

Career Ambassador Toolkit 2017

This guide prepares you to effectively serve as a Career Ambassador for your company at schools and student related events.



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For samples of SMUD’s industry-specific newsletter focused on programs that support education, please visit:
(<https://www.smud.org/en/residential/education-safety/teachers-and-students/energy-newsletters.htm>)



Introduction

Career Ambassador toolkit

This guide gives you the tools to effectively serve as a Career Ambassador at schools and student-related events on behalf of your company. The training to become a Career Ambassador at SMUD takes approximately 2 hours. Participants receive this guide along with materials to distribute to teachers and students at outreach opportunities. We've included some examples of resources SMUD uses, but you'll want to tailor those pieces for your company.

This guide will prepare you to:

- Help students understand the broad array of career opportunities at your company.
- Explain how to prepare for career opportunities at your company through relevant courses, work experience and skill sets.
- Help students connect what they are learning with career opportunities.
- Answer questions about careers at your company.

Role of Career Ambassadors

Bringing your job to school

Thank you for taking the time out of your work day to visit a classroom. Here are some suggestions to help ensure that your visit will be worthwhile when meeting with students.

Why visit the classroom?

Talking with students in your local school is a great way to make a difference in your community and have an impact on the lives of young people.

When you visit the classroom:

- Act as a role model for students.
- Expand students' awareness of various jobs and careers.
- Connect schoolwork to what students need to know in the real world.
- Inspire students to consider career options in your industry or with your company.

Planning your classroom visit

The key to a successful classroom visit is to get students engaged and involved. Here are some suggestions to help ensure that you and the students have a good experience.

- **Prepare for your visit in advance.** Communicate with the teacher before your visit so that you know what to expect. Make sure you understand what activities students will have participated in and topics they have covered by the time of your visit. Think about how you can connect what you do to what students will have experienced and what they are learning. Ask the teacher what tips she or he has for interacting effectively with the students. Know exactly where to go, when you need to arrive, how the venue is set up (e.g. classroom, auditorium), number of students you will be presenting to and how much time you'll have.
- **Bring visual aids and leave behinds.** Consider bringing handouts and resources to leave with students. It's also important to have materials and activities that are age-specific (a middle school student will be interested in seeing career/work-related information differently than a college student).
- **Introduce yourself with a personal story.** Connect with students by sharing something about yourself. It can be a funny story, something you dreamed of doing when you were their age, or a difficulty you encountered and how you overcame it. Try to keep your introduction brief.
- **Connect your work to students' curriculum or classroom activities.** Briefly tell students what you do at your job and link your work tasks to the curriculum or classroom activities students have completed, as well as to other real-life experiences that are likely to be relatable with students. Describe how developments in your industry or field might affect people's lives.
- **Keep them engaged.** Don't talk non-stop for more than five or ten minutes. Break up your presentation with interaction—ask students questions or invite them to participate in an activity.
- **Hold a question-and-answer session.** Aim for a positive, open-minded discussion. Students like to know the path you took to get where you are today. Be prepared to explain how you got started in your career and what in particular got you interested in your field. Lay out a roadmap for other careers in your field too.
- **Gather helpful resources.** Review available handouts, brochures, checklists, PowerPoint's, etc.

Your challenge is to make the experience informative and entertaining, while also holding students' interest; be creative and flexible.

Resources of Career Ambassadors

The following form is an example of the first step of any classroom related request. It streamlines the process and ensures you have all the necessary information from the beginning. An outreach coordinator is the main point of contact for these requests and we recommend companies assign an in-house point person to facilitate the logistics of the program.

