me and led to job opportunities. I strongly recommend doing an internship or preceptorship. It's a truly rewarding experience."

-- A. Douglas

"Stay open-minded. You may not always get the exact opportunity you expected, but every experience offers valuable lessons and connections. Even unexpected paths can become the most rewarding."

-- M. Belk

TAKE ACTION

- Meet with a career advisor.
- Explore Pathway opportunities.
- Apply early—start four to six months in advance.



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our website at
[USM.EDU/PATHWAYS](https://usm.edu/pathways)



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MICRO-CREDENTIALING

Build a Stronger Professional Profile with In-Demand Skills

A college degree is a valuable foundation, but in today's job market, employers are looking for job-ready skills alongside academic achievement.

Micro-credentials are short, skills-based certifications that show you have expertise in a specific area. They help you build relevant skills, explore new interests, and demonstrate initiative to future employers.

Why Micro-Credentials Matter

Micro-credentials can help you:

- Build job-ready skills employers are actively seeking
- Bridge gaps between classroom learning and workplace expectations
- Strengthen your resumé and LinkedIn profiles
- Explore new career interests or technologies
- Show initiative and commitment to your professional growth

What Makes Micro-Credentials Different?

Micro-credentials are:

- Short-term – often completed in weeks or a few months
- Skill-specific – focused on one clearly defined competency
- Flexible – typically online and self-paced
- Career-oriented – designed to align with employer needs

Explore In-Demand Skills

Examples of popular micro-credentials include the following:

- Google Data Analytics
- Budgeting and Finance Basics
- AI Essentials for Everyone
- Work Smarter with Microsoft Excel



COST-FREE ACCESS TO COURSERA FOR SOUTHERN MISS STUDENTS

To support your career readiness, The University of Southern Mississippi has partnered with Coursera to offer FREE learning opportunities for students. Students can access the following:

- Over 5,000 courses from top organizations like Google, IBM and leading universities
- Verified certificates to add to your resumé and LinkedIn
- Flexible, mobile-friendly learning designed for busy schedules
- Skill-building programs that enhance your degree—not replace it

Get Started Today!

Create your FREE Coursera Career Academy account: usm.edu/provost/coursera.php



Find a Career You Believe In.

Youth Villages offers a continuum of behavioral health services to children in Mississippi, including intensive in-home treatment through MYPAC (Mississippi Youth Programs Around the Clock), Intercept® and LifeSet™, which gives former foster youth a good start on successful adulthood.

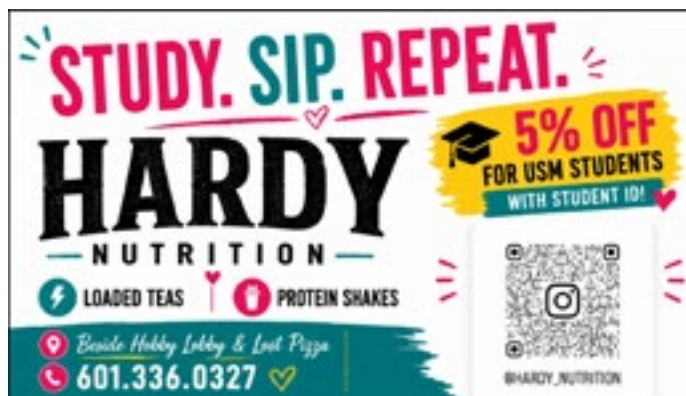
Explore career opportunities across the state!
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Full-time positions (includes both master's and bachelor's degrees)

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Flexible, often non-traditional schedules	Wellness programs and incentives

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From our corporate headquarters to our facilities, we employ over 1,300 people in communities where our operations are located.

Learn about our current career opportunities and how we are making a difference in our communities by visiting our website and following us on LinkedIn.



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FIND YOUR FIT!



SOUTHERN MISS
CAMPUS RECREATION

EOE/VETS/DISABILITY

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You need to talk to MC&L.



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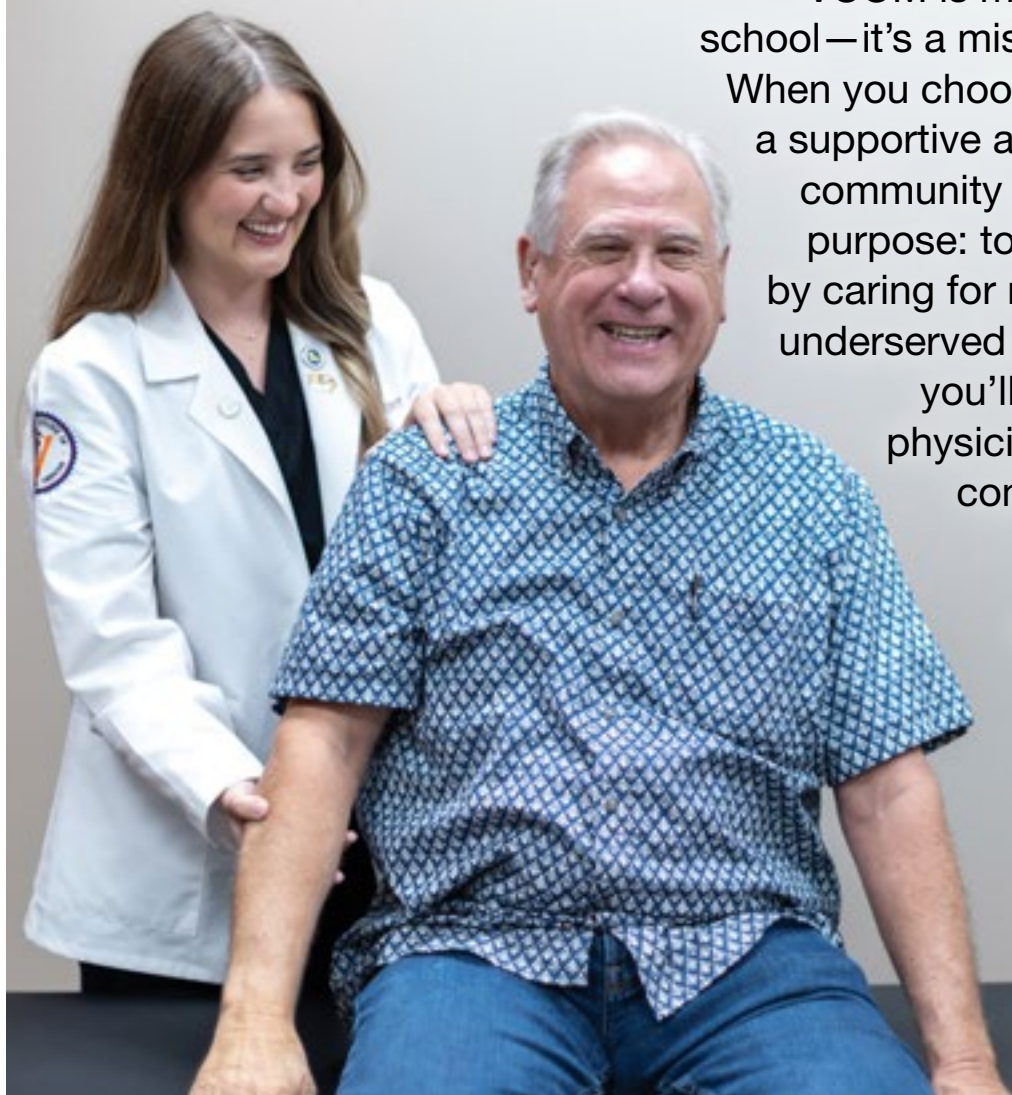
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BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Create Opportunities

It's not what you know or who you know—it's who knows you! Networking is one of the most powerful tools in your career journey, from finding mentors to landing your first job. "Networking creates opportunities. Nearly half of graduating seniors who attended a career fair received an interview as a result." *NACE, 2023*



Step 1	Start With You	Strong connections begin with self-awareness. ➤ Know your strengths, interests and goals ➤ Be ready to talk about your background and career interests ➤ Practice communicating your story (use tools like Big Interview) The more you understand yourself, the easier it is to connect with others.
Step 2	Build on What You Have	Networking doesn't start with strangers; it starts with people you already know. ➤ Talk to professors, classmates and advisors ➤ Connect with alumni and professionals ➤ Ask simple questions like, "I'm exploring careers in [field]. Do you know anyone I could talk to?" Networking = professional relationship-building
Step 3	Be Authentic	People connect with people, not scripts. ➤ Be genuine and let your personality show ➤ Share your interests and goals honestly ➤ Be prepared but not rehearsed Authenticity builds stronger, lasting connections.
Step 4	Take Action Now	You don't have to wait; start building your network today. ➤ Attend career fairs, student organization events and panels ➤ Build your presence on LinkedIn ➤ Start conversations and ask questions ➤ Follow up after meeting someone Every conversation is a potential opportunity.
Step 5	Stand Out and Stay Connected	Networking doesn't end after the first meeting. ➤ Practice your elevator pitch ➤ Keep track of contacts (use tools like Careershift) ➤ Follow up with a message or email ➤ Stay in touch—check in, share articles, or congratulate achievements ➤ Offer value first (help, share or support others) Strong networks are built through meaningful connections and conversations.

TAKE ACTION

- Reach out to one new person this week.
- Attend a networking event this month.
- Follow up with someone you've already met.

Start now—connections you build today can shape your future.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

Turn Career Fairs Into Opportunities

Every conversation can lead to your next opportunity. Career fairs aren't just for job seekers; they're for every student. Attending early helps you build connections, practice communication, and learn what employers are looking for.



Step 1

Prepare Before the Event

Set yourself up for success before you walk in.

- Review employers attending in Handshake and select your top choices
- Research companies (mission, roles, opportunities)
- Prepare your elevator pitch and talking points
- Write two or three questions for each employer
- Update your resumé and schedule a review at least two weeks before; bring multiple copies of your resumé
- Plan your outfit
- Plan your schedule; avoid conflicts

Preparation builds confidence. Confidence builds connections.

