



JOB SEARCH  
*Handbook*

**Western**  
Technical College

[westerntc.edu/careerservices](http://westerntc.edu/careerservices)



# RESOURCES

2	HOW WE CAN HELP
	<b>JOB SEARCH</b>
3	FINDING A JOB
4	JOB SEARCHES: HANDSHAKE
5	NETWORKING: LINKEDIN
	<b>RESUMES</b>
7	RESUME BASICS
8	RESUME SECTIONS
9	BULLET POINTS
10	TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
11	MATCH YOUR RESUME TO THE JOB
12	RESUME EXAMPLE #1: ALL-PURPOSE
13	RESUME EXAMPLE #2: MEDICAL
14	RESUME EXAMPLE #3: DIGITAL MEDIA
15	<b>COVER LETTERS</b>
16	<b>REFERENCES</b>
17	<b>INTERVIEWING</b>
19	JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST
20	CONTACT US



# HELP IS HERE.

Job searches can be difficult, confusing, and time-consuming. Western's Career Services department wants to make yours as headache-free as possible. Wherever you are in your search, this handbook is filled with resources to help you find the career you're looking for.



Western's Career Services department is available to all current students, prospective students, and alumni. You'll find us in The SPACE, room 222 in the Student Success Center. Come say hi and discover how we can help you in your job search! We're here to support you on your journey to your ideal career.

RESUME & COVER LETTER ASSISTANCE  
JOB SEARCH SUPPORT  
INTERVIEW PREP  
CAREER COACHING  
NETWORKING ADVICE  
STRENGTHS COACHING  
INTERNSHIP ASSISTANCE



For more resources and Career Services events:  
[www.westerntc.edu/career-services](http://www.westerntc.edu/career-services)  
<https://engage.westerntc.edu>

# FINDING A JOB

## PREPARE

- Set up your [Handshake](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts and fill out your profiles thoroughly.
- Search for career opportunities on Handshake and on other job sites like Indeed or LinkedIn.
- Use the resources in this handbook to build a strong, effective resume and to create a cover letter that connects with employers.



## APPLY

- Apply for jobs that are a good fit for your skills and experiences. You can apply through Handshake, job sites, or directly through company websites.
- Be sure to customize your resume and cover letter for each position.



## INTERVIEW

- Think through potential questions you may be asked in an interview and prepare your answers.
- Practice interviewing using Western's "Big Interview" program or meet with Career Services staff.
- During your interviews, focus on your strengths, share examples and stories, and just be your wonderful, authentic self.
- Follow up with a thank you card or email.





# JOB SEARCHES: HANDSHAKE

Handshake is Western's employment search website. It's the best place to connect with employers who are actively looking to hire Western students and alumni.

# Handshake

[www.joinhandshake.com](http://www.joinhandshake.com)



Check out this video for instructions on how to set up your Handshake account and build your profile. Students who complete their profiles are *5 times more likely* to have employers reach out to them!



Watch this short clip to learn how to search for jobs and internships and to start networking with professionals in your field!

# NETWORKING: LINKEDIN



## LinkedIn Profile Checklist

**PHOTO:** It doesn't have to be fancy - just use your cellphone camera in front of a plain background. Wear a nice shirt and don't forget to smile!

**HEADLINE:** Tell people what you're excited about now and the cool things you want to do in the future.

**SUMMARY:** Describe what motivates you, what you're skilled at, and what's next.

**EXPERIENCE:** List the jobs you held, even if they were part-time, along with what you accomplished at each. Even include photos and videos from your work.

**ORGANIZATIONS:** Have you joined any clubs at school or outside? Be sure to describe what you did with each organization.

**David Xiao** (He/Him)  
Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Analyst  
San Francisco Bay Area | Financial Services

Previous: Berkeley Ventures  
Education: University of California, Berkeley

153 connections

**Background**

**Summary**

I'm a senior at Berkeley, starting to look for roles in the financial industry. As an economics major, I'm fascinated by the invisible forces that shape our world. Why does one company succeed and another fail? Is it possible to predict which idea will be the next big thing?

As such, I've taken lots of microeconomics coursework and have interned with a local venture capital firm. And now I'd like to put that experience to good use, analyzing tomorrow's up-and-coming companies.

