

Searching For a Job or Internship

Key Steps

Whatever your goal, you need to:

1. Know what you want to do and the skills you bring
2. Identify and target the employers that have what you want
3. Develop effective marketing materials: resumes, cover letters and interview skills
4. Secure and successfully engage in the interview process
5. Evaluate and accept (and often decline) your offers

Seems simple, right? Just remember that you will be repeating the steps for each employer you pursue. While there will be disappointments along the way and things you cannot control may have a great impact (like the economy), keep focused on your goals and work the process.

While some job search methods will work better for you and the career field you are pursuing than others (see listing on page 40), it is important to diversify your search and use multiple methods with your own personal spin that sets you apart.

STEPS 1 & 2

The most important steps in the job search are identifying what kind of job you want, what you have to offer, and finding the employers that offer the opportunities you are targeting. Employers are most interested in individuals who have focused their career interests. Therefore it is important to:

- Identify and be prepared to discuss your interests, skills, experiences, knowledge, and attributes.
- Identify and research employers that have the type of positions and environment that fit your interests.

Don't get caught without experience

Through internships or other experiential opportunities, you will benefit enormously from getting real world work exposure. Employers expect you to supplement your academic background with work experience. You also get the chance to develop contacts in your chosen career. The people in your network can be valuable for advice, information, and job leads. Remember to check with your academic college about internship possibilities.

This information is applicable across all levels of the job search—for undergraduate and graduate students looking for internships or entry-level jobs, alumni with more experience looking to change careers or move up in their current field. Many of the methods are timeless and will be useful for the remainder of your professional life.

STEPS 3 & 4

Effectively promoting your skills and experiences will catch the attention of employers. Your communications might take the form of resumes or cover letters, informational interviews, networking, meeting at a career fair, or telephone calls. You must express why you are interested in that particular employer and position and why you believe you are qualified for the job.

Refer to the articles on Resume Writing, Correspondence, Interviewing, and Job Offers and Acceptances in this Guide for tips. Check with your campus career office for more resources and information on both online and in-person workshops.

STEP 5

As you can see, the job search process involves a great deal of thought and time to eventually have offers to consider. Deciding on the best offer for you is an important final step and often involves sensitive communications and some negotiating.

REPEAT STEPS 1-5

For even highly qualified people, rejection and disappointment are part of the job search process. You might need to look at the amount of time you are spending on job search activities to determine if you are doing enough. You might also need to reassess your job objectives—are they focused enough? Are you following up on leads? Are your resumes and cover letters tailored to the positions you are seeking? Are your interview skills strong enough?

Job Search Methods

There are many ways to look for job opportunities. The most successful job search plan is one in which a variety of search strategies are used. Presented below are some of the most popular strategies for the job search as well as benefits, challenges, and tips.

STRATEGY/TOOLS	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES	TIPS
CAREER FAIRS Attend career fairs sponsored by Career Services and academic colleges	Opportunity to meet with a number of recruiters in person and in one location; Build networking contacts	Not all fields and areas of study are equally represented; Students with very specific career goals may benefit from seeking field-specific or geographically-specific fairs	Plan ahead and research companies attending; Follow up to learn about opportunities in your area of interest
ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWING Add the OCI option to your Nittany Lion Career Network account, view the orientation session on ANGEL and search for jobs from employers interviewing on campus.	Primary way in which companies recruit for business and technical positions; Employers are specifically seeking Penn State students to fill employment openings	Not all industries use on-campus interviewing as a recruitment strategy	Check job listings on a weekly basis paying close attention to deadlines
NITTANY LION CAREER NETWORK Update your personal and academic information, upload a resume, search for job postings and leads/prospects postings, find details on information sessions and more.	Access to a wide variety of jobs posted by employers who are not coming on campus to interview	Not all fields and areas of study are equally represented	Check job postings regularly as they come in on a daily/weekly basis
NETWORKING Talk to everyone you know to develop a list of contacts; Ask for information on jobs/companies and circulate your resume	One of the top job search strategies to identify potential job opportunities and learn more about a position, company, or industry	Takes time and effort to build your network; Requires skill in organizing contacts and following through on recommendations received	Join online networking programs: LionLink, or Penn State Career Connection, the Career Services LinkedIn group; Check with your college/department for contacts.
TARGETED SEARCH Identify the types of organizations you would like to work for, develop a targeted list, and research companies	Allows you to be more proactive and take charge of your search, instead of waiting for companies to post positions	Takes investment of time to research and tailor your resume/cover letter to the organization and the position	Use resources such as CareerBeam, your local Chamber of Commerce, and employer directories
INTERNET Scan job openings on various job search and employer websites	May help you identify types of positions available	Overwhelming number of sites and positions to sift through; May not receive responses	Check listing of recommended sites in this <i>Guide</i>
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS Research professional associations related to your career interests, as most provide a "career opportunities" section on their website	A source of networking information and career opportunities; Build contacts with individuals who share your professional interests	Entry-level positions may be limited; May need to belong to association to access job postings	Ask faculty to suggest professional associations to research; Use Career Information Center resources to identify top associations
EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES Inquire whether these agencies offer experiences in your career areas	Helpful in identifying local businesses and employment opportunities	May have fees associated with the employment services	Research each agency before signing any contract; Talk to others who have used employment agencies

Using Online Resources in Your Job Search

You can find a lot of information about job listings, salary statistics, employer information, and more online.

To have a successful online job search:

- post an online-friendly version of your resume to professional networking & job sites
- research and target employers
- check employer sites for job postings
- network through blogs, social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn & Twitter

Below is a list of several helpful career sites.