Step 2

Engage with Confidence

Treat every conversation as an opportunity.

- Introduce yourself clearly and confidently
- Begin with a brief practice conversation to build confidence before approaching priority employers
- Treat each conversation like a mini-interview
- Ask thoughtful, prepared questions
- Take brief notes after each conversation
- Collect contact information
- Share your resumé (print or digital QR code)

Be curious, be prepared, and be yourself.

Step 3

Follow Up and Stand Out

What you do after the event matters just as much.

- Organize your contacts and notes
- Send a thank-you email within 24-48 hours
- Apply for the positions discussed
- Reflect on your experience; ask yourself:
 - What went well?
 - What could I improve?
 - What did I learn about my interests?

Follow-up turns conversations into opportunities.

MAKE YOURSELF MEMORABLE

- Create a digital business card (QR code) or bring printed cards.
- Practice your introduction until it feels natural.
- Show genuine interest in each conversation.

Employers remember students who are prepared and engaged.

TAKE ACTION

Attend at least one career fair this semester.

- Prepare your elevator pitch.
- Schedule a resumé review.
- Follow up with employers.

Every connection is a step toward your future—start now.

BUILD YOUR BRAND

Stand Out Online

Your online presence can help (or hurt) your future. Your social media is more than personal; it's part of your professional identity. Employers are paying attention. What you post, share and say online can influence internships, job offers and networking opportunities.

WHY IT MATTERS

90% of recruiters say a candidate's online presence influences hiring decisions (Glassdoor, 2024).
70% of employers have rejected candidates based on social media activity (CareerBuilder, 2023).
71% are more likely to interview candidates with a strong online presence (Jobvite, 2024).
Your digital footprint speaks before you do.

Step 1	Clean Up Your Online Presence	Before you build your brand, make sure it reflects you professionally. ➤ Remove or hide unprofessional content ➤ Check privacy settings ➤ Review photos, comments and past posts ➤ Make sure your profiles represent who you want to be If an employer saw it, would you still be confident?
Step 2	Build a Consistent Brand	Make it easy for employers to recognize you across platforms. ➤ Use the same professional photo ➤ Keep usernames and bios consistent ➤ Highlight your major, interests and goals You are your brand; make it clear and consistent.
Step 3	Show Your Work and Interests	Don't just scroll—contribute. ➤ Share class projects, presentations or achievements ➤ Post about internships, jobs or campus involvement ➤ Highlight skills and experiences you're building Feature activities and accomplishments that align with your future career goals.
Step 4	Engage With Your Field	Start building your network online. ➤ Follow companies and professionals ➤ Comment on industry posts ➤ Join groups and conversations ➤ Connect with classmates, alumni and recruiters Networking starts before graduation.
Step 5	Use LinkedIn Intentionally	LinkedIn is your primary professional platform. ➤ Keep your profile updated ➤ Add experiences and skills ➤ Request recommendations ➤ Use it to connect and apply If you're not on LinkedIn, you're missing opportunities.

TAKE ACTION

Review your profiles today.

- Update at least one platform.
- Create or improve your LinkedIn profile.
- Start sharing your experiences.

Build a brand that opens doors to future opportunities.

LEVERAGE LINKEDIN

Grow Your Network

LinkedIn is the #1 platform employers use to find and evaluate candidates. A strong profile helps you show up in searches, make connections and discover opportunities. If your profile isn't complete, you're harder to find. If it's strong, opportunities can find you.

Step 1

Create a Strong First Impression

- Use a professional headshot (clear, simple background)
- Choose a background image that reflects your major or career interests
- Make your profile clean, polished and professional

Your photo is often the first thing employers see; make it count.

Step 2

Write a Clear, Keyword-Friendly Summary

- Write in first person ("I")
- Focus on what you do and what you're interested in
- Include keywords related to your skills and career goals
- Example: Instead of "student," use terms like marketing student, future accountant, aspiring engineer

Keywords help recruiters find you in searches.

Step 3

Add Skills and Experiences

- Relevant and accurate skills (aim to fill most of your skills section)
- Add work, internships and class projects
- Ask peers, professors or supervisors to endorse your skills

Your skills section builds credibility and visibility.

Step 4

Build Your Network

- Connect with classmates, professors, alumni and professionals
- Personalize connection requests when possible
- Join groups related to your field

Start building your network now.

Step 5

Engage and Stand Out

- Share projects, experiences and achievements
- Comment on posts and join conversations
- Follow companies and industry leaders

Being active makes you visible and memorable.

Step 6

Search and Apply for Jobs

- Use the LinkedIn Jobs tab to find opportunities
- Turn on "Open to Work"
- Set job alerts based on your interests

Let recruiters know you're ready for opportunities.



TAKE ACTION

Create or update your LinkedIn profile today.

- Add at least five skills and one experience.
- Connect with five people this week.

A strong LinkedIn profile helps opportunities find you.

COMMUNICATE WITH CONFIDENCE

Professional Communication

How you say something matters as much as what you say. Whether you're emailing a professor, messaging a recruiter, or speaking in an interview, your communication shapes how others perceive you. Strong communication builds credibility. Weak communication skills can close doors.

Step 1 - Be Clear and Direct

Respect people's time by getting to the point.

- Keep messages short and focused
- State your purpose early
- Avoid unnecessary words

Example:

❌ "Hey, I was wondering if maybe you could look at my resumé when you have time."

✅ "Hi, Dr. Lee, would you be available to review my resumé this week? I'd appreciate your feedback."

Clear communication = confident communication

Step 2 - Use a Professional Tone

Even in casual settings, stay polished.

- Use proper greetings (Hi, Hello, Dear)
- Avoid slang, emojis, and overly casual language
- Write in complete, professional sentences

Keep it friendly but professional.

Step 3 - Format for Readability

Make your message easy to read.

- Use short paragraphs or bullet points
- Avoid large blocks of text
- Highlight key information (dates, requests, deadlines)

If it's easy to read, it's easier to respond to.

Step 4 - Proofread Before You Send

Mistakes can hurt your credibility.

- Check spelling and grammar
- Verify names and titles
- Make sure attachments are included

Always pause and review before hitting send.

Step 5 - Start and End Strong

First and last impressions matter.

- Start with a clear greeting
- End with a polite closing (Best, Thanks, Sincerely)
- Include your name and contact information

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Sample Email

Subject: Request for Resumé Feedback

Hi Dr. Lee,

I hope you are doing well. I am currently preparing for upcoming career fairs and wanted to ask if you would be available to review my resumé this week. I would appreciate any feedback you may have.

Thank you for your time and support.

Best,
Jordan Williams

WHERE YOU'LL USE THIS

You'll use professional communication in

- Emails to professors and employers,
- LinkedIn messages,
- Interviews and networking conversations, and
- Workplace communication.

Strong communication sets you apart in every setting.

TAKE ACTION

- Review one recent message you've sent—how could you improve it?
- Practice writing one professional email today.
- Apply these steps in your next interaction.

Communicate clearly. Communicate confidently.
Make the right impression.

TELL YOUR STORY

Master Your Elevator Pitch

Introduce yourself with confidence in 30–60 seconds. An elevator pitch is a short, clear introduction that explains who you are, what you're interested in, and what you're looking for. You'll use it at career fairs, networking events and interviews. When someone says, "Tell me about yourself," this is your answer.

Step 1 - Know What to Say

A strong elevator pitch includes three key parts:

WHO YOU ARE

Your name, major and year

Your background or experience

WHAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN

Career goals or fields of interest

Key skills or areas you enjoy

WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Internship, job or career direction

Reason for connecting

Keep it focused, clear and relevant



TAKE ACTION

- Write your elevator pitch today.
- Practice with a friend or Career Services.
- Use it at your next event.

Confidence comes from practice; start now.

Step 2: Build Your Pitch

WHO + WHAT + WHY

Example:

"Hi, I'm [Name], a [major/year] interested in [field]. I've gained experience through [class, job or internship], and I'm looking for opportunities to [goal]."

Step 3: See It in Action

Sample Elevator Pitch:

"Hi, my name is Aisha Cartwell, and I'm a senior at The University of Southern Mississippi, majoring in marine biology. I have experience in customer service and am currently interning at the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies, where I work with marine life and educate the public. I'm interested in a career studying the impact of environmental changes on marine ecosystems and would love to connect about opportunities in this field."

Step 4: Practice With Purpose

- Keep it 30-60 seconds
- Practice out loud until it feels natural
- Don't memorize; focus on sounding confident and clear
- Adjust your pitch depending on who you're talking to

The goal is to sound prepared, not scripted.

Step 5: Make It Work for You

Use your pitch at the following times:

- Career fairs
- Networking conversations
- Interviews
- LinkedIn outreach

Be ready to do the following:

- Ask a follow-up question
- Continue the conversation naturally
- Your pitch starts the conversation; your curiosity keeps it going

Hi, my name is _____.

I am a _____ (year/major) interested in _____.

I have experience in _____ (class, job, internship or project).

I'm looking for _____ (internship, job or opportunity).

I'd love to _____ (connect, learn more, explore opportunities).

Tip: Keep it to three to five sentences and focus on what matters most.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Make a Professional Impression

What you wear communicates before you speak. Your appearance plays a role in how employers perceive you, especially during interviews, career fairs and professional events. First impressions matter. What you wear should reflect your professionalism and readiness.



Step 1

Dress for the Occasion

Different settings require different levels of professionalism.

Interviews and Career Fairs

- Wear professional/business attire
- Choose neutral colors (black, navy, gray)
- Keep your look clean and polished
- When in doubt, dress more professional, not less

Workplace Settings

- Follow the organization's dress code
- Ask questions if expectations are unclear
- When unsure, dress slightly more professional
- "Business casual" can vary; don't assume

Step 2

Pay Attention to Details

Your overall presentation matters just as much as your outfit.

- Clothing should be clean, wrinkle-free, and in good condition
- Shoes should be neat and appropriate
- Hair should be clean and well-groomed
- Keep accessories simple and professional

Small details can make a big difference.

