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So You're Graduating, What Now? [A Graduate's Guide to Job Searching]

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STEPS TO PROFESSIONALISM

Don't graduate college without a plan! Venturing into the professional world can seem stressful and even daunting, but being proactive and following a few simple rules will get you on your way to a career in no time! This pamphlet is full of advice and tips for the college graduate or anyone who is job searching. Take a look and good luck!



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ethan Sykes and Leslie Poynter are both graduate students in the Student Affairs program at Western Kentucky University. They are also both employed at WKU. Ethan is an Assistant Residence Hall Director for a male residence hall. Leslie is a graduate assistant for the Downing Student Union. Ethan and Leslie are both beginning their professional careers in their chosen field just like you, and they hope that you find this brochure enjoyable and informative!

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So You're Graduating, What Now?



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The Graduate's Guide to Beginning a Professional Career

Begin Your Career!



Many college graduates find themselves unsure of where to go upon finishing school. There are many elements to consider and prepare for as you

enter the professional world. This pamphlet, along with the career services office on your campus, will help you take the steps to successfully begin your career.

The Search

Before you begin your job search, you first must know what career field you desire and if your skills and knowledge fit. Attending job fairs or placement exchanges, talking with professionals, and completing internships will aid in your decision. You also must consider aspects like a company's values, their mission, and location.

Be proactive. The earlier you begin researching careers and programs the sooner you can send your resume and apply for positions.

Resume Building

Building a resume is a crucial part of beginning your career. A good way to develop your resume is to start by creating a "running resume." This is a list of all of your experiences, like campus involvement, professional experience, and academic achievements. A running resume makes it easy to tailor your resume to fit each job you apply for. Your experiences should match the qualifications for the position.

How your resume looks can determine if an employer will hire you. Choose a professional format and print it on resume paper. Have several professionals review and critique your resume before you send it out.

Always include a cover letter along with your resume. A cover letter is a personalized message to the potential employer that highlights your experiences and qualifications. This is where you explain why you are the best candidate for the position.

Preparing for an Interview

It is important to prepare in advance when you know you have an interview. Research the organization's mission, values, programs, and initiatives. It is also smart to know who is interviewing you and what his or her title is. Lastly, carefully read over the job description of the position you are interviewing for. Write down any questions you have for the employer.

Dress to Impress

The way you dress for an interview can be a determining factor in if you are hired or not. You must look professional and put together, but you do not want your clothes to be overpowering. A navy or black suit over a crisp, white shirt is tasteful for men and women.



Fingernails and beards should be trimmed and clothes should be clean and ironed. Strong colognes and over-the-top makeup or jewelry are not recommended.

First impressions are important! Remember to have a strong handshake, smile, and be yourself.

Follow Up

After an interview it is crucial that you follow up promptly. A hand written thank you note is personal and will leave a lasting impression on the employer. An email thanking the interview for his or her time is also acceptable.

