

## II

### STUDENT CORNER



## HOW TO FIND AND LAND A JOB

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### ABSTRACT

Securing employment is the final hurdle for students as they transition from college life to the professional world, and effective preparation and execution are essential. This article will equip students with actionable strategies for landing a job. A roadmap for success is presented including methods to identify open positions and tips for standing out during the interview process. Guidelines are presented for creating resumes and cover letters that effectively align skills and experiences to meet potential employers' needs. Professional email communication is also highlighted. By integrating these techniques, students will jumpstart the next phase of their career development and professional growth.

### KEYWORDS

job application process, interviewing skills, resume writing, university career center, professional organizations, LinkedIn, evaluating job offers, cover letters and email exchanges

## CHAPTER I

### THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Landing your dream job or internship is hard work. Not only is the application process time-consuming and tedious, but the additional steps following the first round require polished soft skills in addition to the technical proficiencies that you have mastered through your studies. This section provides an overview of what to expect from the application process. Details on the application documents are presented in subsequent chapters.

**TABLE 1.1.** Steps to the application process

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Apply	Interview	Site Visit	Accept the Offer

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## STEP 1: APPLYING

Before you can land the interview, you must identify positions of interest to you. There are numerous resources, and you should make use of as many as possible. This section outlines the most common methods and guidelines for making the most of each.

### *Methods to identify open positions*

#### University career services

Your university's Career Center is the best place to start when searching for an internship or entry-level position. Most Career Centers will have a university specific job search platform open only to their students and alumni. Oftentimes, alumni will reach out to their alma mater to directly select students and arrange for on-campus interviews. Therefore, you should use this resource as the best way to connect with prospective employers—and be one step ahead of other applicants. The most common platform is Handshake, which allows students and alumni to upload resumes, search for jobs and internships, apply for positions, register for career events, and manage an online profile available to potential employers. Other options typically available through your Career Center include career fairs, on-campus interviews, and industry meetups and info sessions. If you have not scheduled an appointment with a career advisor at your university, do so immediately to identify all resources available to you.

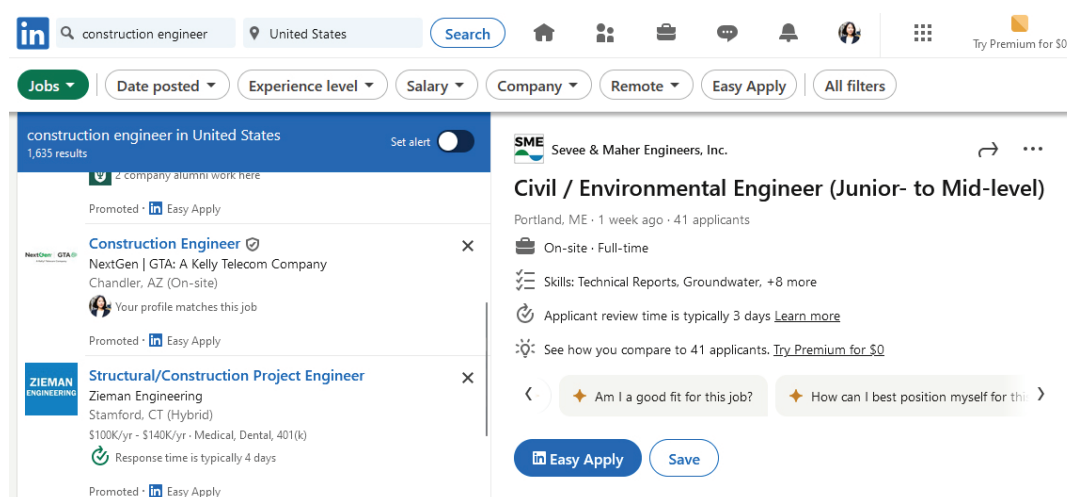
#### LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an excellent reference for identifying available positions in your area. Figure 1.1 shows the job search interface. In addition to simply searching for open positions, you should sign up for Job Alerts to receive emails when LinkedIn identifies newly posted positions relevant to you.

#### Professional Organization Websites

In addition to networking at the local level, professional organizations typically have career resources available on their national websites. These websites will give you access to jobs specific to your industry and are often only accessible to organization members. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 provide examples of the job search features available within the American Society of Civil

**FIGURE 1.1** The Jobs feature within LinkedIn.





Engineers (ASCE) and American Institute of Architects (AIA) member portals, respectively. The AIA portal also offers a free resume evaluation.