Step 3

Keep It Simple and Professional

You should avoid wearing the following:

- Anything that could distract from your qualifications
- Clothing that is too casual or revealing
- Loud patterns or distracting colors
- Overuse of accessories or fragrance

Your goal is to be remembered for your skills, not your outfit.

DRESS WITH INTENTION

Ask yourself these questions before any professional event:

- » Does this outfit fit well?
- » Does it look clean and professional?
- » Would I feel confident meeting an employer in this?

Confidence comes from feeling prepared, which includes your appearance.

Southern Miss offers a FREE professional dress program at the Gulf Park campus! This program is a selection of professional clothing, shoes and accessories available to students at no cost. Student ID is required.

GULF PARK CAREER CLOSET

Hardy Hall, Third Floor, Room 335

Gulf Park Campus

mary.maner@usm.edu or 228.214.3330

ACT WITH PROFESSIONALISM

Master Etiquette

How you behave matters, and people notice. Professional etiquette is about showing respect, confidence and awareness in any setting.

- It shapes first impressions.
- It influences how others perceive your professionalism.
- It helps you succeed in interviews, events and the workplace.



Step 1	Make a Strong First Impression	How you greet others sets the tone. ➤ Stand, smile and make eye contact when introduced ➤ Offer a firm (but not overpowering) handshake ➤ Use names and titles unless told otherwise First impressions are formed in seconds; make yours count.
Step 2	Communicate With Respect	How you interact matters as much as what you say. ➤ Listen actively and don't interrupt ➤ Be polite and professional in conversations ➤ Avoid inappropriate or controversial topics ➤ Show appreciation and respect for others' time Respect builds trust and strong relationships.
Step 3	Be Mindful in Professional Settings	Whether in meetings, events or networking spaces: ➤ Arrive on time (or early) ➤ Silence your phone and avoid distractions ➤ Maintain good posture and body language ➤ Contribute to conversations without dominating them Your behavior reflects your professionalism.
Step 4	Navigate Dining With Confidence	Professional meals may be part of interviews or networking. ➤ Wait until everyone is served before eating ➤ Follow the host's lead when ordering ➤ Choose foods that are easy to eat ➤ Keep your phone off the table ➤ Stay engaged in conversation Dining etiquette is about awareness and respect.
Step 5	Keep It Professional	Small habits make a big difference. ➤ Dress appropriately for the setting ➤ Be mindful of tone and body language ➤ Avoid oversharing personal information ➤ Stay aware of how you present yourself Consistency builds your professional reputation.

TAKE ACTION

- Practice introductions and greetings.
- Be mindful of your behavior in class, work and events.
- Apply these habits at your next networking or career event.

Professionalism =
What You Know × How You Show Up



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APPOINTMENTS



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Location: Scott Hall (Century Park South)

Monday-Wednesday: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Thursday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Friday: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Scan here
to make
an appointment.



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usm.edu/student-health-services

Location: Scott Hall (Century Park South)

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Friday: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.



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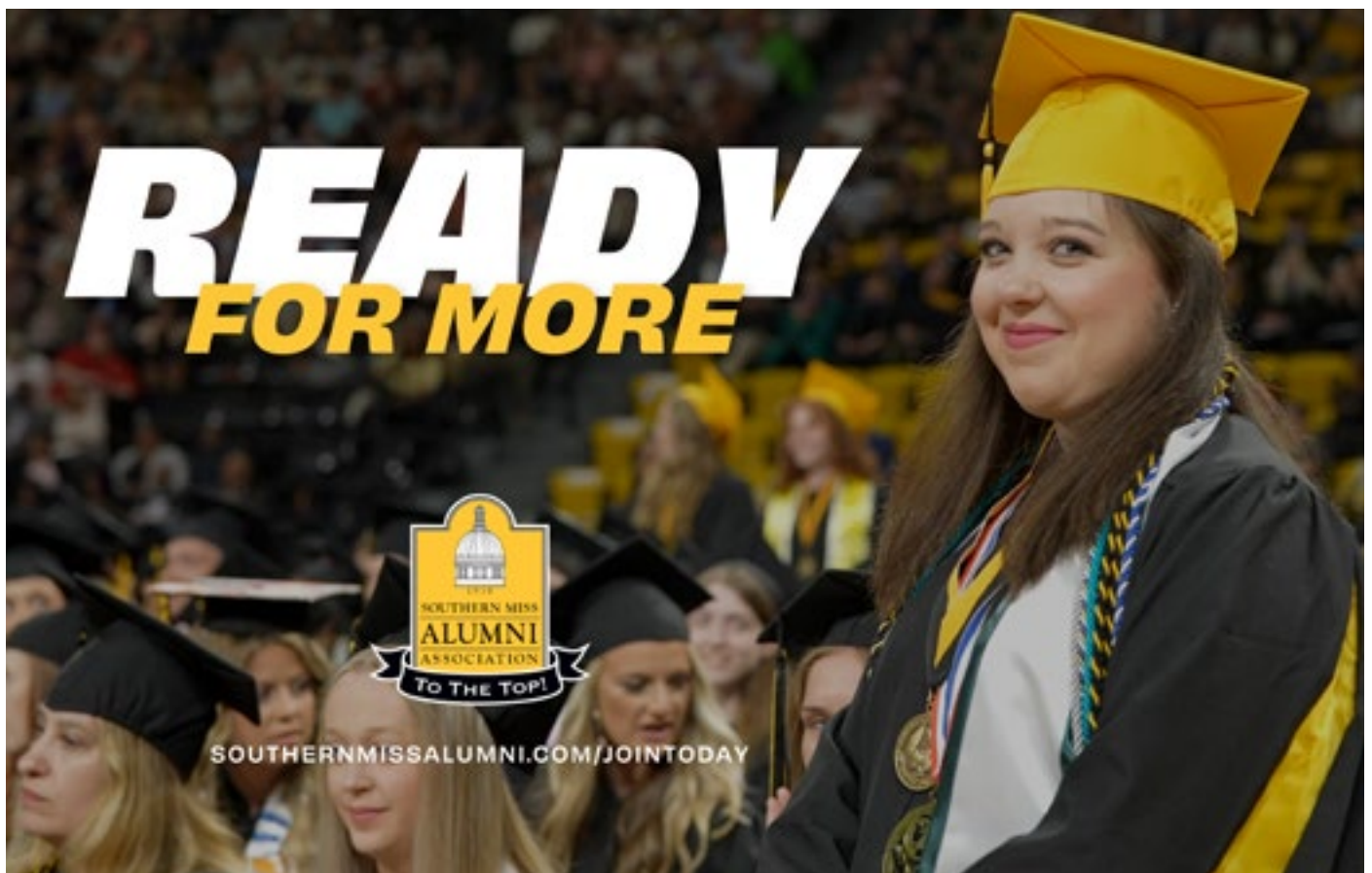
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USE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) STRATEGICALLY

Build Stronger Applications

Your resumé may be reviewed by a computer before a person ever sees it. Use AI the right way to stand out, not blend in. AI tools and Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) are now part of most every hiring process. When used strategically, they can help you create stronger application materials, improve your job search, and increase your chances of getting noticed.

What is ATS, and Why Does It Matter?

Most employers use ATS to scan and filter applications before recruiters review them. ATS software helps employers:

- Sort large numbers of applications
- Identify candidates who match job requirements
- Search for specific keywords and skills

If your resumé isn't optimized, it may never reach a person. If it is optimized, you increase your chances of being selected. The bottom line is that your resumé must work for both technology and people.

How to Optimize Your Resumé for ATS

Use keywords from the job description:

- Include skills, tools and qualifications listed in the posting
- Match language exactly when appropriate (e.g., "data analysis" vs. "analyzing data")

Use simple, clean formatting:

- Standard section headings (Education, Experience, Skills)
- No tables, graphics or text boxes
- Traditional font (Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman)

Make your experience easy to scan:

- Use bullet points
- Start with strong action verbs
- Focus on skills and results

Save and submit correctly:

- Use PDF format unless otherwise instructed
- Use a clear file name:
FirstNameLastName_Resume.pdf

Using AI to Strengthen Your Materials

AI tools, such as ChatGPT or resumé builders, can help you do several things:

- Brainstorm bullet points
- Improve wording and clarity
- Tailor your resumé to a job description
- Draft cover letters

Use AI as a tool, not a replacement.

How to Use AI Effectively

Instead of saying, "Write my resumé," try the following instead:

- "Rewrite this bullet to highlight communication and problem-solving skills."
- "Tailor my experience to this job description."
- "Make this sound more results-focused."

The better your input, the stronger your output.

Common AI Mistakes to Avoid

- ❌ Copying without editing - Generic content sounds the same as everyone else.
- ❌ Overloading with buzzwords - Too many keywords can reduce clarity and authenticity.
- ❌ Misrepresenting experience - AI can generate content that isn't accurate. Employers will ask about your experiences.
- ❌ Losing your voice - Your application should still sound like you.

BEST PRACTICE: THE 3-STEP AI APPROACH

1. Draft - Use AI to generate ideas or improve wording.
2. Refine - Edit for accuracy, clarity and relevance.
3. Personalize - Make it specific to your experience and the job.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Strong applications:

- Use keywords strategically (ATS-friendly)
- Show skills through action (employer-friendly)
- Use AI to enhance, not replace, your work

TAKE ACTION

- ☑ Compare your resumé to a job description and add three to five relevant keywords.
- ☑ Use AI to revise one bullet point for clarity and impact.
- ☑ Review your resumé formatting for ATS compatibility.
- ☑ Schedule a resumé review with Career Services. Your goal isn't just to apply; it's to get noticed.

TURN YOUR EXPERIENCE INTO YOUR STORY

From resumé to interview, show employers what you can do. You're already building valuable skills through your classes, jobs and experiences. Now it's time to communicate your value clearly on paper and in person.

Employers want to know these things:

- What have you done?
- What skills did you build?
- What impact did you make?

