

CAREER READINESS

“First Impressions Count”



Volunteer State Community College
Office of Career Services
1480 Nashville Pike
Gallatin, TN 37148
615-230-3307

Soft Skills, Creating a Personal and Professional Brand, Elevating Your Marketability



Self-Assess, and determine needed areas of improvement

- Performance, Image, Exposure
 - Confidence, time management, water cooler talk, come early-stay late, Cooperative Education/ Internship, Service Learning- Community Engagement
- Personal and Professional Brand/Self Assess
 - LinkedIn, Vocabulary, Soft Skills
- Soft Skills
 - Eye Contact, Stride, Hand shake, Elevator Speech, Communication, Flexibility, Dress to Impress, Humility, Diversity & Inclusion, Creativity, Technical Skills
- Communication Vehicles
 - Cover letters, Resumes-Employer first-match to need, Applications for Employment, Portfolios, References)
- Interview do's and don'ts
 - Telephone, Virtual, Face to Face, Follow up-thank you!

PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD: MAKE EYE CONTACT AND OFFER A GOOD, FIRM HANDSHAKE.

SPEAK UP: INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO VENDORS AND "PRACTICE" YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK: ASK FOR BUSINESS CARDS AND FOLLOW UP WITH POTENTIAL MENTORS AND PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS.

LEARN BY DOING: INQUIRE ABOUT INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AN ORGANIZATION MAY OFFER.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS: DRESS FOR THE CAREER YOU INTEND TO ENTER UPON GRADUATION.



Employers are looking for employees to be Career Ready — meaning they know how to use their talents, strengths, and interests. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has identified eight key competencies for career readiness.

1. **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints.

Social Networking

Be extremely careful when engaging in social network sites such as MYSPACE and FACEBOOK, TWITTER and Blogs. Be sure to communicate in ways that are positive and produce an image of yourself as someone in whom a prospective employer might show interest. Overzealous comments about bragging about inappropriate exploits, cheating in class, sensationalizing verbiage, and/or suggestive photos can damage your reputation and ruin future employment opportunities. Blogs and TWITTER are also communication networks where you must communicate carefully. Today, there are numerous businesses that hire student interns to review prospective employees who use social networking sites. Such investigation may keep you in the hunt for a particular job or quickly remove your candidacy. LinkedIn is a well-recognized social media vehicle through which individuals may develop and share professional profile information with potential employers. Create a professional, consistent "portrait" that captures the key words, skills, abilities and titles that you want potential employers to know about you. Make appropriate changes to reflect interest in potential employers. "Google" yourself; What will a potential employer see?



2. Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image.

3. Oral/Written Communication: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and out of the organization.

4. Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

5. Information Technology Application: Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task.

6. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.

7. Career Management: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas of professional growth.

8. Global/Intercultural Fluency: Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates, openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.





Interview Etiquette

Be on time.

Or arrive 15 minutes early. Being late says you're disorganized and not very good at time management.

Turn off your cell phone.

And leave it in your car. You don't want to be distracted as you offer your expertise to a potential employer.

Respect those already employed.

It doesn't matter whether you're interviewing to be an entry-level employee or the next CEO of an organization. Be polite to everyone you meet, including the receptionist. You never know who may be asked, "So, what did you think of this candidate?"

Dress like you mean it.

Dress in business attire, even if you're interviewing in a business-casual office.

Be handy with your handshake.

Hand out. Clasp the extended hand firmly, but gently. Pump twice. Release.

Practice ahead of time with a friend.

Have a presence.

Speak well, make eye contact, sit up straight.

Say thank you. Twice.

At the end of the interview and by email to each person who interviewed you immediately afterward.

Dress for Success: Women and Men

What do you wear to a career fair?
To a job interview?
To your first day on the job?



Look professional—first impressions count. **HERE'S WHAT TO WEAR:**

What to Wear: Women



SUIT: Wear a conservative suit or conservative dress in black, navy, or dark gray. Skirt length should fall just at or barely above the knee. Pants should be hemmed to skim the top of your shoes.



SHIRT: Pair your suit with a white or light colored blouse, a nice sweater, or a shell.



HOSIERY AND SHOES: Hosiery should be plain or neutral. Shoes should be a closed-toe pump or low-heeled shoe that matches your suit.



ACCESSORIES: Wear a minimum amount of jewelry: small earrings, a watch, a ring.



GROOMING: Have a well-groomed hairstyle and wear minimal and natural-looking makeup. Your fingernails should be clean. Wear a light polish or no polish.



WHAT NOT TO WEAR: Short skirts, shorts, see-through or low-cut shirts, sandals, clanking or large jewelry

What to Wear: Men



SUIT: A conservative, two-piece suit in black, navy, or dark gray is appropriate. Khakis, if business casual is called for.



SHIRT: Pair it with a long-sleeved white or light blue tailored shirt



TIE: Choose a conservative tie. Look for something with stripes or a small pattern.



SHOES: Wear polished dress shoes, dark socks, and a belt to match your shoes.



ACCESSORIES: Wear a minimum amount of jewelry: a watch, a ring.



GROOMING: Have a well-groomed hairstyle and clean fingernails.



WHAT NOT TO WEAR: Shorts, jeans, t-shirt, wild tie

Benefits and Services for students and alumni

- ◇ ON CAMPUS RECRUITMENT
- ◇ CAREER DEVELOPMENT PREPAREDNESS
- ◇ JOB SEARCH STRATEGY
- ◇ RESUME AND COVER LETTER PREPARATION
- ◇ CAREER COACHING
- ◇ JOB INTERVIEW SKILL BUILDING
- ◇ AREA JOB POSTING WEBSITE:
◇ www.volstate.edu/areajobs



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NOTES:

- ⇒ Did you perform a Self-Assessment?
- ⇒ Can you demonstrate all 8 Career Competencies?
- ⇒ Have you reviewed your Social Networking Presence?
- ⇒ Are you dressed for success?

Questions? Concerns?

We would like to invite you to contact us. How can we help you?

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www.volstate.edu/careerplacement

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