

# LGBTQ+ CAREER GUIDE

Gender & Sexuality Center for Queer and Trans Life  
University of Minnesota

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Gender & Sexuality Center  
for Queer & Trans Life



# Welcome!

This is a general career guide for LGBTQ+ students. The guide is designed to support you in applying for jobs and internships by showing you how to leverage available resources and make decisions that work for you and your career.

This guide is not able to answer every question you might have, but we hope that it answers some of them, and offer insight into steps you can take to get closer to finding the answers you're searching for.



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# Get Involved!

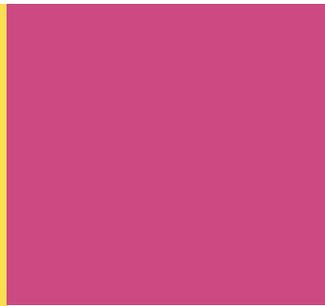
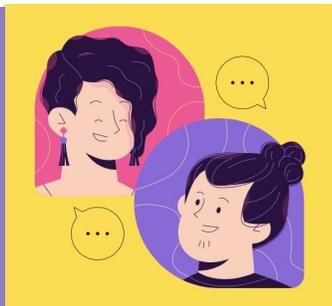
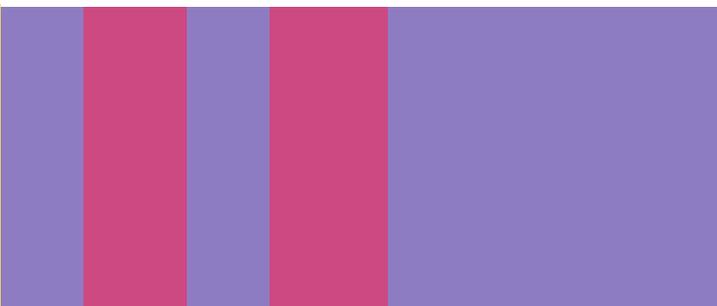
## Support at the U!

Many LGBTQ+ student clubs and organizations, including college and professional faculty, can help you get connected to and network with other LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty. Visit career fairs and career counseling services. Also, consider getting involved with student groups or clubs which align with your career aspirations to gain insight into the profession and meet people who share the same career interests.

- Connect with your college's [Career Support Services](#)
- Utilize [Handshake](#)

Expand your network/connection  
Connecting with professionals, employers, and alumni — particularly those who identify as LGBTQ — is a great way to envision yourself doing what you want to do. Reaching out to your personal and community contacts, and connecting with student groups, campus, and career resources, can feel intimidating and can take time, but is necessary for the job search process.





# Networking

The purpose of networking is to build relationships, connect with people in your field of interest, and an effective way to find job and internship opportunities. Networking can happen in a casual environment, a professional setting, or at formally structured networking events.

## Opportunities to Network include:

- Social media – We suggest creating a LinkedIn profile to seek out individuals you are connected to who are in positions or companies you are interested in exploring.
- Informational interviews
- Job Shadowing
- Professional events
- Professional organization meetings and conferences
- Classroom speakers, current employers, supervisors, internship fairs, and mentoring groups (on-campus or community-based)

## Networking Tips:

- The more you network, the better your chances of hearing about job openings.
- Present yourself professionally in appearance, language, and interactions.
- Prepare a personal introduction or elevator pitch that includes your name, major, year in school, interest areas, and general career goals.
- Develop a list of general questions to ask about an individual's job, career path, and place of employment.
- Maintain an organized list of contacts.
- Send a thank-you note to those who provide information and referrals within 24 hours.

# Informational Interviewing

Once you've identified a professional whom you want to connect with to learn more about their career or a particular job, you can request an informational interview. This is an opportunity to talk to professionals about their career journey and learn from their experiences. This can be a formal invitation or a casual conversation.

## Informational interviews - Start to finish

Reach out: When requesting an informational interview, it's helpful to explain why you're reaching out and to highlight any common interests or experiences.



# Informational Interviewing

**Book a meeting** - Professionals often have busy schedules, so be mindful and accommodating of their time. People often meet in public spaces (such as coffee shops), in meeting rooms and offices, and video conferencing. You should meet where you feel most comfortable and safe.