Build a Resumé That Gets Noticed

- Tell your story. Show your value. Get the interview.
- Your resumé is your first impression with employers. It should clearly show your skills, experiences and value in 10-20 seconds.

Step 1 Focus on What Matters

Your resumé should highlight:

- Relevant experience (jobs, internships, projects)
- Skills employers are looking for
- Achievements and impact

Every line should answer, "Why should they hire me?"

Step 2 Include the Essential Sections

HEADER

- Name (larger font)
- Phone number and professional email
- LinkedIn (if updated)

EDUCATION

- Degree, major and university
- Graduation date
- GPA (if 3.0 or higher)

EXPERIENCE

Jobs, internships and relevant roles - Focus on what you accomplished and the skills you used to accomplish it.

SKILLS

Technical skills, tools or languages - Keep them relevant to your field.

OPTIONAL SECTIONS

- Projects
- Leadership
- Certifications
- Awards

Include what strengthens your story.

USE PROPER VERB TENSE

Past experience = past tense verb

Present experience = present tense verb

Step 3 Write Strong Bullet Points

FROM EXPERIENCE → SKILLS → RESUMÉ

HEADER

Use this formula to turn any experience into a strong resumé bullet.

TASK + SKILL + RESULT

- What did you do?
- What skill did you use?
- What was the outcome or impact?

EXAMPLE: BEFORE AND AFTER

Basic

- Worked at front desk

Strong

- Managed front desk operations by prioritizing high-volume student inquiries, applying strong communication and problem-solving skills to assist 50+ individuals daily and improve service efficiency

Basic

- Group project in class

Strong

- Contributed to a four-member group research project by maintaining regular communication and organizing documentation to manage timelines, coordinate tasks and meet project deadlines



CONNECT YOUR SKILLS TO YOUR EXPERIENCES

STUDENT JOB → RESUMÉ

Experience: *Campus job*

Skills

- Communication
- Professionalism
- Teamwork

Resumé Example:

- Assisted customers in a fast-paced environment by actively listening, identifying needs, and resolving concerns in a timely manner while adhering to company policies

INTERNSHIP / PATHWAY → RESUMÉ

Experience: *Internship*

Skills

- Critical thinking
- Leadership
- Career readiness

Resumé Example:

- Utilized critical thinking skills to analyze data, evaluate trends and interpret results; developed a presentation to communicate key insights from findings to stakeholders

COURSEWORK → RESUMÉ

Experience: *Class project*

Skills

- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Technology

Resumé Example:

- Used Excel and research analysis to evaluate data for a real-world problem, and presented findings in a technical paper and corresponding infographic

STUDENT ORGANIZATION → RESUMÉ

Experience: *Club involvement*

Skills

- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Initiative

Resumé Example:

- Led event planning for 100+ attendees by coordinating logistics, securing vendors, and managing task assignments for a team of 10 peers

Think Like an Employer

Employers are asking these questions:

- Can you communicate?
- Can you solve problems?
- Can you work with others?
- Can you take initiative?

Your resumé should answer, “Yes” (with examples).

Get Support

Meet with Career Services for a resumé review.

Practice talking about your experiences for interviews. Your experiences matter—learn how to tell your story.

Step 4 Format for Impact

Make your resumé easy to scan in seconds:

- Keep it to one page
- Use consistent formatting
- Use bullet points (not paragraphs)
- Highlight key details (bold headings, job titles)

If it's easy to read, it's more likely to get noticed.

Step 5 Review and Refine

Before submitting:

- Check spelling and grammar
- Keep formatting consistent
- Customize your resumé for each job
- Save as a PDF: (FirstNameLastNameResume.pdf)

A polished resumé shows attention to detail.



TAKE ACTION

- Create or update your resumé today.
- Write three to five strong bullet points.
- Schedule a resumé review with Career Services.

Your resumé opens the door; make it strong.

BUILD YOUR RESUMÉ – STEP BY STEP

Turn your experiences into a resumé that gets results. Bring this worksheet to your Career Services appointment.

SECTION 1 - WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

List your experiences – everything counts:

Work / Job: _____

Internships / Pathways / Research: _____

Coursework / Projects: _____

Leadership / Organizations: _____

SECTION 2 - WHAT SKILLS DID YOU BUILD?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Communication | ☐ Leadership |
| ☐ Teamwork | ☐ Critical Thinking |
| ☐ Professionalism | ☐ Technology |

Other Skills:

SECTION 3 - WRITE STRONG BULLET POINTS ACTION + SKILL + RESULT

Experience:

Bullet 1: _____

Bullet 2: _____

Example:

Weak:

- Worked at front desk

Strong:

- Managed front desk operations, assisting 50+ students daily and improving customer service efficiency

SECTION 4 - BUILD YOUR RESUMÉ SECTIONS

Header

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

LinkedIn: _____

Education

Degree: _____

University: _____

Graduation date: _____

GPA: _____

SKILLS / HONORS / AWARDS:

ACTION WORD LIST

EXAMPLES OF ACTION WORDS THAT DESCRIBE YOUR FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Strong resumés have strong verbiage. Use our action word list to help your resumé stand out.

COMMUNICATION

Addressed
Advertised
Arranged
Articulated
Authored
Collaborated
Communicated
Composed
Condensed
Conferred
Consulted
Contacted
Conveyed
Convinced
Corresponded
Debated
Defined
Described
Drafted
Edited
Elicited
Enlisted
Explained
Expressed
Formulated
Furnished
Incorporated
Influenced
Interpreted
Interviewed
Lectured
Listened
Marketed
Moderated
Negotiated
Observed
Outlined
Participated
Presented
Publicized
Reconciled
Recruited
Referred
Reported
Resolved
Spoke

Suggested
Summarized
Synthesized
Translated
Wrote

CREATIVE

Acted
Combined
Composed
Conceptualized
Condensed
Created
Customized
Displayed
Drew
Entertained
Fashioned
Illustrated
Initiated
Integrated
Introduced
Invented
Modeled
Modified
Performed
Photographed
Revised
Revitalized
Shaped

FINANCIAL

Adjusted
Allocated
Appraised
Audited
Balanced
Budgeted
Corrected
Counted
Estimated
Prepared
Reduced
Regulated
Retrieved

HELPING

Advocated

Aided
Answered
Assisted
Contributed
Cooperated
Counseled
Demonstrated
Educated
Ensured
Expedited
Familiarized
Furthered
Helped
Insured
Intervened
Prevented
Provided
Rehabilitated
Represented
Simplified
Supplied
Supported
Volunteered

LEADERSHIP

Administered
Analyzed
Appointed
Approved
Assigned
Attained
Authorized
Chaired
Condensed
Considered
Consolidated
Controlled
Converted
Coordinated
Decided
Delegated
Developed
Directed
Eliminated
Emphasized
Enforced
Enhanced

Established
Executed
Generated
Handled
Headed
Hired
Hosted
Improved
Implemented
Led
Managed
Merged
Motivated
Organized
Originated
Oversaw
Planned
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Replaced
Restored
Scheduled
Secured
Selected
Streamlined
Strengthened
Supervised
Transformed

ORGANIZATION

Catalogued
Categorized
Classified
Coded
Compiled
Distributed
Inspected
Logged
Maintained
Monitored
Obtained
Ordered
Processed
Purchased
Recorded
Registered

Reserved
Responded
Routed
Screened
Served
Submitted
Supplied
Updated
Validated
Verified

RESEARCH

Analyzed
Clarified
Collected
Compared
Conducted
Detected
Determined
Diagnosed
Evaluated
Examined
Experimented
Explored
Extracted
Gathered
Identified
Inspected
Interpreted
Invented
Investigated
Located
Measured
Researched
Reviewed
Searched
Solved
Studied
Summarized
Surveyed
Systematized

TEACHING

Advised
Coached
Critiqued
Enabled

Encouraged
Explained
Facilitated
Focused
Guided
Individualized
Informed
Instilled
Instructed
Motivated
Persuaded
Stimulated
Taught
Tested
Trained
Transmitted
Tutored

TECHNICAL

Adapted
Adjusted
Applied
Assembled
Built
Calculated
Compared
Conserved
Constructed
Designed
Determined
Engineered
Estimated
Maintained
Operated
Printed
Programmed
Remodeled
Solved
Specialized
Upgraded
Utilized

Fantasia Firstyear

601.555.7876 | Fantasia.Firstyear@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies

May 2028

Minor: English

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Associate of Science

May 2026

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (Dual Enrollment), Perkinston, MS

High School Diploma

May 2026

Magee High School, Magee, MS

COMMUNICATIONS EXPERIENCE

Student Reporter, Magee Daily News, Magee, MS

June 2026 – August 2026

- Collaborated with writers, editors, and fellow students to develop engaging news stories and produce informative videotaped segments for social media
- Generated ideas and developed content for columns and commentaries through market research and analysis of current events and trending topics
- Reported on specialized fields such as medicine, green technology, environmental issues, science, politics, sports, arts, consumer affairs, business, religion, crime, and education

WORK EXPERIENCE

Camp Counselor, Strong River Summer Camp, Magee, MS

June 2025 – August 2025

- Displayed clear, engaging verbal communication when explaining the principles, techniques, and safety procedures to participants in recreational activities and modeled the proper use of materials and equipment to ensure participants' understanding
- Provided a welcoming experience to over 100 new campers by facilitating introductions to other participants and staff, touring the campgrounds, and encouraging participation in a variety of activities
- Organized, led, and promoted engagement in three daily recreational activities that included art, team sports, and basic life skills

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Hospital Volunteer, Magee General Hospital, Magee, MS

June 2024– August 2024

- Demonstrated positive customer service through courteous and supportive interactions with patients and visitors, and promptly assisted with navigation, answering questions, and attending to their general needs in a professional manner
- Assisted hospital staff with non-medical tasks such as organizing supplies, maintaining clean common areas, and supporting daily operational needs
- Supported front desk and administrative functions by answering phones, directing visitors, organizing materials, and ensuring timely and efficient communication between departments