**Experience**

**Venture Capital Internship** BERKELEY VENTURES  
Berkeley Ventures  
May 2013 – September 2013 (5 months) | Berkeley, CA  
Conducted research on 20 startup companies and presented my findings to the fund's board, leading to a new \$1.5 million investment.

**INTRODUCTION TO VENTURE CAPITAL**

A presentation I gave to my classmates, based on what I learned at Berkeley Ventures

**Organizations**

**Berkeley A Capella**  
Lead Singer  
March 2012 – Present  
Schedule and perform at events for one of Berkeley's oldest a cappella groups, including last year's Cal-Stanford game.

Continued >>



# NETWORKING: LINKEDIN

**EDUCATION:** Starting with college, list all the educational experiences you've had - including summer programs.

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE & CAUSES:** Even if you weren't paid for a job, be sure to list it. Admissions officers and employers often see volunteer experience as just as valuable as paid work.

**SKILLS & EXPERTISE:** Add at least 5 key skills - and then your connections can endorse you for the things you're best at.

**HONORS & AWARDS:** If you earned a prize in or out of school, don't be shy. Let the world know about it!

**COURSES:** List the classes that show off the skills and interests you're most excited about.

**PROJECTS:** Whether you led a team assignment in school or built an app on your own, talk about what you did and how you did it.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Ask managers, professors, or classmates who've worked with you closely to write a recommendation. This gives extra credibility to your strengths and skills.

**Education**

**University of California, Berkeley**  
Economics, B.A.  
2010 – 2014 (expected)

**Volunteer Experience & Causes**

**Big Buddy**  
Skyline High School  
September 2012 – May 2013 (9 months) | Education  
Mentored an Oakland high school student through the college application process, helping him get into his dream school.

**Skills & Expertise**

Most endorsed for...

- 12 Economics
- 11 Start-ups
- 10 Due Diligence
- 10 Venture Capital
- 10 Management

**Honors & Awards**

**The Achievement Award Program**  
UC Berkeley  
Four-year scholarship awarded to community-minded students with a proven track record of academic success.

**Courses**

**University of California, Berkeley**

- Microeconomic Theory (Econ 101A)
- International Monetary Economics (182)
- Public Economics (230A)

**Projects**

**Venture Capital Financing in India**  
May 2013

For our International Monetary Economics course, Paul and I decided to study the emerging venture capital industry in India. By looking at data from the World Bank, we were able to understand the challenges and opportunities facing this nascent sector. And we developed a series of recommendations for overcoming these challenges, which we delivered to our professor in a final term paper.

5 team members

- David Xiao  
Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Anal...
- Paul Smith  
Student at UC Berkeley

**Recommendations** Received (2) -

**Venture Capital Internship**  
Berkeley Ventures

**Tim Lee**  
Partner

David spent the summer with us at Berkeley Ventures and made an immediate impact. He showed us a brand new technique for firm analysis that he had just learned in school and came through with recommendations that opened our eyes to a unique set of opportunities.

We don't normally hire undergrads as interns but after working with David, we will again!

November 13, 2013, Tim managed

Want more LinkedIn tips for students? Check out [students.linkedin.com](http://students.linkedin.com)



# RESUME BASICS

## WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a document that highlights your very best skills, qualities, and experiences. It's used as a tool to market yourself to employers. The goal of a resume is to help you get an interview.

## Video:



## HOW DO I PREPARE?

Gather information from previous employment, education, and volunteer experiences (names, dates, job duties, etc.) Make a list of skills you've gained and accomplishments you have from your employment, volunteering, leadership roles, workshops, trainings, etc.

## AVOID USING RESUME TEMPLATES

We recommend creating your resume from scratch and following the examples in this handbook. Templates can be difficult to change or update and can throw off resume scanning software used by larger companies.

## HOW DO I STRUCTURE MY RESUME?

Make sure the best information is in the top half of your resume. Start with your strongest qualification, then the next, etc. Select the sections that show off your skills the most (see next page for details).

## HOW MUCH INFO DO I NEED?

A resume is not a list of every job duty or accomplishment you've ever had. It's just the highlights. Each piece of information should be relevant to the job you're applying for. Keep your resume to one full page unless you have lots of experience.



# RESUME SECTIONS

Select the sections that best show off your skills, qualities, and experiences, starting with the section that will impress the employer the most.

