

Summarized advice from the ArLiSNAP Career Development Workshop Panel and Q&A Session

ARLIS/NA Annual Conference, New Orleans February 2017

Cover letter advice:

- Take time to really read the job description and really understand the institution.
- “A kickass cover letter makes all the difference.”
- Read askamanager.org (blog), a guide to writing cover letter, interviewing
- No typos in cover letters or resumes - this is librarianship and attention to detail matters.
- No more than 2 pages long
- It's a narrative: a story of what you do and have done, and in that, obliquely hit the qualifications in that narrative. Weave your own personal experience with the job description in a way that make sense. Implicitly refer to the job description (qualifications) by showing how you've excelled in those requirements
- Be yourself in your cover letter, we're looking for a good fit.
- Be passionate, have ideas, be knowledgeable and interesting.
- Incorporate into your cover letter (narrative) “after having a child...”
- Don't assume you're not qualified. See where your strengths are. Qualifications can sometimes be a wish list. Just meet 70% of the requirements.

Resume advice:

- Education at the top, always.
- 2 pages is okay for a resume! Or even more!
- Maybe split your professional experience into sections labeled “library work experience” (at the top) and “other work experience”.
- Don't include jobs from more than 10 years ago (unless very relevant to the job)
- For each job, include not just the responsibilities, but add what you accomplished in that role that someone else would not have.
- Library school is project based, and you may have worked on real-world projects at institutions - that counts.

Interview advice:

- Read the mission statement of the institution, know who works there
- For a phone interview, have printed out in front of you: your resume, your cover letter, and their job description. Refer to these discreetly.
- Interviews will always ask you “why are you interested in this job?” you need to prepare an answer.
- Always send a thank-email after an interview. Maybe not for a phone interview, but it never hurts. Make it a substantive thank you, show that you're thinking, include something specific about the conversation, mention your continuing interest in that position.
- Don't expect to get feedback along the way, and don't push for it. People are busy!

Getting more experience:

- Find projects you want to work on and volunteer if you can.
- You have to go with the flow; you have to know that you don't have control, you can maintain your sanity by relaxing.
- Your first job might not be art-focused, but then just get involved in ARLIS/NE as much as possible - volunteer for the chapter.
- You're busy, but maybe there's somewhere you can volunteer once a month.