

STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE



LAND THE
JOB YOU
WANT
AS A **CPA**

IN THIS GUIDE:

- RESUME RESOURCE GUIDE AND FAQS
- QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT BE ASKED AND WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK
- WHAT MAKES THE IDEAL CANDIDATE? ACCOUNTING FIRMS IN THEIR OWN WORDS



South Carolina
Association of CPAs



Congratulations! If you are reading this, you may have graduated with a degree in accounting and are most likely pursuing your licensing as a Certified Public Accountant. Or perhaps you are just getting started with your accounting education. Regardless of where you are in your educational process, interview skills will be critical when you seek your first position as a CPA.

A career as a CPA is a solid one — the profession is one that will always be needed. And it can be a lucrative career if you land the job that's right for you. Here at the South Carolina Association of CPAs (SCACPA), we want to help ensure that you are best equipped to begin your career.

This guide is full of helpful information and tips for

you: what you should include in your resume (and what you should not include); what questions you can expect to be asked in an interview (and what questions you should ask in return), and what top firms are looking for in the ideal candidate.

On behalf of SCACPA, welcome to the world of CPAs — we are glad you will be a part of it!

WHAT SHOULD MY RESUME LOOK LIKE?

Building a powerful resume is one of the most important steps in starting the interview process.

Your resume must be readable by electronic candidate tracking systems, attention-grabbing and organized so that it effectively reflects your experiences and qualifications. Organize your resume using the following sections to highlight pertinent information:

1. CONTACT INFORMATION

2. SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

3. EXPERIENCE — CURRENT JOB FIRST

4. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CERTIFICATES

5. TECHNICAL SKILLS

6. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

RESUME FAQS

Is it okay for my resume to be more than one page?

As an entry level candidate, you should keep your resume to one page. Interviewers are looking to quickly see if you have the qualifications they are looking for, and it is unlikely they will spend much, if any time, reviewing more than the first page. To keep it to one page:

- Use 1/2-inch left and right margins
- Single space
- Use Calibri or Arial font in 10-12 point size

CONTACT

XXX-XXX-XXXX
Address
Address
Address
xxxxxx@email.com

EDUCATION

SCHOOL NAME, 2019
Degree(s), major(s), minor(s),
Hendebit mi, sum que Tota andan-
du ciassin conse ma doluptioror
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CERTIFICATES
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du ciassin conse ma doluptioror
autatis quaspero et odic te num

TECHNICAL SKILLS

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doluptioror autatis quaspero et
odic te num

AWARDS

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XXXXXX
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utem illatem excest, corporum doluptioror autatis quaspero et
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1 **Firstname Surname**

2 **QUALIFICATIONS**

3 **EXPERIENCE**

4 **JOB TITLE**

Company Company
Employment date

5 **Quick duty description**

- Detailed job duty description Uptaerna turionseque volum que ma vit et aut que sequam endit int re laborerfera nis volupta ipis autem eseculpa estios doloren derume sunt.
- Detailed job duty description Uptaerna turionseque volum que ma vit et aut que sequam endit int re laborerfera nis volupta ipis autem eseculpa estios doloren derume sunt.
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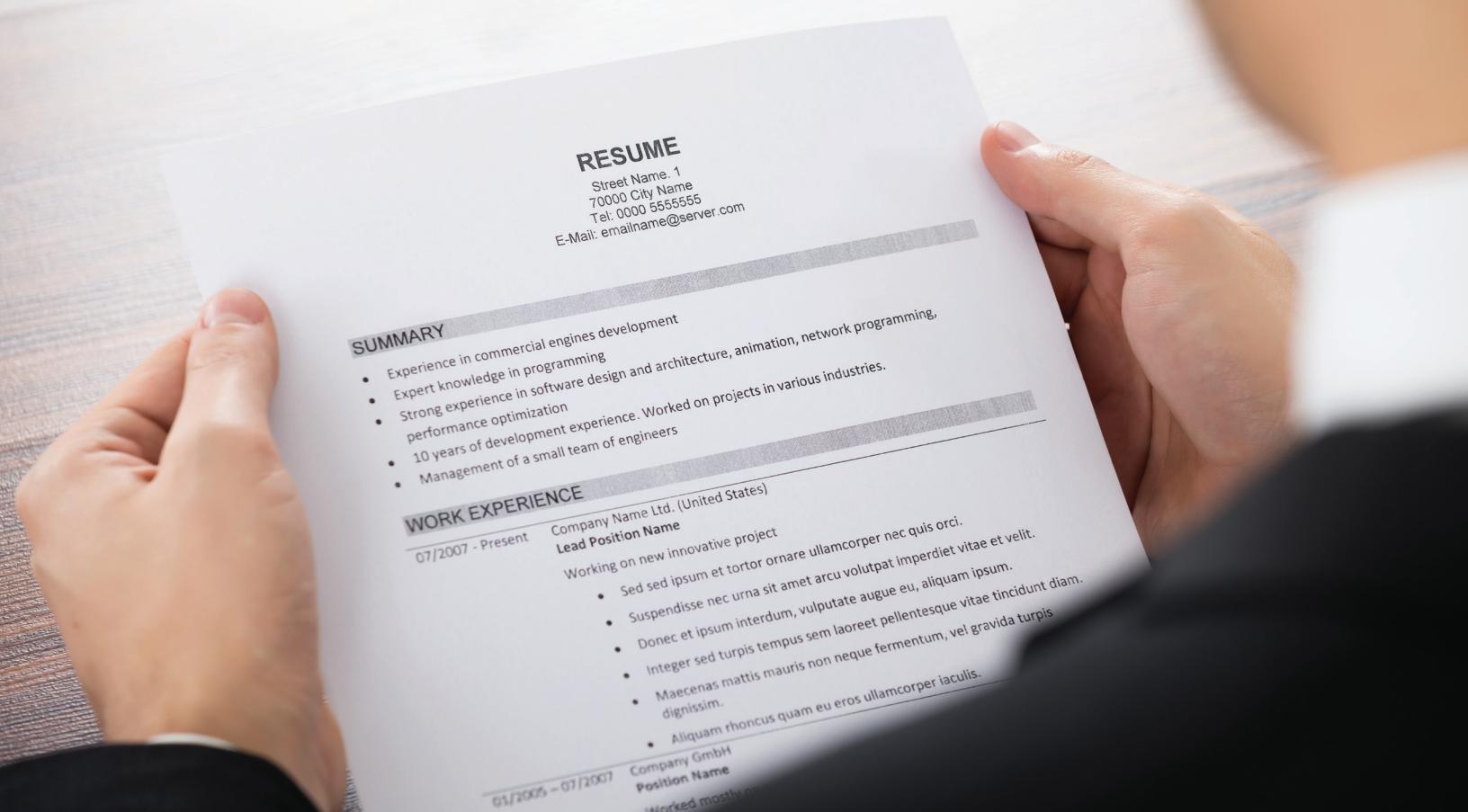
6 **7** **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