## EDUCATION

- List your program/degree first, in bold so they stand out.
- If still in school, write "Expected Graduation" and then the date.
- Consider showing off skills and knowledge you've gained in school with a "Related Coursework" section.
- No need to include your high school information.
- Students should usually list their education first.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- A Summary of Qualifications shows off your best skills, experiences, and qualities that relate to the position.
- Match your qualifications and skills to the job description.
- Write your top 5-6 qualifications as bullet points.
- Be specific. Anyone can write "Customer Service" on a resume. Show *how* you've used your skills, and add the results.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

- List your current or most recent job first and work backwards.
- Write the job title first and make it bold so it stands out.
- Only list job duties and accomplishments that relate to the position you're applying for.
- If some jobs relate to your field and some don't, consider using "Related Work Experience" and "Work History" sections.

## OTHER

- Other common sections include: Certifications, Awards, Volunteer Experience, Clinical Experience, or Software Skills.
- You should add one or more of these sections only if they are relevant to the position you are applying for.
- Most employers consider "Objective" statements obsolete. We recommend leaving them off your resume.

# BULLET POINTS

Strong bullet points can be the difference between an effective resume that shows off your strongest skills or a generic resume that gets placed on the bottom of the pile. Follow these tips to make your skills and experiences stand out!

## Video:



### 1

## Match bullet points to the job.

When you apply for a job, look through the job description. Notice the skills and qualities the employer is searching for and think about where your experiences line up. Highlight those skills and experiences in your bullet points, using those key words.

### 2

## Don't just list your skills. Show how you've used them.

Anyone can write "Customer Service" on a resume. Unfortunately, it doesn't provide any evidence of your skills and the employer can't picture how you've used those skills. Be sure to add details and results to strengthen your bullet points.

**Level 1 (Generic):** "Customer Service"

**Level 2 (Better):** "Demonstrated excellent customer service skills by actively listening to customer complaints and finding creative solutions to their problems"

**Level 3 (Best):** "Offered creative solutions to customer complaints, resulting in a fifteen percent increase in customer satisfaction"

### 3

## Use accomplishment statements.





# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Whether your career has been long or short, in your desired field or not, you have gained skills, experiences, knowledge, and abilities that can help you perform any job. Have you worked on a team? Solved problems? Organized information? Since no two jobs are the same, employers want candidates with these kinds of skills.

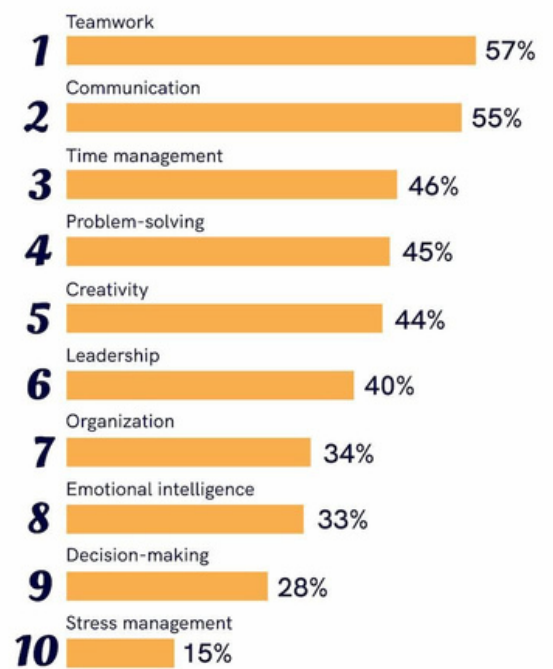
## How do I find my transferable skills?

- Which of the Top 10 skills (right) have you gained?
- Ask your coworkers and friends for feedback.
- Think through past performance reviews. What did they say you are good at?
- Look at a job description for a position you are interested in. What skills are they looking for? Where does your experience match up?
- Connect with Career Services to take an assessment.

## How do I demonstrate my transferable skills?

- List them in the skills section of your resume.
- Expand on how you've used them in the bullet points under your resume's 'Work Experience' section.
- Add skills to your LinkedIn profile and get endorsements from your contacts (by endorsing them first).
- In job interviews, don't just say that you have these skills. Describe how you've made use of the skills, using stories, examples, and details from your work, community involvement or school projects.