**Prepare some questions** - Before the meeting, do some research and prepare questions, such as

- What do you enjoy the most about your current role?
- What is the most challenging aspect of the role?
- What is your advice for someone hoping to enter this field?
- Are there specific resources/groups/contacts that might be useful as I continue my job search?

**Follow up** - After your meeting, send a follow-up email

Thank the person for their time and insights. You can use this follow-up email to remind them of any commitments they made (e.g. referrals to other contacts, resources, etc.). If they gave you a piece of advice, let them know if and how it was helpful.



# Interview Your Employer!

## Look for a Diversity and Inclusion Governance Structure

A company must have a diversity and inclusion governance structure that helps guide its strategies and programs, fosters leadership and management commitment, and drives employee engagement to create and foster an inclusive culture. The University of Minnesota has a resource created in collaboration with [employers who recruit at the university who wanted to share their organizations' DEI statements](#).

## Ask The Right Questions During an Interview

- Can you speak to your company culture?
- Does your company have employee resource groups? And if so, how many?
- What are your specific inclusion practices and policies?

## Ask About Employee Resources Groups

### Consider the Benefits on Offer

A company that's LGBTQ+-friendly and diverse will often pride itself on offering benefits that appeal to a wide variety of employees. Those might include comprehensive health care coverage—including coverage for same-sex spouses or partners—as well as different types of leave, such as paid family leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, and paid sick leave.





# Applying for Jobs & Internships

## Developing your resumé and other documents

Resumés and cover letters allow you to showcase skills you've gained across different experiences and share your accomplishments. Effective applications are tailored to respond to the requirements of a job description. When it comes to your identity and experiences, you can decide what information you want to share and how.

Reach out to Career Center at school, faculty members, or professionals in your desired field to review and provide feedback on your application materials.

## Preparing for interviews

Interviewing can be a stressful process, but is also a rewarding opportunity to share your accomplishments and experiences. Take some time before your interview to reflect on your experiences and choose examples that demonstrate skills most relevant to the job description.

Don't forget to practice! Practicing can help you feel confident with sharing how you choose to present yourself and your accomplishments in a tailored way. Schedule a mock interview with a career professional at school.

## Additional tips to implement during your job search:

- Research the company, hiring managers, and industry to gain a better understanding of who they are and what they care about.
- Brainstorm potential interview questions by going through the job description and highlighting the main skills required and how you've performed those skills.
- Send a follow-up email after the interview and thank them for the opportunity. Try referring to something you spoke about in the interview that resonated.

# Coming Out on a Resumé

Should you include information on your resumé or in a cover letter about your LGBTQ+ experience?

For example, you may wonder whether to include LGBTQ-specific awards or scholarships, advocacy work, your chosen name, gender pronouns, or involvement in LGBTQ+ student organizations.

Whether or not to come out on a resumé or cover letter depends on your comfort level and interest in sharing your sexuality, gender expression, or gender identity with others. It is a very personal decision to come out at any stage of the job search process. As such, there is no right or wrong answer.

We want to acknowledge that our community may not have the privilege to choose to disclose some or all of their LGBTQ+ identities.

For some people who do have the option to choose, some choose to be out and visible, while others may choose to be more private.

When considering whether to come out in the application or interview process, consider these questions:

- Is it important to you to be out at work?
- Is it likely the organization you're applying to is LGBTQ-friendly?  
Be sure to research your work environment. If you're concerned they are not, you may choose to highlight the skills you developed but not the organizations you worked with or LGBTQ+ identities you hold.
- Is a particular activity, award, or experience relevant to the job you are applying for?
  - If the experience does not demonstrate relevant skills you may choose to leave it off at this point.



# What employers can and cannot ask...

Employers are not allowed to make hiring decisions based on gender identity or gender expression in Minnesota. Employers shouldn't ask questions about your gender – either directly or indirectly – during or outside of the interview context.

If they ask these questions, you're not obligated to answer. This might feel challenging in an interview setting, so if an employer asks you an inappropriate question, you have a few options.