Career Ambassador request form

Please fill out the following form to request a Career Ambassador for an event and email it to:

Organization name	
Event date	
Event location: Include physical address, building name and room number.	
Event start time: Include cleanup time.	
Event end time	
Event set-up start time	
Expected number of attendees	
Composition of attendees: Describe attendees based on demographics, major, etc.	
End goal of attendees: Networking, internship, job, etc.	
Other companies/industry representatives attending/presenting: List the other companies who will be showcasing their business/presenting at this event.	
Event setup: Is there a booth? Is this a panel discussion, one-on-one discussion, round-table discussion?	
What will be provided: Food? Table (including length), chairs, table cloth? Is there room to setup a SMUD display (8.5' x 8.5' x 2' deep)? What audio visual equipment is available?	
Number of speakers/representatives requested: What's the minimum or maximum number?	
Disciplines requested: i.e. civil engineer, power systems, mechanical engineer, IT, telecom, business, etc.	
Registration process: What is the process to register? Include link to registration website.	
Registration deadline: When does all registration information need to be submitted? Does payment need to accompany registration? Do all attendees need to be identified at time of registration?	
Cost: What's the cost for an organization to participate?	

Logistics of your classroom visit

Before your visit communicate with the teacher

- Ask what the students are studying and what background knowledge they have about your company's business.
- Find out how many students are in the class, what the physical setup of the classroom is, what audio-visual equipment is available and what you might need to bring.
- Confirm if you can bring job-related instruments or devices to show students.
- Confirm the time, date and length of your visit and discuss any activities you may have planned.
- Confirm appropriate dress (e.g., company branded clothing).
- Exchange phone numbers with school contact.

Day of your visit

- Arrive early and follow any school check-in procedures.
- Bring any needed equipment and supplies. If you're providing handouts to the students, make sure you have enough.

Delivering your presentation

- Smile! Exude comfort and confidence. Remember, you're the expert.
- If you're using a slide presentation, keep text to a minimum.
- Use photos, illustrations and simple diagrams. Consider using infographics or cartoons if they help better explain ideas.
- Ask students questions that will allow them to make connections between what they have been learning and your company's future workforce needs.
- If relevant, show students some tools used in your profession. If safety permits, pass around the devices you've brought so that students can handle them.
- Leave time to answer students' questions about your work and how it relates to their curriculum.

After your presentation: Follow up

- Ask the teacher for feedback about your visit. What was most memorable? What could be done differently next time?
- If you're willing, provide an e-mail address so interested students can contact you.
- If feasible, invite students to visit your workplace.

