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10-5-2017

## 20 Places to Get Experience for Your Resume

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### Repository Citation

Streufert, Billie and Career Center, University of Maine, "20 Places to Get Experience for Your Resume" (2017). *General University of Maine Publications*. 2026.

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## 20 Places to Get Experience for Your Resume

by Billie Streufert, Director, Career Development Center, University of South Dakota

Employers want experience. You don't have to look far to get it.

Experience is not limited to paid employment. It can include any co-curricular activities or accomplishments that demonstrate your knowledge, skills, and abilities. Your college campus is rich with opportunities to gain experience, including:

- Internships
- Part-time employment or work study
- Study abroad
- Service-learning
- Undergraduate research
- Student activities or program councils
- Special interest or professional organizations
- Sororities or fraternities
- Community service or volunteer work
- Athletics or club sports
- Choir or band
- Student newspaper or radio
- Student government associations
- Resident assistants or community advisors
- Admissions ambassadors
- Orientation leaders
- Tutors or supplemental instruction leaders
- Theater
- Honor societies
- Homecoming planning committee

Contact the campus career center to locate the specific opportunities that are related to your professional goals. For example, if you are an education major, inquire about employment at the campus daycare center. In addition to these opportunities, the staff can also help you locate summer employment or internships in your field.

Not convinced yet that you should couple your strong academic background with learning and engagement outside the classroom? Read on to learn about the top ten benefits of these experiences.

1. **Confirm your major and career goals:** When you buy a car, you test drive it. If you purchase new clothes, you often try them on before making a purchase. Similarly, internships and co-curricular experiences provide an opportunity for you to test reality and assess the fit of various activities or tasks. Ultimately, this minimizes the risk that you will be dissatisfied with your career after graduation.
2. **Gain broad transferrable skills:** Even though these activities occur outside the classroom, they play a vital, equal role in your education. In fact, colleges and universities are now using the term “co-curricular” rather than “extra-curricular” to describe these experiences because they are directly connected to the mission of

the institution. They are not optional; they are essential. Through this engagement you will develop leadership, time management, teamwork, interpersonal, communication, and other needed skills.

3. **Employers value these skills:** In a recent survey conducted by the National Association of College and Employers, employers identified communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills as some of the top qualities they look for in new graduates. These are exactly the skills that are developed through many co-curricular experiences.
4. **Graduate schools value these experiences:** Not only do these activities demonstrate that you have the skills that are needed to succeed in the program, but they also enhance your performance in a graduate school interview or personal statement. You will be required to articulate your reasons for selecting a particular career. Participating in co-curricular opportunities permits you to preview a profession, which will offer proof of your interest and engagement in the field.
5. **Build your resume:** [Visit the UMaine Career Center website or the office on the third floor of the Memorial Union for additional information, or to schedule an appointment with a career counselor.]
6. **Improve your interview responses:** Behavioral based interviewing is becoming commonplace. These questions require you to identify previous experience, with the assumption that your past behavior will predict your future performance. When asked these questions, you can draw upon your co-curricular experiences. View “Marketing your Co-Curricular Experiences” for examples.
7. **Increase your engagement in the classroom:** Participating in co-curricular opportunities will provide experiences that you can bring back to the classroom. You can utilize this hands-on, practical experience to apply the theories and principles that you are learning. This will facilitate your academic success, increase your participation in classroom discussions, and make learning more enjoyable.
8. **Network:** Co-curricular engagement, particularly internships, provides an opportunity for you to connect with professionals in the field and demonstrate your talent. According to the National Association of College and Employers, 66% of interns were offered full-time employment in 2007. Even if a permanent position is not available, you are still able to share your career goals with your supervisors who can then network on your behalf.
9. **You are more likely to graduate:** Researchers report that students who participate in co-curricular activities are more likely to remain enrolled in college and ultimately graduate. You have fun, relieve stress, and form lasting friendships.