

Job Search Strategies

- 1. Conduct a thorough self-assessment.** Take time to better know yourself. Identify your interests, skills, and work values. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and think of some relevant examples. Emphasize those which connect most directly with your career goals.
- 2. Develop your plan.** Decide what you want to do, where you want to do it, what type and size of organization you want to work for, etc. Research your career area thoroughly; know position requirements, advancement potential and demand, salary range, and training programs. Knowing what you are searching for enhances your chances of finding it. The average job search can take 3-6 months. Set up a schedule, breaking it down into tasks.
- 3. Target Employers.** Use a variety of methods to identify potential employers. Ask friends, family, former employers, and faculty. Look at employment and professional association directories, available through the Career Services resource library, public libraries and the internet, as well as Chamber of Commerce offices and professional organizations.
- 4. Attend career fairs.** Career Services holds its career fair at the beginning of fall semester each year. Over 90 employers visit campus to talk with students about full-time, part-time, internship, summer, and volunteer opportunities. Review newspapers and periodicals, checking not only the “want ads,” but also the business section for organizational changes, expansions, and openings.
- 5. Research organizations.** Find out as much as you can about prospective employers through employees, visits, company literature, internet sites and reference books. Prioritize your list of employers in order of preference.
- 6. Develop your resume.** Prepare it based upon information about yourself, and the organization you've targeted. Consider developing several versions of your resume, depending upon the position or organization you are pursuing. When you have a solid draft bring it to Career Services for a critique and get valuable hints on how to improve it.
- 7. Begin contacting employers.** Use all job search methods, concentrating on the most effective ones. Be persistent in your approach. Above all be proactive in your follow-up, don't rely on them to call you!
- 8. Interview.** Organizations usually hire based on face-to-face interviews. Review the interview tips and begin to formulate answers to the practice questions in your head. Practice your interviewing skills and set a goal of obtaining an interview with all organizations on your list, even if there are no current openings. It is your best chance of being remembered once an opening does occur.
- 9. Record keeping.** Set up a system to manage your job search. Your system should include prospective contacts, companies contacted, follow-up dates, and status of contact.
- 10. Prepare for outcomes.** Experiencing rejection is inevitable. Try not to take the rejection personally. You are evaluating, accepting, and rejecting potential employers, just as they are doing with you. You're both looking for a good fit. Use friends and family as support to help you deal with rejection. Be ready to redefine your plan as required.
- 11. Accept/Negotiate offers.** Sometimes it can be feast or famine. First there are no offers, then several come in at the same time. Review your plan and weigh all job offers based upon your needs. You usually can ask for a reasonable amount of time to decide and negotiate the terms of your offer.
- 12. Review your decision.** Look back over the process and determine successes and problems. This will prepare you for next time.