- Answer if you feel comfortable.
- Deflect or address the concern you think the question is about. If, for example, someone asks you about a previous name that you used, you could respond with something like, "That is my legal name and this is the name I use."
- Ask the interviewer to explain how it's relevant to the role to make them realize it's not an appropriate question. For example, you could say, "I'm not sure I understand how this would be relevant for this position. Can you explain?"
- Refuse to answer the question.

An interview is a great opportunity to determine the company's diversity and inclusion policies, practices, and culture in the workplace. Consider asking:

- What do diversity and inclusion look like in practice here?
- What does this policy look like day-to-day? What opportunities or initiatives are there to contribute to an inclusive workplace?



# To share or not to share : Disclosure for Gender Queer Folx

Whether disclosing on a resumé, in a cover letter, or during an interview, there are many things to consider. Here we've highlighted just a few. We encourage you to connect to your queer mentors and TAP IN to their expertise.

## Discrimination

Discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is against the law in Minnesota. However, transphobia (and discrimination on other protected identities) is still pervasive in our society today.

If you're unsure whether or not to include this information at the application stage, you can speak to a mentor, human resources representative, or a trusted employee at the company.

## Benefits

The option to disclose is available for some, but not all queer and trans people. Some benefits of disclosing your LGBTQ+ identity include asking questions and engaging interviewers in topics related to LGBTQ+ inclusive culture. This could help your overall research in order to get a more authentic reading of the organization. To help interviewers accurately refer to you in their decision-making process, you could choose to share your pronouns on your application materials and/or during the interview process.

## Risks

There are always risks associated with disclosing a trans, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming identity. This can happen in a variety of ways, such as sharing your pronouns, chosen name, or legal name. Disclosing your trans identity could cause bias to show up in the application process or you might worry that it has or will, which can distract you from focusing on the interview. Misgendering and/or deadnaming may still occur and whether to address it or not becomes a concern.

As LGBTQ+ people, we are constantly evaluating the culture or an environment and associated risks with our presence and/or disclosure of our identities. This guide is intended to provide some, but not all, of the associated benefits and risks. Each of us makes decisions everyday based on the information we gather and perceive. Tap into your support networks to determine how you want to proceed to balance the benefits, risks, and strategies to show up authentically.

# Dress Code Tips for LGBTQ+

## Gender-Neutral Attire

Regardless of your gender identity, gender-neutral clothing is appropriate for anyone to wear.

Here are some tips to consider:

- Clothing should fit as you feel comfortable.
- Arrive in freshly washed and wrinkle-free clothes (If you're not able to, do your best and communicate about needs as you feel comfortable.)
- Use neutral colors as your base, such as black, beige, brown, blue, and gray, and adding splashes of color to find a balance with your style.

## Tips for Choosing What to Wear

Here are some additional tips on how to choose your outfits for your internships or workplace:

- **Confidence is key.**  
Tap into your confidence by wearing clothing that allows you to be yourself.
- **Consider your core ensemble.**  
To make your mornings smoother, create a look with 3-5 core clothing items that you can splash with complimentary items, thus creating multiple outfit choices (on a budget).
- **Observe how peers in your profession dress.**  
We know our community challenges the expectations of 'professional dress', so taking notes on colleagues' attire can be helpful.
- **Binding, Packing, or Tucking.**  
Consider the time you'll spend at an interview or workday to align with your needs for binding, packing, or tucking.



# Resources

[Career Services - Students](#)

[Career Services - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual \(LGBTQIA+\) Students](#)

[Coming Out at Work](#)

[LGBTQ+ and Gender Non-binary Resources](#)

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# Gender & Sexuality Center for Queer & Trans Life

This is a general career guide for LGBTQ+ students at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. The guide is designed to support you in applying for jobs and internships by showing you how to leverage available resources and make decisions that work for you and your career.

Please connect with us with new resources you may have found or ideas you'd like to share! Support us in supporting our community!

GOOD LUCK  
&  
WE KNOW YOU'LL BE GREAT!

Questions, ideas, or feedback?  
Please connect with us at [gsc@umn.edu](mailto:gsc@umn.edu).