### TOP 10 Most Important Soft Skills as chosen by recruiters and hiring managers



2020 study on skills employers look for conducted by zety

# MATCH YOUR RESUME TO THE JOB

Notice the main skills the employer is seeking and address those skills in your bullet points.

## Accounting Intern - Accounting and Finance

**Date:** March 2022  
**Location:** La Crosse, WI 54601  
**Company:** Business, Inc.  
**Shift:** Days

Accounting Department is seeking an Accounting Intern who will be responsible for providing assistance to the Internal Audit team relating to validating payments, reviewing processes and identifying risks.

### Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Examine invoices and purchase orders for accuracy and compliance
- Identify key controls to reduce risk
- Review department processes to ensure they are following company policies
- Identify process improvements and make recommendations to the business units
- Document finding and report results to the business units

### Qualifications:

- Knowledge of general accounting principles and methods
- Knowledge and ability to use personal computers and related software applications
- Excellent written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills
- Skilled in various computer software for word processing, spreadsheets, databases, etc.
- Ability to prioritize and organize a variety of responsibilities
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with department co-workers, managers, directors, and external vendors

**Work Schedule:** Part-time, 20-30 hours per week, Monday through Friday, daytime hours.

**Pay Grade:** Non-Exempt Salary Structure

**Function:** Accounting; Entry Level; Finance; General Business

"Completed risk assessments for small businesses"

"Use Quickbooks and Microsoft Suite daily to track and validate payments"

# RESUME #1: ALL-PURPOSE

Name is large and stands out

## Ying M. Vang

123 Main Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

me@students.westerntc.edu  
(608) 555-5555

Education is at or near the top

Important information is in bold

### Education

**Administrative Professional, Associate of Applied Science Degree**  
Western Technical College, La Crosse, WI

April 2022

#### *Related Coursework:*

- Business Procedures
- Meeting & Event Planning
- Business Correspondence
- Managing Office Finances

Skills listed match the job description

### Qualifications

#### **Software Knowledge**

- Proficient with Microsoft Office 2016; Advanced skill with Word and Outlook
- Website design – Advanced skill level

Bullet points are detailed and share examples

#### **Bookkeeping and Records Management**

- Maintained detailed records for all store accounts with a major wholesale supply company
- Organized and implemented a new numerical and alphabetical filing system
- Learned and applied for software programs during company accounting system conversion

#### **Customer Service Skills**

- Experienced working with the public in a fast-paced work environment
- Communicated with potential clients to answer questions and provide referrals to account representatives
- Conducted a customer satisfaction survey and presented the results to the administration

Dates are spaced to the right edge

### Related Work Experience

**Administrative Professional Intern, Northwoods Elementary School, La Crosse, WI** Spring 2021

- Participated in all aspects of the school district records management system
- Applied spreadsheet software knowledge to a variety of grant funded school projects
- Assisted in the organization and dissemination of a staff in-service program
- Organized parent/teacher conference schedules for twenty-four teachers in a two-week time period

Only list job duties that apply

### Work History

**Order Clerk, Wholesale Supply Company, La Crosse, WI**

June 2019 – February 2021

**Hostess/Waitress, Fayze's Restaurant, La Crosse, WI**

April 2014 – June 2019

**Customer Service, Courtesy Corporation, La Crosse, WI**

January 2013 – April 2014

### Honors and Awards

- Volunteer Award Recipient 2019 – 2020
- Student Leadership Scholarship Recipient 2021



# RESUME #2: MEDICAL

## Ali Singh

123 Main Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

(608) 555-5555  
me@students.westerntc.edu

### Education

Medical Assistant, Technical Diploma, Western Technical College, La Crosse, WI April 2022

- First semester GPA: 4.0
- President's List first semester

### Summary of Qualifications

- Obtained Medical Assistant Certification in May 2022
- Hold current First Aid and CPR Certifications
- Knowledge of medical terminology and medical procedures
- Very proficient in Phlebotomy
- Understand sterilization techniques

Job seekers in the medical field should include clinicals and other experiences specific to their area

### Clinical Experience

Gundersen Health System, Urology Department  
Mayo Clinic Health System, Obstetrics Department  
St. Joseph's Clinic

March 24 – March 28, 2022  
March 31 – April 4, 2022  
April 7 – April 24, 2022

- Assisted in the examination and treatment of patients
- Measured vital signs, such as pulse
- Recorded information on charts
- Prepared treatment rooms for examination of patients
- Cleaned and sterilized instruments

