Getting a Job
Success Strategies

A job search is a job in itself. It’s important that you break your search into small, manageable steps that are spread out over time, rather than cramming it all in a small window of time.

“It is not the most qualified persons who get the best jobs; it is those who are most skilled at finding a job.”

Did You Know?… A typical job search can take anywhere from 3-9 months.

Ask Yourself Before Beginning a Job Search:

✓ Do I know what my interests, skills, and strengths are as they relate to my career choices?
✓ Have I identified a list of job titles and careers that interest me and I am willing to pursue?
✓ When was the last time I reviewed my resume, or made edits? If your work history, or activities, have changed recently it’s time to update!
✓ Am I comfortable writing a cover letter?
✓ Do I have a list of 3-4 professional references, and have the consented to be my reference for applications?

If you are unsure of any of the above, schedule an appointment with a Career Coach at Career Education to get started! Call (434) 223-6106 OR stop by Bagby 209

There are many ways and locations in which to search for a job...

Advertisements – remember, not all positions are advertised! Sources of job advertisements include:

  o TigerConnections: Career Education’s online job posting board. Create your account today www.tigerconnections.com – and download the app; search for ‘Careers by Symplicity’
  o Company’s/Organization’s website: often positions are listed here and you can apply through the website
  o Professional and Trade Journals: most are online now, and for specific industries
  o Newspaper Classified Ads: the classic paper version or online listings
  o Mega Sites: such as indeed.com, idealist.com, or others
  o Chamber of Commerce websites: they may, or may not, list job openings in a particular geographic area, but look for the Member Directory. This will give you a great listing of businesses in an area you may be unfamiliar with, and you can contact them.

Always target your resume and cover letter to each position you apply for because advertisements get many applications – you need to stand out.

Personal/Professional Contacts – reality is that many professions operate through informal “networks” – some positions are never advertised – and these people may know of position openings. While your contacts may not be giving you a job, they can provide valuable information and job leads.

  o Organize – develop a list of contacts. They should be in your field of interest and can be professors, internship supervisors, past employers, friends/family friends, contacts through professional associations, and Hampden-Sydney Alumni.
Initiate Contact – with email, a phone call, or letter. Start with people you know to get comfortable. Introduce yourself, say how you got their name (if appropriate) and your purpose (career information and job search advice – not a job). Then determine the best time to talk with them in-depth.

Conduct the informational interview and be sure to send a thank you note. See other handouts for more information on these topics.

Career Fairs & On-Campus Recruiting – you get to speak with recruiters one-on-one from organizations about your interests and how they fit with their company and opportunities. Never attended a career fair? We have a handout for that! Schedule an appointment with a Career Coach to get more tips on success at career fairs.

See the Career Education Calendar of Events (by semester) to keep updated on career fairs.

Targeted Outreach – involves marketing yourself to employers when not responding to a specific advertisement. It requires research and planning, but can be very effective. It shows determination!

- Develop a prospect list
- Research the employer
- Call for the name and title of the person who heads the department you are interested in
- Write a targeted cover letter to the department head/contact
- Follow-up with a phone call