HONORS AND AWARDS

Luckyday Citizenship Scholar

Rotary Club Scholarship

National Honor Society



Carly Communications

601.323.1122 ~ carlycomm@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, Public Relations

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

British Studies Program, London, England

- Enhanced knowledge of best practices in digital communication by researching media coverage and communication strategies involving elected officials
- Built professional connections throughout London while strengthening knowledge of mass media practices and career pathways

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Marketing Intern, South Central Regional Medical Center, Hattiesburg, MS

- Developed written articles for hospital publications by translating video interviews into clear, engaging content
- Supported the planning, promotion, and facilitation of a children's health fair to encourage community health education
- Reviewed and edited press releases to ensure accuracy, clarity, and consistency of information

EMPLOYMENT

Student Worker, USM New Student and Retention Programs, Hattiesburg, MS

- Deliver responsive front-line support by using active listening and interpersonal communication to assess student needs, answer questions, and connect students with appropriate resources
- Promote student engagement and academic progress by providing coaching participants with timely reminders, individualized assistance, and academic success resources
- Maintain efficient and confidential office operations by organizing student records, coordinating appointment schedules, and directing inquiries to the appropriate departments

LEADERSHIP & CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Social Chair, Kappa Delta Sorority

Luckyday Citizenship Scholar Recipient

Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society for Communication Studies

Eagle Connections Recruiter

Group Leader, Golden Eagle Welcome Week

SKILLS

Public Relations

Press Releases

Event Planning

Blog Posts

Marketing

Microsoft Office Suite

Audience Research

Promotion

Social Media

Instagram

Snapchat

Twitter

May 2027

May 2026-July 2026

May 2025-July 2025

August 2024-Present

ELLA EDUCATION

601.101.0011 | ella.education@gmail.com

EDUCATION

The University of Southern Mississippi | Hattiesburg, MS

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education | GPA: 3.7 | May 2027

EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

Hattiesburg Elementary | Hattiesburg, MS

Student Teacher 4th Grade | January 2026 – May 2026

- Assisted in delivering daily instruction for a classroom of 20+ students while supporting differentiated learning needs and individualized education plans (IEPs)
- Designed and implemented engaging lesson activities aligned with curriculum standards that supported active student participation to enhance comprehension and learning outcomes
- Monitored and assessed student progress through assignments and observations to inform instructional improvement
- Collaborated with the lead teacher to adapt instructional strategies for diverse learning styles and behavioral needs

Camp Lake Stephens | Oxford, MS

Camp Counselor | May 2025 – August 2025

- Supervised and mentored a group of 10–12 campers, ensuring safety, engagement, and emotional well-being
- Developed and led daily recreational and educational activities tailored to varying skill levels and interests
- Resolved behavioral conflicts and responded to emergencies with sound judgment and effective problem-solving

WORK EXPERIENCE

Ultra Beauty | Hattiesburg, MS

Cashier | September 2024 – May 2025

- Processed \$2,000+ in daily transactions with accuracy while maintaining compliance with cash-handling procedures
- Delivered high-quality customer service by attentively resolving concerns and facilitating returns, contributing to positive customer experiences
- Increased loyalty program participation through positive customer engagement and thorough product demonstrations

LEADERSHIP AND CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

President, Educators Aspiring for Great Learning Experiences

Delta Delta Delta Sorority

Secretary, Education Major Student Association

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Total Hours Obtained: 126

Downtown Crawfish Jam | Hattiesburg, MS

Hattiesburg Elementary | Hattiesburg, MS

The Library of Hattiesburg, Petal & Forrest County | Hattiesburg, MS

CHRIS COMPUTER

chris.computer@usm.edu • <https://github.com/chris-computer/chris> • (601) 266-4153

EDUCATION

The University of Southern Mississippi

Hattiesburg, MS

Bachelor of Science, Computer Science

May 2027

Minor: Economics

Technical Coursework: Data Structures, Algorithms, Software Engineering, Object-Oriented Programming, Software Development Process, Database Systems

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Languages: C++, HTML, CSS, Java
- Database Management: MySQL, Oracle Database, Microsoft SQL Server
- Application Servers: Java EE, WebSphere, JBoss
- Operating Systems: Windows, Linux, UNIX
- Tools: Git/GitHub, Postman, BitBucket

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

The University of Southern Mississippi

Hattiesburg, MS

Robotics Research Assistant

August 2025 – Present

- Apply foundational knowledge of artificial intelligence and robotics to train machines to perform basic movement and navigation tasks
- Demonstrate critical thinking and diagnostic abilities to analyze system errors and troubleshoot robotic components using programming and circuit analysis concepts
- Utilize attention to detail and organizational skills to conduct routine maintenance and document system performance

APP DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

FullStack Project

January 2025

Source code: github.com/chris-computer/chris

A full-stack web application for a blog about campsites developed with MEAN stack, where registered users can share their experiences with the user community

- Built a full-stack campsite review platform using the MEAN stack (MongoDB, Express.js, Angular, Node.js) that allows users to create, edit, and review campground listings
- Implemented secure user authentication and authorization using Passport.js, supporting session-based login and role-based access control
- Designed RESTful APIs to manage CRUD operations for campsites, comments, and user profiles
- Developed responsive, user-friendly interfaces with Angular to improve usability and accessibility across devices
- Integrated form validation and error handling to enhance application reliability and user experience

WORK EXPERIENCE

The University of Southern Mississippi

Hattiesburg, MS

Resident Assistant

August 2025 – Present

- Manage administrative operations for a residence hall of 50+ students, including budgeting, maintenance coordination, and incident reporting, while ensuring timely follow-up and accurate documentation
- Provide mentorship and support to first-year students by addressing academic and personal concerns and connecting residents to campus resources to promote retention and well-being
- Facilitate community-building events and programs to foster an inclusive and engaging residential environment
- Collaborate with housing staff and campus partners to enforce policies and maintain a safe living environment

Nick Nursing

601.111.1221 | nick.nursing@gmail.com

EDUCATION

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS
Bachelor of Science in Nursing, GPA: 3.8 December 2027

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Forrest General Hospital, ER, Hattiesburg, MS August 2027 – Present

- Assist the medical team in the care of patients in a high-acuity emergency department, supporting triage, monitoring, and patient stabilization
- Participate in emergency response situations, including code blue events, performing CPR and assisting with defibrillation
- Monitor vital signs and report critical changes in patient condition to nursing staff

Pinebelt Association for Families, Community Health Hattiesburg, MS January 2026 – May 2026

- Compiled historical data and employed community outreach strategies to recruit a diverse population of medically underserved individuals, and conducted health assessments to identify needs and improve access to treatment
- Administered vaccinations and provided counseling on topics such as nutrition, exercise, and chronic disease management to promote wellness and disease prevention

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS August 2025 – December 2025

- Applied clinical judgment and critical thinking through simulation-based training using high-fidelity manikins and virtual reality scenarios
- Demonstrated clinical decision-making and teamwork by assessing patient scenarios, prioritizing interventions, and adapting care plans in response to changing simulated patient conditions

CERTIFICATIONS

CNA Certification, Mississippi State Department of Health
CPR and AED Certification, American Heart Association
Stroke Scale Certification, National Institute of Health

License Number: 8883434
Expires: January 2029
Expires: January 2029

WORK EXPERIENCE

Certified Nurse Assistant January 2025 – July 2026

South Central Medical Center, Laurel, MS

- Assisted with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, grooming, and mobility
- Monitored vital signs and reported any changes in residents' condition promptly to the nursing staff, facilitating timely interventions
- Collaborated with nutrition staff to ensure dietary restrictions and meal plan changes were received in a timely manner to prevent feeding schedule interruptions, and kept detailed documentation of nutrition intake and hydration levels

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Student Nurses Association (SNO)
Christian Nurses Fellowship
Southern Pines Animal Shelter, Volunteer

Pranit Polymer

(123) 456-7890 | xyz@email.com
linkedin.com/in/xyz

Professional Summary

Detail-oriented international student pursuing a degree in Polymer Science with hands-on research experience in biodegradable polymers and materials testing. Passionate about applying polymer chemistry knowledge to innovative, sustainable solutions in industry or academia.

Education

The University of Southern Mississippi — Hattiesburg, MS

Bachelor of Science in Polymer Science and Engineering — May 2029

GPA: 4.0

Institute of Chemical Technology — Mumbai, India

Bachelor of Science in Chemistry — May 2026

GPA: 4.0

Skills

Technical

Techniques: FTIR, NMR, DSC, TGA, GPC, Rheology, UV-Vis
Software: ChemDraw, OriginPro, Microsoft Excel, MATLAB

Language

Languages: Hindi (Native), English (Fluent)

Research Experience

Research Assistant, August 2026 – Present

School of Polymer Science and Engineering, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

- Synthesized biodegradable polyesters using ring-opening polymerization for potential biomedical applications, including medical implants
- Characterized material properties using DSC, TGA, FTIR, and GPC to evaluate thermal stability and molecular structure
- Authored a research abstract accepted to the American Chemical Society (ACS) National Meeting, demonstrating scientific communication skills

Work Experience

Laboratory Assistant, January 2024 – April 2026

Innovate Materials Pvt. Ltd. — Mumbai, India

- Conducted quality control testing on polymer-based adhesives to ensure compliance with ISO standards
- Analyzed experimental data and prepared technical reports to support product development and performance validation
- Maintained laboratory inventory and enforced safety protocols, ensuring efficient and compliant lab operations
- Supported quality control testing of polymer-based industrial adhesives while ensuring adherence to ISO standards

Certifications

Google Analytics

Laboratory Safety Certification – Coursera

Leadership and Campus Involvement

Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE)

President, Indian Student Association

Events Director, International Student Association, The University of Southern Mississippi

Franco Finance

228.555.5555

franco.finance@usm.edu

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Proficient in financial statement analysis and ratio analysis to assess credit risk and support lending decisions
- Experience preparing credit reports and evaluating client financial health in a banking environment
- Strong communication skills with 3+ years of customer-facing experience that required translating complex information to diverse audiences