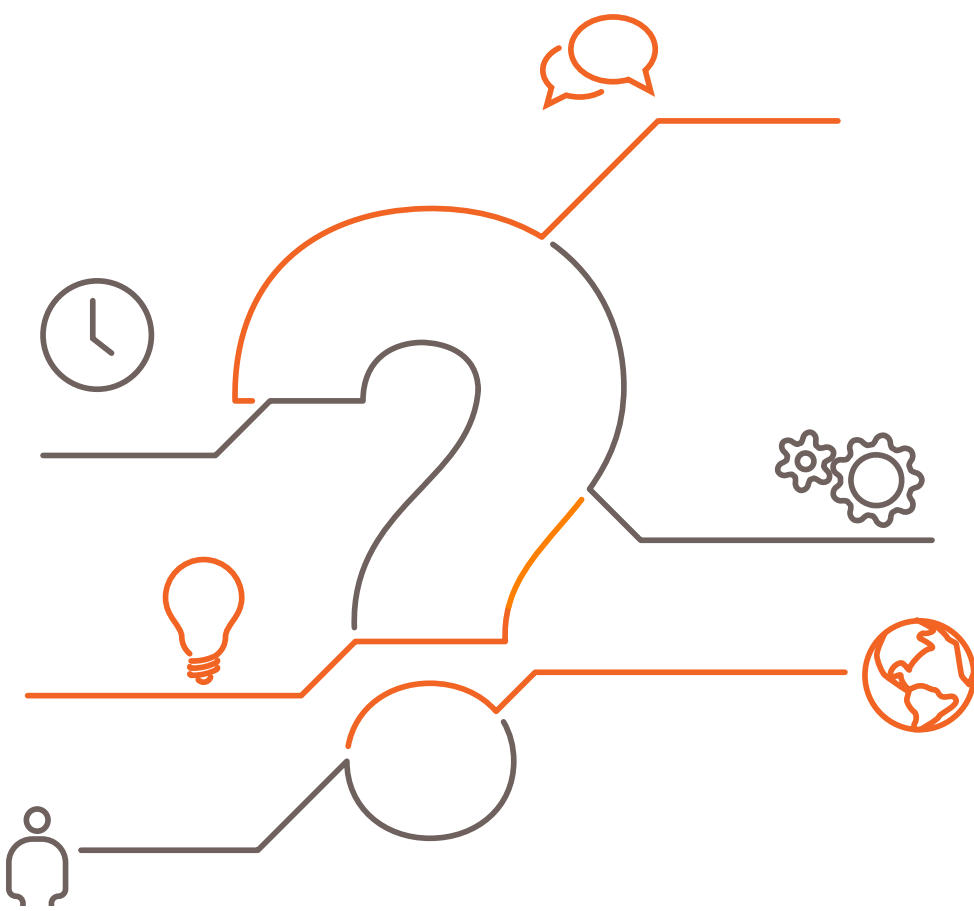
Career Ambassador feedback form

Thank you for participating in the education outreach event on _____(date) at _____(location).

Please take a minute to provide feedback by answering the questions below. We want to ensure that we're providing the right level of support to our Career Ambassadors and meeting the needs of our community.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I felt adequately prepared to represent the company at this event.			
The handouts I received to give to the students were useful.			
The directions to the event were accurate.			
The staff at the event was helpful and courteous.			

Comments or suggestions:



Questions students may ask

1. What kind of car do you drive?
2. How much money do you make?
3. What is the typical pay range for entry-level jobs at your company?
4. Do all jobs require a college degree?
5. What difference will earning a college degree make on how much I can earn?
6. How much math/science did you need to get your job?
7. How much math/science do you use in your job?
8. What are the key skills (technical and interpersonal) needed for your job?
9. What skills does your company typically look for in applicants?
10. What classes or training did you need to take?
11. How long have you worked at your company?
12. What other jobs have you had? What has your career path been?
13. How old are you?
14. How many people work at your company?
15. Where do you work (where is your company located)?
16. How many people does your company hire in a year?
17. How do I get a job at your company?

Presentation preparation worksheet

Who?

Who do you work for? Supervisor: _____

What kinds of jobs are offered? _____

What?

Your title: _____

Pay range: _____

Your duties: _____

Do your duties change from day-to-day? _____

What are the physical requirements of your job? _____

What are the mental requirements of your job? _____

What do you do during a typical day? _____

Do you work by yourself or with other people most of the time? _____

Are there any unusual demands? _____

Is your job dangerous? If so, explain. What safety precautions do you take? _____

What skills are important to your job? _____

How do you use reading, writing and computing in your job? _____

Where?

Do you work inside or outside? _____

Is your job in a rural or urban area? _____

Is it a large or small facility? _____

Do you travel? If so, where? _____

Could you do your job anywhere in the country? _____

Why?

Why do you work for your company? _____

What are the advantages/disadvantages of working in your field?

Advantages	Disadvantages

At what age can you retire? _____

Is the job secure for the future? _____

Why did you choose this field? _____

Why do you think it's a good job? _____

Was there an outstanding event at your work that was humorous, dangerous, or rewarding? _____

How?

How did you get your job? _____

What education is necessary? _____

What will the education cost? _____

Where can the education be obtained? _____

What special license, examinations, or certificates are required? _____

Did you go to school to learn how to do your job? _____

Classroom management scenarios

Scenario A: What if you ask for questions and nobody raises their hands?

Solutions:

- Call on someone.
- Offer an incentive for anyone who asks questions (or who asks the most thoughtful question).

Scenario B: What if the students are not very engaged during your presentation and it seems like they've tuned out?