### Networking

A network is a web of personal and professional contacts that can assist you with your job search and career goals. Most positions on the market are not advertised, so the importance of a vibrant network cannot be overstated. During your time as a student, you should work on developing your network using the following avenues:

1. **Career fairs:** In addition to helping land employment; career fairs are an excellent way to practice your networking skills by providing quick access to a large number of company recruiters. Your institution's Career Center will likely organize on-campus career fairs with a focus on recent graduates and interns, but you can also explore local career fairs for extra exposure.
2. **Program alumni:** Try reaching out to members of your department's Board of Advisors with similar interests and career paths. Another option is to use the search function in LinkedIn to identify alumni with similar interests.
3. **Members of professional organizations:** Joining a professional organization such as the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS), American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), and the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) early in your student career will provide an excellent opportunity to network with professionals within your community. Many organizations also have a Young Professionals Division. Events hosted by professional organizations are a great opportunity to meet new people and learn about what life after college looks like in your field. Consider serving on the executive board of your student organization and working to head-up joint events with the local chapters and young professional members. Such events will make excellent bullet points for your early-career resume.
4. **Professional fraternities:** Many universities support professional-social fraternities such as Alpha Rho Chi for architecture students and Theta Tau for engineering students. Membership will provide access to alumni, professional development activities, and a lifelong network of colleagues in your field.
5. **Family and friends:** Do not underestimate the networking potential within your current set of contacts. Do you have an uncle in consulting? What about the mother of a close friend? Spend a few minutes brainstorming anyone who could be in your professional network (e.g. family members, family friends, congregation members, advisors, past employers, classmates, coaches, neighbors).

### Application documents

Once you have identified available positions of interest to you, you will need to submit a formal application. Documents that may be requested include:

- Resume/CV
- Cover Letter
- Unofficial Transcript
- Supporting Documents

Resumes are covered in more detail in Chapter 2 and cover letters in Chapter 3.

**FIGURE 1.2** Job search platform for ASCE members

**Your blueprint for a career in civil engineering**

Keyword (e.g. Engineering Technician) Location (e.g. Orlando) Within 10 miles Search Jobs

Browse Jobs By: **Specialty** Location Position Type [View all](#)

Architectural Engineering <sup>2</sup>	Geotechnical Engineering <sup>30</sup>	Water Resources Engineering <sup>12</sup>
Coasts, Oceans, Ports & Waterways <sup>2</sup>	Planning & Development <sup>14</sup>	Water, Wastewater & Stormwater Infrastructure <sup>51</sup>
Construction Engineering <sup>26</sup>	Structural Engineering <sup>67</sup>	Other <sup>42</sup>
Energy Engineering <sup>6</sup>	Surveying & Geomatics <sup>5</sup>	
Engineering Mechanics <sup>3</sup>	Transportation Engineering <sup>32</sup>	
Environmental Engineering <sup>35</sup>	Utility Engineering <sup>14</sup>	

**FIGURE 1.3** Job search platform for AIA members

**Free resume review offer**

Job seekers with a registered AIA Career Center account now have access to a FREE one-time resume evaluation. Sign in and visit your profile page to take advantage of this new service.

Home Jobs Your Profile Resources [Help](#) [Sign In](#)

**Find Your Next Job**

Keywords Location Search All Locations Search Jobs

[Advanced Search](#)

## STEP 2. INTERVIEWING

Once your application packet has grabbed the attention of a hiring manager, you will be invited to interview. The interview process is typically multistep and is often the most intimidating to students. The good news is that practice makes perfect. This section outlines a typical interview process and tips for success during the process.

## ***The Interview Process***

Once you are selected for an interview, you will likely be contacted by the hiring manager through email. Figure 1.4 shows what such an email might look like. If an email response is required, it should be prompt (less than 24 hours), brief, and professional.

### ***Screening Interview***

Oftentimes, companies will conduct an initial round of screening interviews. This type of interview will be brief, usually conducted by phone, and designed to screen numerous candidates for basic qualifications. Expect questions about your educational background, work history, and knowledge of the company. Therefore, you should prepare just as you would for a formal interview using the guidelines in the following section. Note that not all companies will perform an initial screening interview.

### ***Formal Interview***

After passing the screening interview, you will be invited for a more extensive interview either in person or virtually. At this point, the company has established that you possess the qualifications necessary to complete the job duties, but passing the next test will require you to truly stand out from the other candidates. The goal here is to demonstrate your knowledge of the company and your fit for the position. Also, do not forget the importance of presentation—dress professionally and arrive early.

