

More Q&A With Employers

1. It appears that employers are not specifically looking for arts & sciences majors - what tips do you have for us to find employment?

[ksimons] Just through a quick search on Careerbuilder, I found several openings for both of these majors. Arts (898) and Science (1787). I recommend that people keep their options open as to relocation. Even if you can't "start" your ideal career exactly where you'd like to be, that doesn't mean you can't get your feet wet on a new adventure and relocate back to this area or refocus your career path in the future.

2. What questions should I ask you in an interview?

[ksimons] Questions about the corporation as a whole and what might be differences from one location to another. Questions about community involvement. Questions about the geographic area if you aren't familiar with it. Ask about plans for future growth and expansion. However, with all of these items, I suggest doing your homework up front. For instance, someone applying with AAR might say, "I viewed the aarcorp.com website and noticed X about the Defense Group. How does the Structures and Systems Group fit into that initiative by what they do?" If someone hasn't even bothered to do the minimum, it sends a message that you just aren't that interested in truly becoming part of our team.

3. With the increase in non-traditional students who have professional work experience... Does a Bachelor's degree outweigh previous job experience, why or why not?

[ksimons] I want to see experience regardless of whether or not I'm seeking a degreed individual. The ideal candidate for most positions will have both. My philosophy is that the book will only teach you so much - practical experience in applying the concepts you learn through formal education will get you a lot further.

4. A lot of job postings are seeking experience - what advice do you have for students in how to gain this experience in their field? [ksimons] Internships, volunteer activities, community involvement - you'd be surprised at the connections you'll make that may introduce you face-to-face with your next employer. In a recent company wide survey AAR conducted, we found that over 90% of our employees said it was important to them that our company was involved with the communities our divisions are located in. We are out there - potential candidates should be too - and not just at job fairs.

5. In an interview, what do you expect a candidate to know about your company? What impact does this knowledge have? [ksimons] Please refer to my response about the questions you should ask in an interview. I don't expect you to know the entire website by memory, but you should have at least bothered to look at it and formulated some questions you really want the answers to. This isn't just about finding a job - it's about your career development - and the amount that you put into it says a lot about you.

6. Can you give us an example of how someone really impressed you in an interview, at the job fair, or on their resume? [ksimons] The most impressionable candidates are those who have done their homework. While they were going to school, they were involved with the community in which they lived, whether that was working or volunteering or both during their education process. One memorable candidate came to the interview and had us go to their personal website where we could see the portfolio they had created, as well as letters of reference from professors and past employers. It was quick and easy to access, and gave a good frame of reference for their abilities. It was also interesting to read some of the comments from their instructors on their work that was part of the portfolio. I've also been given DVD's of work - either way - it sets you apart from some of your competition.