Solutions:

- Walk around the room during the presentation; it can help students focus on what you're saying.
- Bring hands-on materials (handouts or items that demonstrate your work or what your company does); this helps students relate to what you're talking about. Remember that people are visual, kinesthetic and/or auditory learners.

Scenario C: What if the students are hyper-active or unruly, including distracting sidebar conversations?

Options:

- Walk around the room to help students connect with you.
- Stand near the disruptive individual or group; it can help change the "temperature" of the classroom.
- Ask the students in sidebar conversations to add to the topic. Calling people by name often gets their attention.
- If students are very unruly, enlist the help of the teacher. It's a good idea to talk with the teacher in advance about ground rules.



Know your audience

Every class is unique and you should tailor your presentation to each specific audience.

Audience characteristics

- Age range
- Grade level
- Career goals
- Demographics
- Personalities
- Beliefs and values
- Attitudes
- Past work experience

Audience analysis methods

- Talk to your company's education coordinator about the audience.
- Talk to the audience before you begin your presentation to "take a pulse".
- Talk to the host teacher, faculty member or school administrator.
- Perform online research (i.e. school website).
- Take a mini poll during your presentation.

Exercise: Know your audience

Directions: Use the space provided below to plan how you will get to know your audience for an upcoming presentation in order to tailor your approach effectively.

Presentation topic: _____

Presentation audience: _____

Consider relevant questions that will help you understand your audience

- What have they studied and what are they currently studying in school?
- What will they be studying next?
- What objectives does the teacher have for your presentation?
- Does anyone in class have someone in their family who does the same job you do (or who works for your company)?
- What are the demographics of the school and the class?
- Have they had any experience with your company in the past (attended a community or recruiting event where your company was present)?
- What options/resources are available to you in order to secure answers to the questions listed above?
- How might you adjust your approach based on the class level or age group? Reference the chart below for insight into the developments of different age ranges.

Age range	Physical development	Fine motor development	Language development	Mental development	Social development ¹
7-12 years	Dexterity increases Agility and coordination Improve motor skills	Increasingly skillful with hands Likes to build things Fond of puzzles and games Learning to write cursive	Thinks in concrete terms Able to read and write	Curious about the function and use of objects Concrete operation stage (age of relational and concrete concepts)	Privacy is important Hero worship begins Wants to be involved in clubs
13-16 years	Body changes associated with puberty Increases in height/weight May become more clumsy	Learning to type Able to write stories Able to draw a person with appropriate body parts	Able to understand advanced levels of communication May respond with monosyllable answers High level of comprehension and vocabulary	Concerned about body image and function Beings to develop abstract thinking and logic Enjoys developing intellectual powers	Concern for privacy More self-conscious Peer groups more important than family Mood swings

What they’re really thinking

Most audience members need the answers to these three fundamental questions to stay engaged:

1. Why should I pay attention?
2. Now that I’m listening, why should I care about this issue?
3. What can I do with this information?

¹ http://undsci.berkeley.edu/teaching/35_nature.php

Structuring your presentation

Storytelling structure | Choosing your story

- Consider your audience and select a relevant story (e.g. junior high vs. high school vs. college audiences).
- When choosing your stories, use personal examples wherever possible.
- Remember that emotion is the fast lane to the brain. Choose stories that are funny or dramatic.

Developing your story ²

- Once you identify a potential story, first, determine the relevant message.
- Build your story forward to make one clear and concise point for each story.
- Crafting a story:
 1. Set the scene.
 2. Introduce the characters.
 3. Begin the journey.
 4. Describe obstacles (career / personal) encountered and how you overcame them.
- Stories that lack emotional triggers are interesting, but not compelling.
- Stories typically frame a teachable moment; a point in time when an important personal lesson was learned. Be prepared to articulate this lesson.

Introductions and conclusions

- Audiences will most remember the beginning and end of your presentation.

Creating an effective introduction: 5 keys to connecting with audiences

- Show enthusiasm for the subject.
- Establish common ground.
- Appreciate and affirm.
- Elevate their mood.
- Enlighten.