#### **Demonstrate your knowledge of the company**

You will learn in Chapter 3 that a successful cover letter will grab the reader's attention by demonstrating how you are the best fit for the company and position. Similarly, you should arrive at the interview with a thorough understanding of the company. While researching, aim to develop a firm grasp of what the company produces, their mission, and, if possible, any background information on your interviewer(s). Use the company website as a starting point and take note of any recent news stories about the company.

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**FIGURE 1.4.** Example email for a screening interview request

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Dear Jamie,

I would like to schedule a 30-minute initial phone interview for early next week if possible. This interview will be fairly informal and will determine whether we move you on to the second round of interviews. Below is a link to a calendar sign up. Please pick a time that works best for you. If possible, please schedule for Monday or Tuesday of next week.

<https://calendly.com/initialscreeningjamie>

Thank you, and I look forward to speaking.

Jordan Smith

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## Demonstrate your suitability for the position

The next step to sufficiently prepare for an interview is to compose a set of targeted answers to top interview questions. Some example questions are presented below. Your first attempt at answering these questions will prove challenging. Therefore, you should take the time to formulate a thoughtful response to each which plays up your strengths while downplaying your weaknesses. Write down your answers and revise as needed, then practice often. You will find that once you are truly comfortable with a response, you will be able to tailor it to address a range of potential questions. For example, the same response with only minor modifications may work for any question about teamwork. Check with your university's career center to identify any tools available for you to practice (online learning tools, mock interview with a career coach, etc.).

### Categories and sample questions:

#### *Self-Reflection and Life Experiences*

- What do you consider your greatest strength?
- What do you consider your greatest weakness?
- What accomplishments to date have given you the most satisfaction?
- What is the biggest mistake you have ever made and what did you learn from it?

#### *Academics*

- Why did you select your major?
- What course did you like (or dislike) the most?

#### *Working with Others*

- Give an example of a leadership role you have undertaken.
- Have you encountered a conflict in a team project? How did you handle it?

#### *The Position*

- What do you know about our company?
- Why are you a good fit for our company?

#### *Work Experience*

- Tell me about your work experience.
- How have you demonstrated an ability to work under pressure?

#### *Virtual or phone interviews*

Oftentimes, the first round of interviews will be conducted by phone or through a virtual platform like Zoom. Ensure that you have a quiet, distraction free location to conduct the interview. Your career center will likely have quiet rooms for you to reserve for this reason. Even though the interview will be virtual, you should dress neatly and wear the same professional attire that you would wear to an in-person interview.

In some cases, you may be asked to submit a prerecorded video interview. Essentially, there will be a prerecorded video of an employee asking you a question. You will then be given a short amount of time (~30 seconds) to gather your thoughts followed by a set recording time (~2 minutes). You cannot rerecord an answer, so jot down your key ideas in the 30 second prep time. Remember to practice sounding upbeat, speaking clearly, and at a reasonable pace.

### STEP 3: SITE VISIT

A technical presentation and/or design question is typically the last step prior to a final decision on whether you will be offered the position. Oftentimes, this is completed onsite through an all-expense paid invitation to visit. Figure 1.5 shows an example of what the request may look like.

During your visit or call, you will meet with multiple employees—with and without technical backgrounds. The invitation will outline the specifics of the requested info.

#### *Technical Presentation*

You will select a project from coursework or an internship. Be strategic about your chosen project and select one that best demonstrates your problem-solving ability. Remember that you will be presenting to audience members who are not familiar with the project, and some may not have technical backgrounds. Therefore, you will want to establish relevance with a solid description of background and goals. Then present your results, discussion, major conclusions, and recommendations moving forward.

#### *Design Question*

You will be given access to information regarding a specific problem related to the company, and your goal will be to recommend a solution. These types of problems have no single correct answer. You should design your presentation with a logical explanation of your solution and rationale. Communicate your thoughts explicitly, always restate the problem at hand, and work methodically towards your final selection.

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**FIGURE 1.5.** Example Email for Follow-up Interview

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Hi Jamie,

As the final step in our interview process, we would like to invite you to an onsite interview where you will have the opportunity to tour the facility and meet our team.

During the visit, we would like for you to give a presentation to a few team members. The presentation should take roughly 1 hour and include the following:

- 30 min presentation of a project
- 15 min design question. Please see the attached building plans, design requirements, and spec sheets. Recommend a series of improvements to increase sustainability of the facility.
- 15 min Q&A.

