Exploring a Career in Consulting

What is consulting?
Consultants provide professional advice to their clients to help solve specific issues or problems. Some become experts in serving clients in particular industries, while others specialize in solving specific types of problems across many industries.

Is consulting for you? Wondering who hires consultants? Preparing for job search applications and interviews? Learn more about the field, when and where to apply for positions, and how to ace your interview.

Step 1: Research
Develop your understanding of consulting using these web and print resources and conversations with alumni and recruiters.

Print: Books in UCS Library
- Vault.com Career Guide to Consulting
- The Harvard Business School Guide to Careers in Management Consulting
- Vault Guide to Case Interviewing

Web:
- Enjoy free access to Vault by creating a MyUCS account with your computing ID (http://www.career.virginia.edu/, see top right corner for link).
- Research consulting firms and the industry in Vault, and download these free guides:
  - Vault Career Guide to Consulting
  - Vault Guide to the Top 50 Consulting Firms
  - Vault Guide to the Top 25 Tech Consulting Firms
Additional sites:
Management Consulted: http://managementconsulted.com/
A popular blog with career advice, firsthand accounts of life in the consulting world, and in depth information on top consulting companies.

Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services:
The U.S. Department of Labor offers this career guide to consulting jobs.

People
Alumni working for consulting firms have volunteered to share tips and advice with you. Ask them about the best parts of their job, what a typical day is like, to describe their most recent project, to share what entry level consultants contribute to their company, and more. Visit the University Career Assistance Network (UCAN) online at hoosonline.imodules.com (login required). You can ask a UCS counselor how to make the best use of the information you find there.

Recruiters and company representatives attend career fairs and information sessions to promote their company, internships, and full-time jobs. Take advantage of this opportunity to speak with someone face-to-face – ask questions, market your experience and skills, and leave a positive impression.

Information sessions begin in early September. Visit the UCS calendar (http://www.career.virginia.edu/calendar/) and select “show employer presentations” in the top right corner to see details.

Attend Commerce Career Day, typically held in September. Visit http://www.career.virginia.edu/students/ to find out more information about the fair, including location, date, and employers attending.

Step 2: Apply
Assess your qualifications and demonstrate your abilities on your resume where applicable. What are hiring managers looking for in strong applicants?

- Strong academic record, interpersonal and leadership skills, and teamwork.
- Quantitative skills: May highlight on resume with standardized test scores and coursework.
- Analytical skills: Provide structure to unstructured problems, prioritize components of an issue/problem, synthesize data, and propose solutions.
- Creativity: Ability to see the “big picture,” to draw conclusions from partial information, to see patterns and generate hypotheses.
- Enjoy problem solving: Appear excited and not intimidated by challenging issues, ask insightful questions, and assimilate information quickly.
Sample “results” and “achievement” oriented bullets from previous students pursuing consulting:

- For one week achieved the highest sales volume of any representative with fewer than five years of experience including full-time representatives
- Managed 30 student leaders with an executive leadership team and coordinated logistics for a one day service event with over 300 students at multiple sites for two years
- Executed, implemented, negotiated, and awarded contracts for products and services
- Streamlined mailing process by integrating many Microsoft Access databases into single master database
- Increased organization’s public visibility by partnering with leading local newspapers and introducing a daily “tip of the day” section
- Produced the annual budget and tax report for student-run organization, kept track of all financial and legal activity, and coordinated fundraising

Tip: For a list of strong, action-oriented verbs, see the UCS resume writing handout: http://www.career.virginia.edu/students/resources/handouts/writing_resumes.pdf

Submit your resume
Many consulting firms will conduct interviews on Grounds for full-time hires early in the semester! These opportunities will be listed in CAVLink and can only be viewed once you have completed an On-Grounds Interviewing (OGI) Orientation. This orientation can be completed online at http://www.career.virginia.edu/ogi_tutorial/.

Note: If you are not selected for an interview through OGI, you may apply directly on the company’s web site.

Step 3: Interview

Once you have submitted your resume, let UCS help prepare you for your interviews!

- Fall Focus: Case Mock Interview
- Fall Focus: Behavioral Mock Interviews

These events are typically held in September from 5:00-6:30 pm in Bryant Hall at Scott Stadium

Additional interviewing preparation:

- Vault Guide to the Case Interview
Note: Not all consulting interviews are case interviews! Booz Allen Hamilton uses behavioral interviewing for entry-level positions. Practice answering these sample questions, centered on skills valued by consulting firms:

- **Analysis**: Tell me about a time when you developed a solution and determined the course of action for a complex problem? How did you approach it?
- **Data Gathering**: Give me an example where you had to gather data from various sources. What was your approach and how did you compile the information?
- **Listening**: Tell me about a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you—for example, a time when other people missed the key idea in what was being expressed.
- **Communication**: Describe a presentation you delivered where you were faced with a challenging audience. What made them challenging, how did you deliver the presentation, and did you have to do anything differently than with other audiences?
- **Flexibility**: Can you give me an example of a time when a project was refocused? How did you react, how did your role change, and how did you feel?

Tip: Review more interviewing tips in the Hoos Career Guide (available at UCS) or interviewing handout ([http://www.career.virginia.edu/students/resources/handouts/interviewing.pdf](http://www.career.virginia.edu/students/resources/handouts/interviewing.pdf)). Also, use InterviewStream—a tool accessible through MyUCS that allows you to practice responding to interview questions via webcam and allows you to save and share your responses.

Best wishes as you explore a career in consulting!

If you would like assistance in your job search and career exploration:

- Call 924-8900 to schedule an appointment with a career advisor.
- Utilize our drop in services in Monroe Hall and our daily walk-in advising sessions. Visit us at [www.career.virginia.edu](http://www.career.virginia.edu) to get more information on specific days and times.