Nittany Lion Career Network

studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/students/NLCN.shtml

This easy-to-use database has many internship and full-time opportunities especially for Penn Staters. NLCN accounts have already been created for all registered Penn State students. Login to your account today and use the job search agent feature that sends you email updates with jobs that meet your skills and needs.

Career Information Center Online Resources

studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic/

Access major, internship, and career information from WetFeet, Vault, CareerBeam, What Can I Do With This Major?, and more.

See page 8 for more information on the resources available.

Career Information Center Handouts & Salary Information

studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic/handouts.shtml

Download career-specific handouts on topics ranging from Consulting to Careers in Sports and access the latest starting salary information from NACE.

Job Search Via Social Media

LinkedIn ~ Facebook ~ Twitter

Social media sites are excellent places to learn about careers and internships and cultivate a professional network. Recruiters are also using social media tools like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter to identify and connect with potential candidates.

If you choose to search for jobs on these networks, be aware that companies are using them to conduct background checks on applicants looking for jobs. They want to uncover questionable judgment, illegal activity, or other things that they consider to be red flags. Some companies even gain access to information that students might consider relatively private by asking interns who have strong campus connections to perform online background checks.

Exercise CAUTION: Recruiters report that students who use these sites to brag about drinking habits, illicit drug use, etc. are likely to hurt their chances of obtaining job offers. Students who would never dream of bringing up such subjects in an interview or showing a recruiter risqué photographs sometimes do that very thing online, thinking that a company will never uncover this information. That's a dangerous—and incorrect—assumption.

Investigate the privacy settings on social networking sites and use good judgment before you post.

See page 16 for more tips on how to manage your online presence.

Other Career Sites

www.quintcareers.com
www.rileyguide.com
www.simplyhired.com
www.collegegrad.com
www.onedayonejob.com

Looking for industry-specific job search resources? Check out the Salaries, Guides and Handouts link in the Career Information Center on our website.



Avoiding Scams while Hunting for Jobs and Internships

Enter with Caution: Tips for Avoiding Job Posting Scams

- Do not give your personal bank account, PayPal account, or credit card numbers to a new employer.
- Do not agree to have funds or paychecks direct deposited into any of your accounts by a new employer— you should know them first. Most employers give the option of direct deposit or a paycheck, and make these arrangements during your first day or week of actual employment—not before.
- Do not forward, transfer, send by courier (e.g., FedEx, UPS), or “wire” any money to any employer, or on behalf of any employer, using your personal account(s).
- Do not transfer money and retain a portion for payment.
- Do not respond to suspicious and/or “too good to be true” unsolicited job emails.
- In general, applicants do not pay a fee to obtain a job (but there are some rare exceptions—so be careful, and consult with a Career Services professional first).
- Do not pay to participate in high priced international internships (not only are these internships unpaid, but the students must pay the organization to intern with them).
- Stay away from high-pressure sales pitches that require you to pay now or risk losing out on an opportunity.

Warning: Signs of a Possible Scam

- Often found via broad-based employment web sites or sent as unsolicited email directly to you
- Makes claims such as: “Work from home – make thousands from your computer. Work as much or as little as you want.”
- “Company” does not have a web site, or it is very poorly organized or developed
- Uses domain names that do not exist (e.g., @InMail24.com and others) or free mail services like Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.
- Asks you for personal information that may include social security number and/or bank account information (for “credit check” purposes) prior to any face-to-face interview
- Job advertised is not the same as the one offered to you
- Job involves money transfers of any kind and/or as part of the interview process
- Emails sent to you contain poor spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- “Employer” asks you to generate “leads” as part of your interview

***If it seems too good to be true,
it probably is!***

Job Scam Email: An Example

Hello,

If you are seriously looking for income and want to work when your schedule permits, we can help you. We are currently looking for online workers. You will need to have available computer and internet access. All you do is online. No experience required.

*So, if you are interested and need more info on this job, please email me at my business email:
ashleyr@worksj.com*

*Best regards,
Ashley Randall*

P.S. Please send all emails to: ashleyr@worksj.com



Investigate: Resources for Researching Possible Scams

Check with your local consumer protection agency, state Attorney General's Office, Federal Trade Commission, and the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed about a company with which you intend to do business.

- Better Business Bureau : www.bbb.org
- National Association of Attorneys General: www.naag.org
- Federal Trade Commission: www.ftc.gov

You may file a consumer complaint with the FTC by calling (1-877-382-4357) or by using the FTC's online filing system, located at www.ftc.gov. Click on "File a Complaint Online."

Help –I've Been Scammed! What Can I Do?

- Close all bank accounts at the bank(s) where transactions were made related to the scam.
- Order a credit report from all three credit bureaus every 2 to 3 months—look for unusual activity.
- Victims of payment-forwarding scams should contact their local Secret Service field agent. The Secret Service handles complaints of international fraud.
- Fraud victims should file a police report with local law enforcement officials.
- Victims should report the company name, the job posting, and all contact names to the job sites where the scam was posted.
- Victims should permanently close all email addresses that were associated with the job fraud where possible.

Content adapted from "How to Avoid Job Scams while Job Hunting" – a publication of the Academic and Career Planning Center at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College



Since we can't warn you about every scam out there, it is up to you to learn how to recognize the warning signs. If you EVER have concerns about whether a job or internship opportunity is legitimate, please contact the Career Services office for guidance.

Please visit studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/students/disclaimer.shtml to read the full disclaimer which describes the shared responsibility among Penn State Career Services and internship/job seekers in researching and identifying potential concerns about the legitimacy of employers and their respective postings.