Available time slots: Thur 4/30 1–3:00 pm PST, Fri 5/1 after 1:30 pm PST. I'll send a calendar invite once you let me know the best 1.5 hour block for your schedule. Additionally, to get a head start on the reference checks, please provide 3 references.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Best regards,  
Jim Lopez, PhD  
Senior Engineer, SSRTech

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### Tips for choosing references

At some point in the interview process, you will likely be asked to provide a list of references who can speak on your character and suitability for the job. Keep your references professional in nature (such as professors and internship supervisors) versus selecting friends and family. You will also want to ask any potential reference for permission to provide their information to your prospective employer. Confirming with your references will ensure that they are comfortable speaking highly of you and are prepared to do so.

## STEP 4: ACCEPTING THE OFFER

You will likely receive an email detailing the outcome within 2 weeks of the final interview. The offer should include the amount of time the company expects for a response. Congratulations!

### *TIPS for evaluating multiple offers*

You may run into a situation where you have multiple offers on the table. First off, relax and pat yourself on the back, this is a good problem to have! Keep in mind that there is more to consider than the salary figure when determining the best offer for you. A good method to tackle this important decision is to start by making a list of your most important criteria for future job satisfaction. Items to consider include benefits (retirement funding, paid vacation time, etc.), growth potential within the company, company culture, professional development support (including tuition coverage for advanced education), position expectations, and location. For students deciding between graduate programs, you will most likely be evaluating financial aid, teaching/research expectations, and location. Once you have a clear picture of the criteria that are most important to you, you can weigh the pros and cons of each offer and make a decision which you can feel confident about.

## CHAPTER II

### GUIDELINES FOR RESUMES

#### THE GOAL OF A RESUME

Your resume is the first opportunity for a potential employer to learn a bit about you; therefore, an effective resume is one that will leave the reader wanting more. Because hiring managers are oftentimes sifting through hundreds of applications spending only a few seconds on each, you will need to ensure that yours makes the cut. This section will provide guidelines for standard resume formatting for students seeking internship or entry-level positions, as well as tips to help you stand out from the pack.

#### *Formatting*

##### Page Layout

You have many options for the overall look of your resume—but you must choose a layout that draws the reader's eye to the most important information. For readability, you want your section headings left-aligned with your section information indented. The level of indentation



is up to you but be sure that the finished product is pleasing to the eye and easy-to-read. This means plenty of white space and varied spacing, fonts, and formatting. Some choose to use the “hanging heading” layout, where the headings are left-aligned, and the text begins in its own further indented column. This gives less room for additional text but makes the headings stand out. A good trick to efficiently align your info is to use tables, demonstrated in Figure 2.1. Other formatting considerations:

- **Spacing:** Single-spaced
- **Font:** Professional, no less than 11 point.
- **Section Titles:** Informative and attention grabbing.

**FIGURE 2.1. Layout Examples using Tables for Formatting.** Each example includes a) section with borders displayed and b) the final version with “No Borders” selected.

<b>Example 1:</b>	
<b>Experience</b>	
<b>Research Assistant</b>	June 2018 – Present
<i>Albert Research Group – Tulane University   New Orleans, LA</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote Python code to determine the Order-Disorder Transition (ODT) points for several polymer blends</li> <li>• Calculated radial distribution functions (RDFs) and analyzed output data to infer system characteristics, such as spacing of lamellar domains</li> </ul>	
<b>Experience</b>	
<b>Research Assistant</b>	June 2018 – Present
<i>Albert Research Group – Tulane University   New Orleans, LA</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote Python code to determine the Order-Disorder Transition (ODT) points for several polymer blends</li> <li>• Calculated radial distribution functions (RDFs) and analyzed output data to infer system characteristics, such as spacing of lamellar domains</li> </ul>	
<b>Example 2: Hanging Heading</b>	
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	
May 2019 – Aug. 2020	Engineering Intern
	<i>Bryden Wood, New Orleans, LA</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with a multidisciplinary team of engineers to create a preliminary design for a commercial glass recycling facility</li> <li>• Gained experience with CAD workflows and Bluebeam software</li> </ul>
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	
May 2019 – Aug. 2020	Engineering Intern
	<i>Bryden Wood, New Orleans, LA</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with a multidisciplinary team of engineers to create a preliminary design for a commercial glass recycling facility</li> <li>• Gained experience with CAD workflows and Bluebeam software</li> </ul>

## Resume Sections

Resumes are divided into sections arranged in a standard order using the following sections:

1. **Heading**
2. **Education**
3. **Experience**
4. **Personalized Sections** (e.g. professional memberships, campus involvement, honors, awards, skills)

You may be wondering why the Objective or Personal Statement is not included in this list. Although commonly seen on resumes, the Objective Statement is often generic and glossed over by the potential employer. Make better use of this valuable space by including additional personalized sections that highlight your strengths.