Tips for conclusions

- Leave them with a call to action.
- Invite questions (remember, you don't have to know everything; you can take questions and follow up at a later time).
- Provide them with a URL, email address or phone number for further questions or more information.

² ATD (Association for Talent Development) - <https://www.td.org/Offers/2017/01/The-9-Steps-of-Story-Structure>

Story crafting worksheet

Choose three personal stories that changed your career.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Define the message of each story.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Identify the emotional triggers of each story. What emotions did you experience and where?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Identify the moment of crisis, decision or revelation in your story. Hold the moment.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Have fun!

Managing Q & A

It's important to set the stage with your audience regarding questions and answers. It gives them an opportunity to formulate their questions and lets them know they'll be heard.

Ask your audience to save their questions for the end so you don't run out of time. It's best to repeat the question before answering it to make sure everyone in attendance has heard the question. The better you know your audience, the more prepared you'll be for the Q & A.

Pitfall

If you lose your cool during Q & A, you lose your credibility with the audience.

Solutions

Observe questioner's body language, facial expression, voice projection and inflection to gauge intent.

- Confused & seeking clarification?
- Challenging message?
- Challenging speaker?
- Venting frustration?
- Demonstrate respect for all questions, even if the student is wrong, ill-informed, or unprofessional.

Pitfall

A single flopped response can overshadow your entire presentation, so take time to rehearse Q & A.

Solutions

Anticipate questions; think of the 10 most likely questions and plan out your answers. Clarify the question if necessary by paraphrasing or repeating:

- "Let me make sure I understand your question..."
- "To clarify, do you want to know more about...?"
- "For those who did not hear, the question was..."

Don't digress

- Keep your answers brief.
- If you can't answer the question, say so.
- If you need time to research the answer, say so.
- If a question is off-topic, either suggest an off-line discussion or remind your audience of the goal of the presentation.
- Avoid answering a question with eye contact solely given to questioner. The answer is for the entire group.
- At the end of the answer, ask "Does that answer your question?"
- Use names to personalize answers when possible.
- Neutralize negative questions. Use a restatement of a question as an opportunity to reframe or neutralize the negative judgment.
- Tactfully correct inaccurate conclusions. "I think you may be prematurely concluding that...." or "I think it's too early to conclude that..."
- Correct inaccurate assumptions. "I think you're assuming that.... Let me clarify..."

Supplemental materials

SMUD career event preparation for Career Ambassadors

Before the event:

- If needed, request a 30 minute meeting with your coordinator to discuss “what to expect” at the event.
- Make sure event is on your calendar.

You will receive the following from your outreach coordinator:

- Map and directions for parking and where the event is being held.
- Parking permit if needed.
- If the event is a panel format, you’ll receive a list of questions in advance.
- If the event is a career fair, you’ll receive SMUD’s online postings of any open entry-level positions relevant to the event.
- You may also receive relevant positions that will be available in the near future.
- If applicable, you will also receive:
 - SMUD SWAG/giveaways
 - SMUD tablecloth
 - SMUD recruiting pop-up display
 - Hand-outs
 - List of current or potential job openings
 - SMUD general job descriptions (overview of SMUD positions, education requirements, salaries)
 - List of student opportunities/internships
 - Engineering positions at SMUD
 - Careers for women at SMUD
 - How to apply for a job at SMUD
 - SMUD facts booklet
 - SMUD programs & services brochure
 - Career Ambassador request form

After the event:

Complete the Career Ambassador feedback form (see page 5) and return it to your outreach coordinator.

SMUD key messages

SMUD in 30 seconds

For more than 70 years, SMUD has been Sacramento's community owned electric service. We serve 1.4 million people and SMUD is the nation's sixth-largest electric utility that's owned by its customers. Our fundamental promise is to provide you and your families with safe, reliable electricity at affordable rates.

Community

SMUD was born of this community, and is an integral part of it. More than just a bare-bones supplier of electricity, SMUD gives back to the community in ways that make life better for all who live and work in the Sacramento area. We support the community through sponsorships, education, beautification and recreational facilities.