EDUCATION

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Finance, May 2027

GPA: 3.4, President's List (Fall 2025, Spring 2026)

Italian Studies Program

CERTIFICATION

Bloomberg Certified in Equity Essentials and Fixed Income Essentials, June 2026

FINANCE INTERNSHIP

Trustmark National Bank, Jackson, MS

Credit Analyst Intern, May 2026 – August 2026

- Generated financial ratios, using computer programs such as Optimist, to evaluate customers' financial status
- Prepared reports determining the degree of risk of lending to potential clients and supported loan documentation processes
- Corresponded with credit associations and references to acquire client credit background
- Utilized attention to detail to accurately complete loan applications, including credit analysis and summaries of loan requests prior to submitting to the loan committee for approval

WORK EXPERIENCE

Olive Garden, Hattiesburg, MS

Server, October 2024 – Present

- Demonstrated efficiency and attention to detail while delivering high-quality customer service to 50+ guests daily in a fast-paced environment,
- Increased daily specials sales by 5% through persuasive communication and upselling techniques
- Recognized four times for top customer satisfaction scores

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Financial Management Association Symposium, Hattiesburg, MS

August 2025 – October 2025

- Coordinated outreach to senior executives to organize a finance leadership panel, managing communication across multiple stakeholders

Eagle Jam and Crawfish Fest, Hattiesburg, MS

January 2025 – May 2025

- Raised \$4,300 in sponsorships as part of a committee supporting an event for 500+ attendees

LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

Treasurer, Financial Management Association

- Managed organization budget and tracked expenses to ensure financial accountability

Vice President of Pledge Education, Delta Sigma Pi, Business Fraternity

- Led onboarding and development programs for new members

Southern Miss Activities Council

- Collaborated on campus-wide events to enhance student engagement

Ben Baller

111.222.3333
Ben.b.baller@ymail.com

EDUCATION

The University of Southern Mississippi Master of Business Administration GPA:3.7	Hattiesburg, MS May 2027
The University of Southern Mississippi Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences GPA:3.6 Dean's List	Hattiesburg, MS May 2025 Fall 2022, 2023, 2025; Spring 2023, 2025

SALES/MARKETING EXPERIENCE

To The Top Collective, Southern Miss Athletics NIL-Affiliated Student Athlete	Hattiesburg, MS August 2024 - Present
- Develop and execute strategic marketing campaigns to enhance brand visibility and engage a growing fan base through social media and in-person events - Negotiate and secure NIL brand partnerships, leveraging personal influence and market insights to drive successful collaborations - Utilize persuasive sales techniques to attract sponsors and donors by effectively communicating the value proposition of the NIL collective - Demonstrate strong interpersonal and networking skills to facilitate and maintain relationships with sponsors, teammates, and fans to support the collective's growth	

STUDENT ATHLETE

The University of Southern Mississippi NCAA Division 1 Baseball Team	Hattiesburg, MS August 2022 - Present
- Balance full-time athletics and academics, utilizing time management, self-motivation, and commitment to succeed on the field and in the classroom - Mentor and motivate teammates, provide guidance, support, and encouragement to cultivate a winning mindset and team cohesion - Demonstrate dedication, adaptability, and commitment to high-level performance to earn the position of starting right fielder for three consecutive seasons - Selected as team captain for two consecutive seasons for leading by example on and off the field and fostering a culture of accountability, discipline, and resilience - Delivered high-impact performance and established the ability to perform under pressure during two consecutive conference championships and NCAA Super Regional appearances - Engage with the fan base to encourage participation in university athletics, show appreciation for their support, and create an energizing environment for the team and spectators - Cultivate relationships in the community through volunteerism, promoting the value of hard work, kindness, and the importance of character among our youth	

LEADERSHIP and AWARDS

Auburn All-Regional Team	2024
Voted Hardest Working Player	2025
Freshman All-American	2023
Sun Belt Conference, Commissioner's Honor Roll	2024, 2025

Sarah Pavlov

sarah.pavlov@gmail.com | (601) 123-7890

EDUCATION

Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy, July 2027

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM), Hattiesburg, MS

GPA: 3.9

Master's Thesis: The Effects of Parent-Child Emotional Coregulation on Later College Academic Success

Bachelor of Science in Psychology, May 2025

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

GPA: 4.0

Honors College

Honors College Thesis: The Relationship Between Cognitive Triggers and Trauma in Adolescents

CERTIFICATIONS

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Adult/Pediatric CPR and First Aid

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Psychology Intern, August 2024 – January 2025

Merit Health - Wesley Rehabilitation Center, Hattiesburg, MS

- Managed and maintained accurate, detailed treatment plans for a caseload of 5 patients
- Collaborated with an interdisciplinary team to assess client histories and develop evidence-based treatment strategies
- Facilitated psychoeducational group sessions focused on treatment planning and discharge readiness
- Applied therapeutic modalities and interventions to support 5 families in achieving treatment goals

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Researcher, August 2025 – Present

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

- Conduct qualitative and quantitative research on parent-child emotional coregulation and its impact on academic success
- Analyze data using SPSS and apply statistical methods to interpret research findings
- Synthesize research findings to support ongoing thesis development and academic publication efforts

WORK EXPERIENCE

Student Academic Tutor, January 2023 – May 2025

Department of Housing and Residence Life, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

- Provided academic support to students across multiple subjects to enhance academic success and confidence
- Developed individualized learning approaches to meet diverse student needs and promote active engagement in academic activities

LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

Psychology Club

Recruitment Chair, Kappa Delta Sorority

HONORS AND AWARDS

Order of Omega, Greek Honor Society

Kappa Delta Sorority, Model Member of the Year

National Merit Finalist Scholarship

USM Outstanding Freshman of the Year

FEDERAL RESUMÉS

Apply For Government Roles

Federal resumés are more detailed than standard resumés and are required for most positions within the U.S. federal government.

How Federal Resumés Are Different

- Now strictly limited to two pages
- Require detailed descriptions of experience that specifically demonstrate how you meet each requirement and qualification in the job announcement
- Require specific information not found in standard resumés

What to Include

Full Name

Phone Number

Email Address

Education

- Name of school/institution
- Completion date
- Degree type
- Grade point average (GPA)

Work experience with:

- Employer name
- Job title
- Start and end dates (include month and year)
- Hours worked per week
- Salary (if requested)
- Detailed descriptions of responsibilities and accomplishments that explain:
 - » What you did
 - » How you did it
 - » The impact or results

How to Strengthen Your Application

- Use keywords directly from the job announcement.
- Clearly demonstrate your skills and qualifications.
- Highlight impact and results, not just duties.
- Include relevant experience that matches the position.
- Use plain language. Avoid using acronyms and terms that are not easily understood.

Federal applications take time; start early and review carefully before submitting.

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

Document Your Academic Experience

A CV is a comprehensive record of your academic, research and professional accomplishments.

When to Use a CV

- Graduate school applications
- Academic or research positions
- Fellowships, scholarships or grants
- Some healthcare or scientific roles

What to Include

- Education
- Research experience
- Publications and presentations
- Teaching or clinical experience
- Honors and awards
- Professional affiliations

How to Structure Your CV

- No page limit (length varies by experience)
- Organized into clear categories
- Listed in reverse chronological order within sections

Tips for Success

- Prioritize the most relevant information first
- Keep formatting consistent and easy to read
- Update regularly as you gain experience
- Tailor sections based on your goals

Start building your CV early and update it as you complete research, presentations and coursework.

WRITE A COVER LETTER THAT GETS YOU NOTICED

Show employers why you're the right fit. A cover letter introduces you to an employer and explains why you're a strong candidate for the role. Your resumé shows what you've done. Your cover letter explains why it matters.

Step 1: Know Your Purpose

A strong cover letter should:

- Introduce who you are
- Explain why you're interested in the role
- Show how your skills match the position

Think of it as your professional "story" on one page.

Step 2: Structure Your Letter

Your cover letter should include four key sections:

HEADER

- Match your resumé header
- Include your name, email and phone

OPENING PARAGRAPH (WHY YOU'RE WRITING)

- State the position you're applying for
- Mention where you found the opportunity
- Explain your interest in the role or organization

Make a strong first impression immediately.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S) (WHY YOU'RE A MATCH)

- Highlight your most relevant experience
- Connect your skills to the job description
- Show how you can contribute to the organization

Focus on what you can do for the employer, not just what you've done.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH (NEXT STEP)

- Express interest in an interview
- Reaffirm your fit
- Provide your contact information
- Thank the reader

Step 3: Write With Purpose

Strong cover letters contain the following qualities:

- Specific – tailored to the job
- Clear – easy to read and focused
- Confident – positive and professional

Avoid:

- Repeating your resumé word-for-word
- Generic statements
- Unclear or overly long sentences

Your goal is to make the employer want to learn more about you.

Step 4: See It in Action

Strong Example Opening:

"I am applying for the marketing intern position at XYZ Company advertised on LinkedIn. I am drawn to your organization's focus on innovation and would welcome the opportunity to contribute my experience in digital marketing and content creation."

Strong Example Skill Connection:

"Through my internship experience, I developed skills in data analysis and client communication, which align with your need for a candidate who can translate insights into actionable strategies."

Step 5: Make It Stronger

Before submitting:

- Tailor your letter to the job
- Use keywords from the job description
- Keep it to one page
- Proofread carefully

Every cover letter should be unique to the position.



TAKE ACTION

- Draft your cover letter using this structure.
- Customize it for each application.
- Have it reviewed by Career Services.

A strong cover letter helps you stand out before the interview.