### Heading

The heading announces who the resume belongs to and how the reader can contact you. A proper heading should include:

1. **Your name**
2. **Mailing Address (current and permanent)**
3. **Contact information**

Heading format is ultimately up to the author but be sure that the information is easy to read and neatly organized. Figure 2.2 provides some common heading formats.

### Education

Your education section is an opportunity to demonstrate how your academic studies set you apart from the pack. You have a few options on what to include in this section, and remember to use formatting to call attention to highlights. See Figure 2.3 for examples of formatting and relevant information.

**FIGURE 2.2.** Examples of Resume Header Format

<i>Current Address</i> 3958 Toulouse St. New Orleans, LA 70118	<b>Brittany Nathan</b> 506.888.5000   <a href="mailto:bnathan@tulane.edu">bnathan@tulane.edu</a> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/bnathan">linkedin.com/in/bnathan</a>	<i>Permanent Address</i> 5969 Millbrook Dr. Houston, TX 77001
<b>Chase T. Fogg III</b> 8513 State St. • New Orleans, LA 70119 • (338) 896-0000 • <a href="mailto:cfogg@tulane.edu">cfogg@tulane.edu</a> • <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/cfogg">linkedin.com/in/cfogg</a>		
<b>Harrison “Harry” Levi</b> 975 Rustic Canyon, San Diego, CA 91945 800.333.8000   <a href="mailto:harrylevi@tulane.edu">harrylevi@tulane.edu</a>   <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/hlevi">linkedin.com/in/hlevi</a>		



### TIPS for your Education section

- Do not include your high school.
- Include notable courses only if they are unique to the job. For example, you may have taken a series of classes not typically required by your major but relevant to the position (e.g. design software, coding, materials).
- Include any notable projects. This is a good opportunity to insert keywords from the job posting—especially if you have limited experience.

### Experience

Your experience section highlights your most relevant work experience. For early career resumes, this section may be slim compared to other sections. That's okay. You can use formatting to your advantage.

The amount of experience you have will dictate how much and which items you include here. For example, if you are a graduating senior and have completed multiple internships in your field of interest, you could consider removing the ice cream shop experience—or include

**FIGURE 2.3.** Example Education Sections

<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>B.S.E. Civil Engineering</b> Minor: Mathematics <i>Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN</i>	May 2024 GPA: 3.4
<b><u>Education</u></b>	<b>Tulane University, School of Science and Engineering</b> Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering, <i>Major GPA: 3.5</i> Minor: Materials Engineering  <i>Honors:</i> Distinguished Scholar Award (top 5% awarded), Dean's List <i>Relevant Courses:</i> Polymer Engineering, Computational Material Science, Earth Materials	New Orleans, LA May 2023
<b><u>EDUCATION</u></b>	<b>B.S.E. Civil Engineering</b> Minor: Economics Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA	May 2022 GPA 3.87
	<b>Notable Coursework</b> <i>Optimization of cement mixtures</i> – Worked with a team of engineers to explore the use of recycled glass sand as a sustainable additive in industrial cement mixtures.	
<b><u>Education</u></b>	<b>Tulane University, New Orleans, LA</b> Master of Landscape Architecture Master of Science in River-Coastal Science and Engineering	May 2023 GPA: 3.72
	<b>Rice University, Houston, TX</b> Bachelor of Architecture	May 2020 GPA: 3.51

it in a separate “Additional Experience” section. If you only have non-relevant experience, that’s okay too! Think about how you can use keywords to show that the skills are translatable. For example, did you monitor inventory and place weekly orders, or maybe you managed and trained new employees.

Brainstorm all relevant projects that you have worked on in both academic and community settings. Another option is to include a Leadership Experience section.

### ***Building your bullets***

No matter which experiences you include, you will need to present yourself in the best light by highlighting what sets you apart. You will do this with your bullet points. Here you will learn a technique to build better bullets called the APR technique.

### ***APR (Action + Project/Problem + Results)***

Step 1: Considering a specific job, think of a **project** you worked on or a **problem** you solved.

Step 2: Choose an **action verb** to describe the actions you took.

Step 3: Quantify the **results** you achieved.

### ***Additional Sections***

Once you have covered your education and experience, you have more freedom in which additional information to include. The following list provides personalized sections that you

**TABLE 2.1.** Example of the APR Process

<b>Action Verb:</b>	Designed
<b>Project/Problem:</b>	Reduction of stormwater runoff in residential communities
<b>Results:</b>	Alternative process reduced runoff by 48%
<b>Bullet:</b>	Designed a stormwater management plan to reduce runoff in a residential neighborhood by 48%.