### Work History

Host/Dish Washer, Family Restaurant, La Crosse, WI  
Front Desk, Radisson Hotel, La Crosse, WI

August 2020 – March 2022  
June 2018 – August 2022

### Community Involvement and Leadership

Asian Student Organization—Raised money for scholarships 2020 – Present  
Heritage Manor Nursing Home—Read to residents and helped them with crafts 2022  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Conference 2022  
Hunger Task Force volunteer 2019 – 2021

# RESUME #3: DIGITAL MEDIA

## ALEX MARSHALL

Visual Media Editor | Motion Artist

(608) 555 5555 [design@alexmarshall.com](mailto:design@alexmarshall.com) La Crosse, WI

Fields focused on computer skills, design, or media may expect a more visually creative resume

### PROFILE

Video Editor  
Animator  
Motion Graphic Artist  
Software Developer  
Video Game Designer

### SOFTWARE | TOOLS

Adobe Photoshop

Adobe Premiere

Adobe After Effects

Adobe Illustrator

Final Cut Pro X

HTML & CSS | WordPress

### SOCIAL MEDIA



 alexmarshall.com

 linkedin.com/in/alex-marshall

 example.itch.io

 sample.club

### INTERESTS

 Game Dev.  Illustration

 Film Preservation

### EDUCATION

#### Digital Communication and Media | Multimedia

Associates of Arts and Sciences - AAS  
Western Technical College  
2018 - 2020 • La Crosse, WI

### WORK EXPERIENCE

#### Interact Communications - Video Editor | Animator

Jan 2020 - Present • La Crosse, WI

- Processed, reviewed, and edited visual media
- Worked effectively within a team while creating products
- Contributed and innovated a creative marketing process

#### Western Technical College - Tutor

Oct 2018 - Jan 2020 • La Crosse, WI

- Supported students with visual and graphic based projects
- Instructed students on how to use the Adobe Creative Suite
- Oversaw and upheld a work study environment

#### Menards - Electrical Dept. Sales Floor Team Member

Feb 2017 - Nov 2019 • La Crosse, WI

- Maintain ample knowledge about electrical devices
- Built and maintained over 500 lighting fixtures
- Responded to customer needs in a timely manner

#### Follett Higher Education - UW Parkside Sales Associate

Sep 2014 - Mar 2016 • Kenosha, WI

- Assisted students with locating and purchasing textbooks
- Maintained a professional, fast-paced, retail environment
- Trained 12 new employees

### SKILLS

- Eager to learn new tools and share knowledge
- Proven ability to output work swiftly
- Always seeking organization and optimization
- Able to work proficiently in a fast-paced environment
- Genuinely excited about the creative work process

# COVER LETTERS

Your cover letter should be a separate document, not attached to your resume.

Use the same header for your resume and cover letter.

**Maria J. Ortiz**

123 Main Street, La Crosse, WI 54601 | (608) 555-5555 | me@students.westerntc.com

November 4, 2022

If possible, include the name of the hiring manager. Look on the job posting, website, or call and ask.

Hiring Manager Name  
Their Title or Department  
Organization/Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Firstname Lastname:

**1** In your opening paragraph, talk about your interest in the position (be sure to mention the job title), and state how you found out about it. Write about why you are interested in the position and why you want to work for that company, specifically.

**2** The middle paragraph (or two paragraphs) is your chance to highlight a few of your absolute best qualifications for the job. Show off your skills and experiences that match most closely to the job you're applying for. Pay attention to key words in the job description and make sure those words appear in your cover letter. As you describe your qualifications, be specific and talk about the results of the work you've done. Instead of saying you have financial skills, or technical knowledge, give examples of your accomplishments, or of projects where you used your skills and knowledge. Finally—and this is very important—be sure that your cover letter is *employer-centered*, not *you-centered*. Instead of writing about how this job would help you gain experience, or advance in your career, state how you would contribute to the success of the company.

**3** In the closing paragraph, thank the hiring team for their time and consideration. Repeat your interest in the position and state you are looking forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,

Your Name



# REFERENCES

Your references should be a separate document, not attached to your resume.