Sarah Pavlov

sarah.pavlov@gmail.com | (601) 123-7890

August 28, 2026

John Doe
Hiring Manager and Clinical Director
Pine Belt Mental Health Resources
1000 South XYZ Avenue
Hattiesburg, MS 39402

Dear Director Doe:

Header

Double-Space

Current Date

Double-Space

Addressee

Double-Space

Salutation

I am writing to express my interest in the Crisis Community Support Specialist position with Pine Belt Mental Health. As a graduate student in Marriage and Family Therapy at The University of Southern Mississippi with hands-on experience in clinical and community mental health settings, I am eager to contribute to your mission of providing high-quality, person-centered care to the Pine Belt community.

Through my academic training and clinical experience, I have developed a strong foundation in assessment, treatment planning, and psychoeducational support. In my role as a mental health assistant, I conducted intake assessments, collaborated with interdisciplinary teams, and facilitated group sessions focused on treatment planning and social-emotional development. These experiences have strengthened my ability to support clients in crisis while applying evidence-based interventions.

Additionally, my internship experience with Merit Health-Wesley Rehabilitation Center provided direct exposure to the responsibilities outlined in the job post. I assisted in maintaining treatment plans, participated in team-based care coordination, and supported outpatient psychoeducation services. This experience has prepared me to transition seamlessly into a crisis services role while contributing to effective, client-centered care.

Thank you for considering my application. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss how my academic background and clinical experience would contribute to this role and the organization. I can be reached via email at Sarah.pavlov@gmail.com or phone at (601) 123-7890. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Pavlov

Sarah Pavlov

Closing Paragraph

Double-Space

Signature if submitting a physical copy Signature

is not needed for electronic application

Full name typed out

SECURE STRONG REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDATION LETTERS TO SUPPORT YOUR APPLICATION

Your references can confirm your skills, character and work ethic and help you stand out in the hiring process. Employers and graduate programs often rely on references to validate what you've shared in your resumé and interviews. Preparing early ensures you have strong advocates ready when you need them.

Securing Your References

Start one or two months before you anticipate needing references. Choose the right people. Select three or four individuals who:

- Know you well
- Can speak to your knowledge, skills and abilities
- Have observed your work or performance
- Strong options include professors, academic advisors, supervisors (past or current), and internship or research mentors

Ask professionally.

Whenever possible, Schedule a meeting or conversation, Bring a copy of your resumé, and Share your career goals and plans. Then ask, "Would you feel comfortable serving as a positive reference for me?" This gives them the opportunity to say, "Yes," confidently or decline if they can't provide a strong recommendation.

Managing Your References

Once someone agrees to be a reference, maintain the relationship and communicate clearly.

Give advance notice:

- Request permission to include as a job reference two or three weeks in advance.
- Request letters of recommendation six to eight weeks in advance.

Keep in mind:

- Faculty may not be available during breaks or the summer.
- Deadlines vary depending on applications.
- Provide what they need.
- Help your reference write a strong letter by including the following:
 - Your resumé
 - The job or program description
 - Key skills or experiences to highlight
 - Submission instructions and deadlines

Follow up professionally.

- Send a reminder one week before the deadline.
- Thank them after submission.
- Professional communication reflects your responsibility and respect.

Reference List Basics

When an employer requests references, provide a separate document.

Format your reference list:

- Match your resumé header
- Use a consistent format
- Include:
 - Name
 - Job Title
 - Organization
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address

Best practices

- Only submit references when requested.
- Always ask permission before listing someone.
- Keep your list updated.

Sample Email Request

Subject: Request for Letter of Recommendation

Dear Dr. Lee,

I hope you are doing well. I am currently applying for [job/graduate program] and would like to ask if you would be willing to serve [as a reference or provide a letter of recommendation]. My application deadline is [date]. I have included my resumé and additional information about the opportunity to assist you. Thank you for your time and support. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Best,
[Your Name]

TAKE ACTION

- ☑ Identify three or four potential references this semester.
- ☑ Reach out and ask early.
- ☑ Prepare a reference list document.
- ☑ Follow up and maintain relationships.

Strong references don't happen at the last minute; start early and stay organized.

Sarah Pavlov

Sarah.pavlov@gmail.com | (601) 123-7890

REFERENCES

Sorin Eagle, Executive Director of Housing and Residence Life

Department of Housing and Residence Life, The University of Southern Mississippi

Work: 601.111.1111

housingdirector@usm.edu

Dr. Maslow Needi, Training Director

Department of Psychology, The University of Southern Mississippi

Work: 601.555.5555

mneedi@usm.edu

Dr. Dew Goode, Clinical Director

Merit Health Wesley Rehabilitation Center

Work: 601.333.3333

mcole@mhw.ms.us.gov

PORTFOLIOS WITH PURPOSE

Show What You Can Do

Think portfolios are only for artists or designers? Think again. Whether you are studying business, education, healthcare, engineering, or anything in between, a portfolio is one of the most powerful ways to showcase your skills, experiences and impact. Your portfolio helps employers see not just what you’ve done, but what you’re capable of doing next.

Why a Portfolio Matters

A strong portfolio helps you:

- Stand out in a competitive job market
- Show, not just tell, your skills through real examples
- Highlight your growth over time.
- Tell your story with confidence and clarity
- Make a lasting impression in interviews and networking conversations

Build Your Portfolio With Purpose

Keep these best practices in mind:

- Tailor it to your goals. Focus on work that reflects your career interests and target roles
- Start early and keep adding. Save projects, presentations and experiences as you go
- Be selective. Include your strongest and most relevant work, not everything
- Add context. Briefly explain each piece: What was the goal? What was your role? What did you learn?
- Keep it updated. Refresh regularly as you gain new experiences
- Practice talking about it. Your portfolio should support your story. Be ready to confidently walk someone through it

What to Include

Your portfolio might include the following:

- Professional summary or personal statement
- Resumé
- Work samples (projects, presentations, research, creative work, case studies, etc.)
- Reflections or project descriptions
- Certifications, awards or micro-credentials
- Letters of recommendation or evaluations
- Relevant coursework or transcripts
- Leadership, involvement or service experiences
- Professional development (trainings, workshops, conferences)

DIGITAL VS. PHYSICAL PORTFOLIOS

PHYSICAL PORTFOLIO	DIGITAL PORTFOLIO
Best for in-person settings like interviews or career fairs	Best for applications, networking and virtual interviews
Printed binder or organized document	Website, PDF or online platform (LinkedIn, Canva, Wix, etc.)
Easy to bring and present	Easily shared anytime, anywhere
Limited customization	Highly customizable and visually engaging
Static (no multimedia)	Can include videos, links and interactive elements

READY TO BUILD YOURS

Your portfolio is more than a collection of work; it’s a reflection of your potential. Start building now and use it to confidently show employers what you bring to the table.

Need help getting started? Career Services can guide you every step of the way.

INTERVIEW WITH CONFIDENCE

Prepare and Practice

Interviews are your opportunity to go beyond your resumé and show employers who you are, what you bring, and why you're a strong fit. Preparation, confidence and follow-through can turn an interview into a job offer.

Step 1

PREPARE BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Preparation builds confidence, and confidence shows.

Research the organization and role:

- Review the company website, mission and values
- Understand the job description and key responsibilities
- Identify how your skills and experiences align

Know your Resumé:

- Be ready to explain your experiences clearly
- Connect your skills to what the employer is looking for
- Prepare examples that show your impact

Practice common questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Describe a challenge you overcame.

Prepare questions to ask:

- What does success look like in this role?
- How would you describe the team or culture?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?

Plan your logistics:

- Confirm time, format and location (or link)
- Choose and prepare your outfit
- Plan to arrive 10–15 minutes early

Step 2

PERFORM DURING THE INTERVIEW

This is your opportunity to demonstrate your skills in real time.

Start strong:

- Greet with confidence (smile, eye contact)
- Introduce yourself clearly
- Show enthusiasm for the opportunity

Communicate clearly and confidently:

- Listen carefully before answering
- Be concise and specific
- Use examples to demonstrate your skills

Show your value. Employers want to know:

- Can you communicate effectively?
- Can you solve problems?
- Can you work with others?

Use your experiences to answer these questions through your examples.

Use strong nonverbal communication:

- Maintain eye contact
- Sit up straight.
- Avoid distractions (phone, fidgeting)

Ask thoughtful questions:

- Show curiosity and preparation
- Engage in a conversation, not just an interview

Close with confidence:

- Thank the interviewer
- Restate your interest
- Highlight 1–2 strengths that fit the role

Step 3

FOLLOW UP AFTER THE INTERVIEW

What you do after matters just as much.

Send a thank-you message within 24 hours:

- Personalize it
- Reference something from your conversation
- Reinforce your interest

Reflect on your performance:

- What went well?
- What could I improve?
- What did I learn?

Follow up professionally:

- If no timeline is given, follow up after five to seven business days
- Be polite and concise



TAKE ACTION

- ☑ Practice answering three common interview questions.
- ☑ Prepare two or three questions to ask an employer.
- ☑ Schedule an interview prep appointment with Career Services.

**Preparation + Practice + Confidence =
Stronger Interviews**

TURN YOUR EXPERIENCE INTO STRONG INTERVIEW ANSWERS

Tell your story with confidence and purpose. You've built skills through your experiences; now it's time to talk about them.

In interviews, employers want to know the following:

- **What have you done?**
- **What did you learn?**
- **What impact did you make?**

Your goal is to clearly connect your experiences to the skills employers are looking for.

Use the STAR Method

A strong answer tells a clear story.

STAR = YOUR INTERVIEW FORMULA

S – Situation

- What was happening? Give context.

T – Task

- What were you responsible for?

A – Action

- What did you do? (focus on YOU)

R – Result

- What happened? What did you learn?

Keep it clear, concise, and focused on your impact.

Example: Before and After

Weak Answer:

"I worked on a group project and helped my team."

Strong STAR Answer:

"In a group project (Situation), I was responsible for organizing our research (Task). I coordinated meetings and delegated tasks to keep everyone on track (Action), which helped us complete the project early and receive a high grade (Result)."

Connect Skills to Your Story

COMMUNICATION

Interview Question: "Tell me about a time you communicated effectively."

