

## HOW **2** guide: How Much Does GPA Matter?

The short answer is that it depends on who you ask. A survey conducted by CareerBuilder indicated that about half of the employers surveyed had a GPA requirement. (Of that group, twenty-five percent required a 3.0 or higher, 12 percent required higher than a 3.5, and only 1 percent was looking for a 4.0.)

It may depend on what field you are pursuing. GPA is important in fields in which the nature of work closely reflects the academic curriculum, such as accounting or nursing, or in highly technical fields like engineering or computer science. In these cases, your academic performance may be a strong indicator as to your success on the job, where a mastery of the body of knowledge is necessary.

It also depends on the stage of your career. Job seekers with years of experience will be judged more by their work-related experiences and skills and less by their GPA from years ago.

Sometimes it depends on the size of the company you are applying to. Large, sought-after companies may receive thousands of resumes. They may use GPA requirements as a way of screening applicants since they can be selective.

It does, however, matter a great deal to graduate schools since it, along with your test scores, is how you are evaluated as a candidate. We encourage all students to keep their GPA up so that it doesn't preclude them from the ability to go to graduate school in the future if it is not in their immediate plans. The worst thing you can do is limit your future educational options, which may impair your career growth.

One of the most common questions we receive is whether students should put their GPA on their resume? Our rule of thumb: you should put it on your resume if it is a 3.0 or above. Anything below a 3.0 isn't that impressive.

If your overall GPA is below a 3.0, you may consider just listing your GPA for grades within your major, if that is higher. This is especially helpful if you had a rough transition into college and your freshman year grades are dragging down your overall GPA.

Also, if a job posting specifies a GPA requirement, you should include it, even if your GPA is lower. Then in the cover letter, you can explain any differences and try to sell your other qualifications. Also, make sure your resume lists all those other things you did in college to show that build skills and develop character, such as holding down a job, volunteerism, involvement in a professional association related to your major, and extracurricular activities

Finally, if you are asked in the interview about why your GPA was low, don't make excuses. But focus the conversation on the qualifications you do have. And outwork your competition to get the job offer – spend extra time researching the company and preparing for the interview process.

If you have any questions about your job search, schedule an appointment to meet with a Career Advisor by using the contact information at the top of the page. (To access other helpful job search guides used by FGCU Career Services, go to: <http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/Careers/handouts.asp>)