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XXXXXXXXXXXX

- Detailed job duty description Uptaerna turionseque volum que ma vit et aut que sequam endit int re laborerfera nis volupta ipis autem eseculpa estios doloren derume sunt.

XXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX

- Detailed job duty description Uptaerna turionseque volum que ma vit et aut que sequam endit int re laborerfera nis volupta ipis autem eseculpa estios doloren derume sunt.



GENERAL RESUME TIPS



Update your resume with keywords from each job description and/or title. Be honest when entering keywords. DO NOT enter keywords that are not reflective of your actual experience.



Do not write in paragraphs. Use bullets to highlight your experience. 5-7 bullets per list is ideal.



Save room on your resume by leaving off “References provided upon request.” This is implied and if they want them, they will ask.



Proofread your resume. Then proofread it again; Make sure it is free of spelling and grammar errors. Get a pair of fresh eyes to review.

INTERVIEW RESOURCE GUIDE



SCACPA member Brad Ledford, President of DHG Search, an executive search and recruiting service line of top 20 CPA and advisory firm Dixon Hughes Goodman, shares his criteria in what he looks for in the ideal job candidate:



OVERALL

"We are looking for folks that fit well with our culture and connect well with our core values of trust, relationships, passion and innovation. We are looking for things in their experience and background that show an innovative mind and skillset. We want someone who is passionate about the direction and the path and the profession of accounting. That dedication to the profession results in a very high-performing individual — high-performing in terms of their grades and high performing in the activities they are involved in."



PERSONALITY

"For us it's about engaging. We want folks interested in engaging with our clients and our firm. It's not about being outgoing or being introverted — it's really about having an engaging personality; wanting to be part of something."



EDUCATION

"A lot of times a masters in accounting is preferred but I will say that we are an audit, tax and consulting firm so there are times that an analytical, problem-solving background or MBA-type person would be a good fit with our team here. Really strong GPAs are a big part of what we look at."



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

"We want someone with team-working and team-building abilities. We oftentimes work in teams so it's important to have individuals that are part of the team. How are you involved, how are you engaged, how are you working with groups now as a student? SCACPA is a big part of that. We give students opportunities to be involved as student members. I let folks know that someone who is very involved with SCACPA is someone who is showing they are building their strength in being involved and engaged in the profession. SCACPA student membership and involvement is a big plus to see on a resume."

TOP 10 QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED IN AN INTERVIEW

Deloitte, one of the top accounting firms in the country, recently released an ebook with 45 interview questions they might ask a potential employee. Here are the top 10 on their list:

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Why should we hire you?

What is your greatest weakness?

What is your greatest accomplishment?

What is your greatest strength?

What are your salary expectations?

Are you a team player?

Tell me about yourself.

Do you have any questions for us?

What can we expect from you in your first 90 days?

IDEAL CANDIDATE QUALITIES



Samantha Reeves, Director of Talent Acquisition at Dixon Hughes Goodman, describes an ideal candidate:

Leadership experience

Client service-focused

Coachable

Engaging Personality

**Resourceful /
Problem-Solving
Orientation**

Team-Working Abilities

Innovative

Passionate

Dedicated

Consultative

Analytical



YOUR POTENTIAL EMPLOYER SHOULDN'T BE THE ONLY ONE ASKING QUESTIONS DURING THE INTERVIEW

The interview is going well, your potential employer has asked questions and you feel like you have given the perfect responses. Then, they look at you and ask, "Do you have any questions for us?"

You'd better. Some employers are known to say they will not hire a candidate no matter how well the interview has gone to that point if the candidate does not have questions prepared to ask them. Why? Because this is your opportunity to prove you have done your research, you know the company and you are interested in what you can do to make it stronger.

10 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER ASKING

(Tip: Have several questions prepared — some of them may be answered during your interview so you'll need to pay attention and mark those off).

- What is your top priority/mission for the company overall?
- Can you tell me about the company culture?
- Where would you like to see the company in five years?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the company right now?
- What are the biggest opportunities?
- What are the main goals you have for this position/What would you like to accomplish in this role if I am hired?
- Do you offer continued training/education opportunities to your employees?
- When does the job start?
- When can I expect to hear back from you?
- What are the next steps in this process?