## Maria J. Ortiz

123 Main Street, La Crosse, WI 54601 | (608) 555-5555 | me@students.westerntc.com

### Professional References

Reference Name  
Reference Job Title  
Reference Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number  
E-Mail Address  
Relationship: *(i.e., Former Teacher, Past Supervisor, etc.)*

Use former supervisors or coworkers, if possible. Instructors are great, too. Don't use family or friends as a reference.

Reference Name  
Reference Job Title  
Reference Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number  
E-Mail Address  
Relationship: *(i.e., Former Teacher, Past Supervisor, etc.)*

**IMPORTANT:** Ask your references for permission before listing them. Tell them about the job you're applying for so they can be prepared.

Reference Name  
Reference Job Title  
Reference Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number  
E-Mail Address  
Relationship: *(i.e., Former Teacher, Past Supervisor, etc.)*

If you ask an instructor to be a reference, you **MUST** fill out a release form so the instructor has permission to speak about you with employers.

# INTERVIEWING

## COMMON QUESTIONS

Be sure to prepare answers for these commonly asked interview questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. What are your strengths?
4. What are your weaknesses?
5. Why do you want to work for us?
6. Why are you the best candidate?
7. Do you have any questions for me?

## TIPS

1. Dress nicely for the interview. If it's virtual, have a clean, neutral background.
2. Prepare stories and examples you can share in your interview: things like achievements, teamwork, and challenges you've overcome during your career.
3. Make your interview employer-centric. Instead of talking about how the job would help you learn, grow, and advance, focus on how you will benefit the company.

## 'CAR' METHOD

When you're asked to share a story ("Tell me about a time you..."), use the "CAR Method" to tell a detailed, effective story.

**CONTEXT:** What was the situation? Paint a picture for your interviewer.

**ACTION:** What is the action you took to resolve the situation?

**RESULT:** What was the result? **Important!**

Interviewing can cause anxiety for many people. Who will I be meeting with? What questions will they ask? How do they want me to answer? Here are some tips to help you to be as prepared as possible.

## EFFECTIVE ANSWERS

Prepare answers ahead of time to these commonly asked interview questions:

1. **Tell me about yourself.** Don't give the story of your life. Share how you got into the field and why you want to work for this company. Highlight your education and your strongest qualifications.
2. **What are your weaknesses?** Share an area you could improve in, and include what you're doing to get better at it.
3. **Do you have any questions for us?** Have questions prepared that are about the company, not about what's in it for you.

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Most interviews include questions that require you to share about a time you demonstrated a particular skill. Before your interview, think about your answers to questions like these...

"Tell me about a time you overcame a challenge."

"Share about a time you experienced conflict in the workplace. How did you address it?"

"Describe a time you had to manage your time to complete multiple tasks. How did you do it?"

# INTERVIEW PRACTICE



Western students and alumni have access to Big Interview – the number one job interview training tool in the world. Check out these videos to learn more. When you're ready, [click on this Student Guide link](#) to learn interviewing skills, or to practice for your interview by recording your answers to common questions or questions customized to your field.

Getting Started



Lessons



Mock Interviews





# JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

- Complete your Handshake & LinkedIn profiles.
- Customize your resume and cover letter to each job
- Have someone proofread your documents
- Ask supervisors, coworkers, or teachers to be references
- Apply for jobs that match your skills and experience
- Practice interviewing - create answers to common questions
- Interview for jobs and send a thank you note or email

# CONTACT US

RESUME & COVER LETTER ASSISTANCE  
JOB SEARCH SUPPORT  
INTERVIEW PREP  
CAREER COACHING  
NETWORKING ADVICE  
STRENGTHS COACHING  
INTERNSHIP ASSISTANCE  
AND MORE...



## CONTACT

Grace Janssen (she/her)  
Work-Based Learning Specialist  
jansseng@westerntc.edu  
608-789-4734

Paul Bratsch (he/him)  
Career Services Specialist  
bratschp@westerntc.edu  
608-789-6258

[Click here](#) to schedule an online appointment with Career Services.

For a face-to-face appointment, email Career Services at [careerservices@westerntc.edu](mailto:careerservices@westerntc.edu).





## *Career Services*

EMAIL: [careerservices@westerntc.edu](mailto:careerservices@westerntc.edu)

PHONE: 608-785-9440

WEBSITE: [westerntc.edu/careerservices](http://westerntc.edu/careerservices)

**Western**  
Technical College