<b>Action Verb:</b>	Received
<b>Project/Problem:</b>	Annual internship presentation competition at AECOM
<b>Results:</b>	Won first place
<b>Bullet:</b>	Received first-place (out of 53 candidates) in the annual internship presentation competition.

**TABLE 2.2.** Action Verbs

Analyzed	Coordinated	Engineered	Implemented	Programmed
Built	Created	Evaluated	Improved	Researched
Calculated	Designed	Facilitated	Operated	Simulated
Collaborated	Developed	Generated	Organized	Trained

**FIGURE 2.4.** Sample formatting for Skills section

<b>SKILLS</b>
<b>Software:</b> Microsoft Office • AutoCAD • Civil 3D
<b>Certifications:</b> LEED • EIT • OSHA Safety Certification
<b>Programming languages:</b> C++ • Python

**FIGURE 2.5.** Example of an Early-Career Resume

<b>Jennifer G. Jobseeker</b> 1234 Holly Lane, New Orleans, LA 70118 (504) 500-000   jjobseeker@tulane.edu   www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-jobseeker	
<b>EDUCATION</b>	
Tulane University, New Orleans, LA Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering Minor: Materials Engineering	Expected Completion: May 2026 GPA: 3.67
Study Abroad: University of Auckland, New Zealand	Spring 2024
<b>Academic Honors</b> Dean's List (Fall 2022-2023, Fall 2024), Tulane Presidential Award, Arcadis Student Scholar	
<b>Notable Coursework</b> <i>Optimization of cement mixtures</i> – Worked with a team of engineering students to explore the use of recycled glass sand as a sustainable additive in industrial cement mixtures.	
<b>RELEVANT EXPERIENCE</b>	
Civil Engineering Intern <i>Pelican Construction, Geismar, LA</i>	June 2025 – August 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reviewed construction plan markups and created quantity takeoffs.</li><li>Generated structural drawings for a water supply layout using AutoCAD according to state and local standards.</li></ul>	
Research Assistant <i>Gordon Lab, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA</i>	June 2024 – May 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Created an impact resistant composite material using plastic waste from campus recycling streams.</li><li>Used an injection molding machine to produce panels for use as flooring material.</li></ul>	
<b>CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT</b>	
Engineers Without Borders, Tulane Chapter	Fall 2023 – present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Worked with a team to design and build a water purification system for a remote Ecuadorian village.</li><li>Organized the silent auction for the Spring 2025 annual fundraiser.</li></ul>	
<b>CERTIFICATIONS</b>	
Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Safety Certification	
<b>SKILLS</b>	
Software: Microsoft Office • AutoCAD • Civil 3D Programming languages: C++ • Python Languages: French (proficient), Korean (basic)	

might consider. Again, always choose the information more relevant to the position you are applying for. To conserve space, you can lump multiple sections together (e.g. Memberships and Certifications)

- **Volunteering/Service/Campus Leadership**
- **Media/Publications**
- **Professional Memberships and Organizations**
- **Honors and Awards**
- **Skills:** Can be broken into smaller sections (e.g. software, languages, instrumentation, certifications, laboratory, programming)

## CHAPTER III

### GUIDELINES FOR COVER LETTERS

#### THE GOAL OF A COVER LETTER

The cover letter is a one-page document presented with your resume. It should further expand on aspects of your resume, not serve as a duplicate, and is an opportunity to fill in gaps and add a bit more personality into your application.

A successful cover letter will grab the reader's attention by demonstrating how you are the best fit for the job. Prepare by conducting significant research on both the company and the position you are applying for. Thoroughly research the company's website to understand how your values align with company culture, then browse the job posting to identify specific key words that support your experience. Figure 3.1 and 3.2 show a sample cover letter for an engineering and architecture position, respectively.

#### *Cover Letter Sections*

You have a few options for the layout of text within your cover letter. The key is to choose a layout that draws the reader's eye to the most important information. You will use your text to make the best argument for the position, but the cover letter formatting must follow some basic rules. Below is an outline of the necessary elements to include.

#### General Formatting

Cover letters should use standard business letter format in addition to the following:

- **Spacing:** Single-spaced, double spaced between components
- **Font:** Professional, no less than 11-point
- **Margins:** Standard (1–1.5")
- **Paragraphs:** Do not indent the first line and avoid dense paragraphs

#### Heading

Your cover letter will be presented alongside your resume; therefore, your heading should match the heading chosen for your resume.