Strong Example:

- Explained information clearly to customers or teammates
- Adapted your message for different audiences

CRITICAL THINKING

Interview Question: "Describe a time you solved a problem."

Strong Example:

- Identified a challenge
- Evaluated options
- Implemented a solution

TEAMWORK

Interview Question: "Tell me about working on a team."

Strong Example:

- Collaborated with others
- Resolved conflict
- Helped the team achieve a goal

PROFESSIONALISM

Interview Question: "Describe a time you handled responsibility."

Strong Example:

- Met deadlines
- Managed priorities
- Maintained a positive attitude

LEADERSHIP

Interview Question: "Tell me about a time you led a project."

Strong Example:

- Took initiative
- Motivated others
- Delivered results

Build Your Answers

- Choose two or three experiences (job, class, pathway, organization).
- Match each experience with key skills.
- Practice telling your story using the STAR method.
- Don't memorize; practice speaking naturally and clearly.

Interview Success Tips

- Be specific—use real examples.
- Focus on your actions and contributions.
- Show what you learned.
- Keep answers clear and concise
- Practice out loud before your interview.

TAKE ACTION

- Create a Big Interview account.
- Practice your answers using the STAR method.
- Record yourself or practice with a friend.
- Schedule a mock interview with Career Services.

Confidence comes from preparation; start practicing today.

PHONE AND VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

Make a Strong Impression Anywhere

Today's interviews often happen before you ever meet in person. Whether by phone or video, your ability to communicate clearly, present yourself professionally, and manage technology matters just as much as your qualifications.

Phone Interview Tips

- Choose a quiet, distraction-free environment.
- Silence notifications and eliminate background noise.
- Keep your resumé, notes and job description nearby.
- Sound professional:
 - Answer the phone professionally ("Hello, this is [Name]").
 - Speak clearly, at a steady pace, and avoid filler words.
 - Smile while speaking; it positively affects your tone.
- Be prepared:
 - Have a fully charged phone and strong signal.
 - Keep a pen and paper for notes.
 - Use a professional voicemail message in case you miss the call.
- Stay engaged:
 - Listen carefully and avoid interrupting.
 - Ask for clarification, if needed.
 - Avoid speakerphone unless necessary.

Web-Based (Virtual) Interview Tips

- Prepare your technology:
 - Test your camera, microphone and Internet connection in advance.
 - Log in 5-10 minutes early.
 - Use a laptop or stable device positioned at eye level.
- Create a professional environment:
 - Choose a clean, distraction-free background.
 - Ensure proper lighting (face clearly visible, light in front of you).
 - Avoid virtual backgrounds unless necessary, as they can be distracting.
- Present yourself professionally:
 - Dress professionally from head to toe.
 - Use minimal movements and avoid fidgeting.
 - Maintain good posture and professional body language.
- Engage on camera:
 - Look at the camera to simulate eye contact.
 - Speak clearly and allow for slight pauses (to account for delays).
 - Nod and react naturally to show engagement.
- Minimize distractions:
 - Silence phone notifications and close unnecessary tabs.
 - Let others around you know you are interviewing.
 - Keep materials nearby but avoid shuffling papers.



Career Services has interview rooms for students who need a quiet, professional space.
Call 601.266.4153
to reserve a room.

EVALUATING AND NEGOTIATING YOUR JOB OFFER

Receiving a job offer is exciting, but before you accept, take time to evaluate the full package and make an informed decision. Your first offer is important, and how you respond can impact your long-term career success.

Before You Respond, Take Time to Consider

Do not feel pressured to accept immediately. Thank the employer and ask for a timeline to decide.

Example response:

"Thank you for this offer. I'm excited about the opportunity and would like a few days to review the details. When would you like my final decision?"

UNDERSTAND THE FULL COMPENSATION PACKAGE

Salary is only one part of your offer. Be sure to evaluate the total compensation package, which may include:

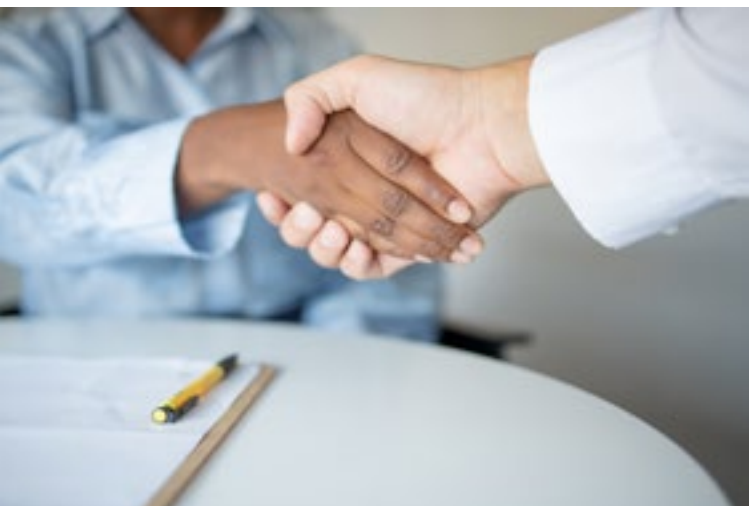
- Health, dental and vision insurance
- Retirement plans (401(k), pensions)
- Paid time off (vacation, sick leave, holidays)
- Flexible schedules or remote work options
- Tuition reimbursement or professional development
- Bonuses or relocation assistance

A lower salary may still be a stronger offer if benefits are better.

Research Your Market Value

Use tools like Glassdoor, Salary.com, or LinkedIn Salary. Consider:

- Location (cost of living varies)
- Industry standards
- Your experience, skills and qualifications



When and How to Negotiate

DO	DON'T
Wait until you receive a formal offer before negotiating	Negotiate during early interviews
Express appreciation and enthusiasm	Accept the offer and then try to renegotiate
Be honest, realistic and professional	Use aggressive or demanding language
Focus on your value and relevant skills	

Example Response:

"Based on my research and experience, I was hoping for a salary closer to [range]. Is there flexibility in the offer?"

USE A SALARY RANGE (NOT A SINGLE NUMBER)

Provide a range that reflects:

- Industry standards
- Your minimum acceptable salary
- A realistic top-end target

Example:

"Based on my research, I'm seeking a salary in the range of \$45,000-\$55,000."

Once You Accept

- Formally accept in writing (email is acceptable).
- Notify other employers and withdraw applications.
- Thank everyone who supported your job search.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Accepting an offer is a professional commitment. Decline other offers respectfully and be confident in your decision.

FINDING YOUR FIT

Choosing the Right Organization for You

Choosing the right job is more than salary; it's about finding a workplace where you can grow, contribute and succeed.

3-PART FIT CHECK

YOU

Know Yourself First

Before evaluating an employer, identify these things:

- Your priorities
(growth, stability, flexibility)
- Your preferred work environment
- Your long-term goals

ROLE

Evaluate the position itself.

- Responsibilities and expectations
- Alignment with your skills and interests
- Learning and advancement opportunities
- Compensation, schedule and flexibility

ORGANIZATION

Research the Organization

- Company mission vs. employee experience
- Leadership and communication style
- Look beyond the website. Check reviews on Glassdoor or LinkedIn.

WATCH FOR FIT SIGNALS

Ask Strategic Questions

Use the interview to evaluate:

- Culture
- Expectations
- Growth opportunities

Make a Thoughtful Decision

A strong fit supports:

- Career growth
- Job satisfaction
- Long-term success

Green Flags	Red Flags
Clear expectations	Disorganization
Support for growth	Lack of transparency
Respectful communication	Negative workplace culture



NEXT STEP: GRADUATE SCHOOL

Making an Informed Decision About Your Future

As graduation approaches, many students face a critical question: Should I enter the workforce or go to graduate school? There is no one-size-fits-all answer. The right decision depends on your goals, your field, and how you define success.

Should You Go to Graduate School?

Graduate school may be a good choice if:

- Your desired career requires an advanced degree (e.g., counseling, medicine, law, research)
- You have a clear career goal that requires specialized training
- You are motivated to deepen your knowledge in a specific area

You may want to gain experience first if:

- You are unsure about your career direction
- You want to strengthen your application (experience, GPA, test scores)
- You want to confirm your interest in the field before committing

Graduate school should be a strategic decision, not a default next step.

Why Pursue Graduate School?

Graduate education can help you:

- Develop advanced knowledge and expertise
- Qualify for roles that require advanced credentials
- Increase career opportunities and earning potential
- Build a professional and academic network
- Gain specialized experience in research, leadership or practice

How to Choose the Right Program

Not all programs are the same. Evaluate options carefully based on:

- Program outcomes (job placement rates, licensure pass rates)
- Cost and funding opportunities (assistantships, scholarships, stipends)
- Faculty expertise and research opportunities
- Location, format and flexibility (online, hybrid, in-person)

The best program isn't always the highest-ranked; it's the one that aligns with your goals.

Before You Apply

Start preparing early, ideally 6-12 months in advance:

- Research programs and admission requirements
- Prepare for required exams (GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.)
- Identify mentors or faculty for guidance
- Draft and revise your personal statement
- Request letters of recommendation early

Application Process

Stay organized and intentional:

- Track deadlines and required materials
- Submit applications early when possible
- Follow up with recommenders
- Monitor application portals for updates

Consider the Investment

Graduate school is a significant commitment of time, money and energy.

Evaluate:

- Tuition and fees
- Living expenses
- Potential student loan debt
- Lost income, if not working full-time

Ask yourself: Will this degree improve my career opportunities? Is the return on investment (ROI) worth the cost?

Make a Thoughtful Decision

The best choice is one that aligns with:

- Your career goals
- Your financial situation
- Your readiness and motivation

Choose the path that prepares you for a long-term, successful journey, not just the next step.

Need Help Deciding?

Career Services can help you:

- Explore graduate school options
- Review application materials
- Evaluate whether graduate school aligns with your goals

Visit usm.edu/career-services or call 601.266.4153.

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, typical of notebook or composition paper. The background is white, and there are no margins, text, or other markings present.

NOTES

[illegible]

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