Environmental leadership is one of our guiding principles at SMUD. We help customers become more efficient users of energy, we use a balanced and sustainable mix of energy sources, and we help reduce the amount of greenhouse gases produced locally. With eyes on the future, we are taking steps to curtail our reliance on carbon-based fuels and meet ambitious goals set by your elected board of directors and state lawmakers to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Smart grid

Smart meters and the smart grid are paving the way for new technologies to let you make smarter choices about saving energy in your home and money on your bill. Some of the benefits you may see in the future are programmable appliances such as dishwashers, and the ability for you to control your home's energy from a smart phone or computer.

Frequently asked questions

Volunteering and internships

Q. Does SMUD have volunteer opportunities for teens or adults?

A. We do not have a volunteer program at SMUD.

Q. Does SMUD have an internship or student program?

A: Yes, high school and college.

Job application and selection process

Q. Does SMUD have any job openings?

A. Information on career opportunities can be found on our website at smud.org/Careers.

Q. What is the phone number for SMUD's job line?

A. The job line phone number is 916-732-5582.

Q. Where can I pick up an employment application form?

A. You can apply for all jobs online at smud.org/Careers.

Q. How long will it take to process my employment application?

A. It depends upon the number of applications for the job. All candidates will be notified of the status of their application by mail or email. You can check the status of your application by logging into your online account at smud.org/Careers.

Q. How many people will SMUD hire for this position?

A. It depends upon the number of vacancies we need to fill. Generally our job postings will state the number of openings.

Q. If I am interested in applying for several jobs that are posted at the same time, can I submit just one application?

A. No. A separate application must be submitted for each job. Please note that some announcements require completion of a supplemental application as well.

Q. Will an employment exam be required?

A. Review the requirements on the specific posting; if there is an exam, it will be stated in the job posting.

Q. What is on the employment exam?

A. Review the requirements on the specific posting.

Q. When will I hear if I've made it through the employment screening process?

A. You will receive a written notification via mail or email.

Q. Once I've passed the employment exam, what is the next step in the process?

A. If there are other requirements in the selection process you will be notified. If you're on an eligibility list, the list may be used for up to two years and you may be contacted directly during that time by the hiring supervisor.

Q. What is an eligibility list?

A. An eligible list is a list of candidates who have passed preliminary civil service examination processes and are eligible for hire. Candidates remain on the eligibility list for a specified period of time.

Q. How long does an eligibility list last?

A. Eligibility lists established through the open recruitment process last up to 2 years and may be extended for an additional year.

Q. I just moved. How do I change my address and phone number with SMUD's Human Resources department?

A. When you change your address or phone number please call HR's main desk at 916-732-5582 and provide your updated information including which list you are on.

Q. Is a drug test mandatory before I start my new job?

A. Yes. SMUD's pre-employment process consists of two steps: a pre-employment physical/drug and alcohol screen as well as a background check.

Q. What does civil service mean?

A. There is a state law (California Municipal Utility District Act or MUD Act) that established the requirement for a civil service system for the selection, examination, employment, classification, advancement, suspension, and discharge of employees at organizations like SMUD that serve the public. Civil service rules apply to applications, examinations, duration of eligible lists, certification of eligible, appointments, promotions, transfers, resignations, layoffs or reductions in force, the filling of positions, classification, and other such matters. These special rules apply to every employee at SMUD except for a few such as our board members (elected by the public), our executives, senior managers, temporary construction employees, part-time employees, limited-term employees, and a few other roles determined to be exempt from the district civil service.

Q. What does limited term mean?

A. Limited term positions are created for special projects or to fill behind an employee away from their position. These positions are at-will, specified for longer than six months in duration, and not to exceed two years, but may be extended for an additional two years.