## Front information

The following should be included after the heading and before the main text.

- **Date:** Date of application packet submittal.
- **Name, title, and address of recipient:** If possible, try to identify the person who will be reviewing your application packet. This may be in the job description, or you may be submitting to a contact that you know personally through networking. If you do not have a specific contact, include the general company address.
- **Salutation:** Professionally address the recipient.

## First paragraph

States the purpose of the letter and how you found out about the position. Establish an enthusiastic tone and try to include something to catch the reader's attention. Do you have a mutual contact? Something that truly sets you apart, or something you specifically admire about the company? You will also state which opening you are inquiring about.

## Body

Here is where you sell yourself. The goal with this section is to demonstrate why you are the best fit for the position. Start by highlighting keywords in the job posting and brainstorm how the items in your resume have prepared you with those skills. The main body of a cover letter is typically broken up into one of two options.

- **Two Paragraphs:** One paragraph elaborating on your education and one on your work experience.
- **Bullets:** Lists your key qualifications with supporting information.

## Closing paragraph

The final paragraph is where you will urge your potential employer to get in touch. You can choose to announce that a resume is enclosed for further review. Keeping with the tone of the entire letter, you will want to show your enthusiasm and interest for the position.

## Closing Information

In line with standard business formatting, you will end your letter with the following items:

- **Complimentary close:** Sincerely, Respectfully, Best regards are all professional options.
- **Signature block:** Leave 4 blank lines followed by your typed name. Insert your signature above your name.

## Proofreading

A potential employer will form their first impression based on your resume and cover letter. Therefore, it is imperative that these documents are polished and free of spelling and grammatical errors. In addition to proofreading during each round of edits, you should ask a few people to review your packet. Consider family members, friends, professors, and university career center advisors.

**FIGURE 3.1.** Example of an early-career cover letter for an engineering position

**Chase T. Fogg III**  
8513 State St. • New Orleans, LA 70119 • (338) 896-0000 • [cfogg@tulane.edu](mailto:cfogg@tulane.edu) • [linkedin.com/in/cfogg](https://www.linkedin.com/in/cfogg)

15 October 2023

Ms. Jessie Irving  
Senior Engineer  
Bryden Hill  
567 Hickory Avenue  
Boston, MA 02210

Dear Ms. Irving:

I have admired Bryden Hill's approach to the construction industry since first learning about your company at an on-campus info session during my first semester in college; therefore, I was thrilled to see the opening for a graduate Civil Engineer. Upon graduation in May 2024, my goal is to merge my experience in the construction industry with my passion for sustainability. Many of my core strengths, which I've outlined below, align directly with Bryden Hill's culture and values:

- Design experience in the construction industry developed through my summer internship with APM and completion of the ASCE Construction Certificate Program.
- Passion for sustainability shown by my LEED Green Associate Certification, involvement with Tulane University's Green Club, and commitment to practicing a plant-based diet.
- Project management experience through creation of a Process Information Management System with Crescent Consulting and through development of a new hydraulics system at APM.
- Strong engineering and data analysis background demonstrated by relevant coursework in Computational Material Science, Intro to Data Science, and Advanced Geographic Information Systems.

I am enthusiastic about working with Bryden Hill and using my skills to promote a sustainable future for the industry. My resume is enclosed for your review, and I am available to answer any questions you may have by phone or email.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*Chase T. Fogg III*

Chase T. Fogg III



**FIGURE 3.2.** Example of an early-career cover letter for an architecture position

**Chase T. Fogg III**

8513 State St. • New Orleans, LA 70119 • (338) 896-0000 • [cfogg@tulane.edu](mailto:cfogg@tulane.edu) • [linkedin.com/in/cfogg](https://www.linkedin.com/in/cfogg)

19 November 2024

Mr. Doug Montemore  
Project Manager  
Satsuma Studios  
6519 State St.  
Houston, TX 77005

Dear Mr. Montemore:

I have admired the work of Satsuma Studios since I first saw your feature in the Houston Chronicle's design section two years ago. Therefore, I was thrilled to see the opening for an entry-level architect at your firm. I will be graduating with a Master's degree in Architecture from Rice University in May 2025, where I developed a passion for both residential and commercial design. Many of my core strengths, which I've outlined below, make me an excellent fit for your firm:

- Strong background in architectural software including AutoCAD, Revit, SketchUp, and Adobe Creative Suite developed through coursework and utilized in my internship with APM.
- Passion for sustainability shown by my LEED Green Associate Certification and my capstone project where I chose to design a sustainable community center using eco-friendly materials.
- Project management experience with Crescent Consulting where I was expected to problem-solve, prioritize tasks, and manage project timelines in a fast-paced environment.
- Strong communication skills developed through experience with preparing project proposals, construction documents, and presentations for potential clients.

I am particularly drawn to your company because of your commitment to innovative design and your reputation for delivering projects that make a lasting impact on communities, and I am enthusiastic about working with Satsuma Studios to promote a sustainable future for the industry. My resume is enclosed, and I am available to answer any questions you may have by phone or email.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*Chase T. Fogg III*

Chase T. Fogg III

## CHAPTER IV

### GUIDE TO EMAIL EXCHANGES

#### NETWORKING EMAILS

You learned the importance of establishing a robust network in Chapter 1. Figure 4.1 provides an example networking email a student might use when reaching out to potential contacts. You should adapt your own email to your personal interests and goals, as well as establish relevance to the addressee.

#### THANK YOU LETTERS

Thank you letters are important to maintaining a robust network. You should write thank you letters in two situations. The first would be to anyone that has helped you (e.g. a professor who wrote a letter of recommendation, someone who you spoke with on LinkedIn, a family friend that provided a contact). The second is a follow-up to a job interview. Below are some tips for an effective thank you letter.

- Be professional and personal
- Demonstrate good communication skills
- If following up an interview, send within 48 hours
- Keep it brief
- Hand-written is more memorable and should be used if there is no time constraint. Email is best if quick turnover is necessary.

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**FIGURE 4.1.** Sample Networking Email

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Dear Mr. Gao,

I am a senior architecture student at Cornell University graduating in May 2025. I am reaching out because I have great interest in working in the green building industry, and I noticed on LinkedIn that you also studied at Cornell.

I recently applied to a position at Locklee, and I saw that you have worked there for almost 20 years; congratulations on the milestone! Considering your experience with the company, I wanted to get your perspective on the culture there and your experience in the industry.

Would you have time for a phone call to discuss further? Any advice that you may have for a student looking to enter into sustainable construction would be insightful.

Thank you for your time,  
Jessica Green  
Architecture, Economics minor  
Cornell University 2025  
jgreen5@cornell.edu  
www.linkedin.com/in/jessicagreencornell

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**FIGURE 4.2.** Sample Thank You Letter or Email

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Dear Ms. Bromberg,

I'm writing to thank you for the interview for the civil engineering position with Honeylight. Speaking with you confirmed my positive impressions of your company and how the culture at Honeylight directly aligns with my interests and career goals.

Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your time,  
Sienna Lewis  
Civil Engineering  
University of New Orleans, 2026  
Slewis4@uno.edu  
[www.linkedin.com/in/slewis](http://www.linkedin.com/in/slewis)

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A thank you letter which follows up an interview is also a good time to fill in the blanks on the interview. Did you forget to mention an item that aligns well with a particular interview question? If so, use the email to add additional thoughts.

### **FOLLOW-UP EMAILS**

You should always conclude an interview by politely asking when a decision will be made. If you have not heard back within that time frame, you can email the interviewer to request an update. Be sure to be brief and polite.

### **REQUESTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH**

If your undergraduate career is preparing you for graduate studies, you should identify faculty members whose research labs you might want to join. The following is a sample of what a request for additional information about research opportunities may look like.

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**FIGURE 4.3.** Sample Follow-up Email

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Dear Ms. Bromberg,

I wanted to follow-up to our interview on November 8<sup>th</sup>. You mentioned that you expected to decide in about 2 weeks, so I wanted to inquire if the position has been filled.

Thank you,  
Sienna Lewis  
Civil Engineering  
University of New Orleans, 2026

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**FIGURE 4.4.** Sample Email to Request Undergraduate Research

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Dear Dr. Cook,

I am a sophomore majoring in civil engineering and am interested in conducting undergraduate research during my time at FSU. I was researching the lab groups in our program, and your research stood out to me. Your lab's focus on resilient infrastructures and AI-driven solutions is a topic that fascinates me. I would love to learn more.

Would you have time for a brief meeting to further discuss the research in your lab and any opportunities available to undergraduate students? If so, I am free from 2–5pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, or 9–11am on Wednesdays. Let me know if any of these times would be convenient for you.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time.

Mindy Toriello  
Florida State University, Class of 2027  
mtoriello9@fsu.edu  
[www.linkedin.com/in/mtoreillo](http://www.linkedin.com/in/mtoreillo)

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