Q. What temp agencies does SMUD use?

A. SMUD uses Apple One, Search Pros, and Premier.



Examples of career paths at SMUD



Graphics, Communications, Digital Media

Public Information Specialist
\$69,564 to \$86,820 a year
 Develop and implement SMUD communication strategies, produce media content for various communication channels (broadcast, print, web, social media) for customers and the community.
Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in multimedia, communications, or public relations is desirable; knowledge of basic communication production practices; 1 or more years of experience in related fields.

Graphic Artist
\$59,028 to \$72,204 a year
 Create illustrative art work for flyers, brochures, charts, signs, displays and exhibits.
Qualifications: Formal (college-level graphics or fine arts program) education and relevant work experience required. Knowledge of graphic design and photography software, principals and techniques of design. Must provide portfolio.

User Experience Specialist
\$69,564 to \$86,820 a year
 Develop and implement User Experience (UX) strategies across SMUD's digital channels, including SMUD websites, email, and social media.
Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in design or digital media, user experience, or marketing. Work experience in related fields.

* Many of these are entry level positions.



Marketing, Customer Service

Customer Service Representative
\$51,096 to \$56,400 a year
 Work with customers - on the phone, in-person, or online - to resolve questions about their electric bills. Enroll customers in SMUD programs, and arrange payment plans for customers who are behind on their bill.
Qualifications: Proper telephone etiquette and customer care skills, basic arithmetic and communication skills - proper English grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. Written & verbal exams required.

Office Technician
\$51,840 to \$63,144 a year
 Perform a range of technical, clerical, and administrative work in the office.
Qualifications: Familiar with office procedures and practices, knowledge of relevant computer systems and software, math skills to perform basic calculations. Written exam required.

Market Research Specialist
\$82,680 to \$103,188 a year
 Design and oversee customer surveys, analyze data, report survey findings, populate and maintain customer information databases.
Qualifications: College-level courses in survey research methods, marketing, economics, statistics. Minimum 3 years of experience in customer research or related fields. Applicants go through data analysis & presentation exercise.



Science, Technology, Engineering, Math

Assistant Engineer
\$63,024 to \$78,672 a year
 Assist in the design of distribution lines, sub-stations, and facilities in compliance with safety and engineering codes and regulations.
Qualifications: Graduating college seniors in engineering or in the final semester of a bachelor's or master's program. Some work experience is expected.

Accounting Technician
\$54,216 to \$66,180 a year
 Process and review financial transactions, prepare spreadsheets, do business calculations.
Qualifications: Understanding of math, knowledge of basic accounting. Written exam required.

IT Associate Desktop Support Specialist - **\$69,576 to \$86,827/yr**
 Install, maintain and troubleshoot PC operating systems; assist employees with software and hardware questions.
Qualifications: Relevant work experience. BA degree is desirable.

Field Biologist
\$98,208 to \$122,676 a year
 Monitor water quality, fish and plant populations to ensure compliance with federal environmental requirements.
Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in biological or environmental science; knowledge of laws about working in natural environments.



Field Work

Lineworker Apprentice
\$36.87 to \$53.88 an hour
 Install and repair distribution lines and other electrical systems. Work at elevations above ground, in trenches and vaults, as well as around and with energized equipment.
Qualifications: Knowledge of basic math to determine cable lengths, calculate voltage, current, and resistance in electrical circuits. Written & physical exams required.

Service Dispatcher
\$61,068 to \$74,448 a year
 Manage calls from customers regarding outages, equipment problems, and emergencies. Dispatch service crews for emergency work.
Qualifications: Basic knowledge of electricity to understand customer problems and take appropriate action. Written exam required.

Vehicle Attendant
\$27.66 to \$32.74 an hour
 Maintain, diagnose, and repair SMUD vehicles, including trucks, automotive, construction, and other equipment.
Qualifications: Knowledge of terminology and tools used in servicing automotive equipment; general principles of fleet operations; safe working procedures. Must obtain a hazardous materials endorsement within 6 months of hire.

Learn about current job openings at smud.org/Careers.

Job descriptions and salary ranges are effective 2017 and subject to change at any time.