



Internship & Job Search Strategies

Quick Guide

There are many effective ways to find a new position. This quick guide outlines the basic components and recommended steps for a successful internship or job search in which the seeker is *actively engaged in the process*. For a more comprehensive guide with step-by-step resources, check out our Internship & Job Search Action Plan handout.

Staff members in the Career Education Center (CEC) are available to support you through every step of the process listed in the guide: from helping you develop your personal search plan, to connecting with alumni on LinkedIn, to preparing for an interview! Visit during Daily Drop In hours or schedule an appointment for a more in-depth conversation.

Create Time For Your Search

While you have competing demands on your schedule, an internship or job search requires dedicated time and energy. The search for an internship or job can take varying lengths of time—between one to nine months—depending how much time you spend on it weekly. If you are serious about finding an opportunity, you must schedule time in your calendar to focus on it. Realize that this is your responsibility, while simultaneously recognizing that there are external factors beyond your control. It is never too early to begin the internship or job search.

Use Multiple Strategies

There is not one magic strategy to searching for a position. Rather, it is a combination of multiple strategies. It is important to strike a balance between looking for advertised openings and unadvertised openings (the hidden job market). Experts agree that between 70-80% of positions are never publicly posted and are identified through networking. It feels intuitive and productive to mostly apply online, however a complete job search is not solely applying to jobs in Handshake or surfing the Internet. Sending out resumes and cover letters is one strategy, but using several different methods at once will likely get you the most results. Using your networking skills in conjunction with sending out resumes and making phone calls is a very powerful way to diversify your search. Try talking people you know who recently completed an internship or job search to find out what worked well for them.

We still would encourage you to utilize Handshake, as it is our comprehensive job and internship platform where local and nationwide employer partners post positions! Work smarter, not harder, by setting up numerous “saved searches” with different filters and sign up for weekly email updates where you’ll be sent new positions that meet your search criteria.

Develop a Plan

When developing your *internship search plan*, consider the following questions: What do I want to learn? What skills do I want to develop? What industries or job functions would I like to explore? When developing your *job search plan*, consider the following questions: What job do I want? Where do I want to live? What types of organizations are best for me? What’s my specific search strategy? Answering these questions will help guide your search towards meaningful, professional experiences that match your skills, interests and values. Develop a plan of how much time you will commit to your job search per week. Create a list of contacts and notes to track your progress and information.

Prepare Your Materials

You need a good resume. You must be ready to respond immediately as you become aware of positions for which you want to be considered. A good resume requires time and effort, so be sure to allow yourself time for multiple revisions. Use resources on resume writing and cover letters at the Career Education Center and have your documents reviewed.

Gain Experience

What are you doing now to build your resume? Are you interning, volunteering or actively involved in the community or on-campus? The majority of employers are looking for candidates with applied experience. Many employers, also recruit interns as potential full-time hires. Positioning yourself within professional associations or organizations of interest can enhance your chances of getting the role you are seeking, because you will make a wide variety of contacts and connections.

Make Connections

Most people find a job by connecting with people. Networking resources include professors, family, friends, neighbors, professional associations, current and previous employers (or internship supervisors) and alumni. Tell everyone that you are looking for an internship or job and ask for suggestions or contacts; however, do not simply ask them for a position. The Career Education Center can assist you in using LinkedIn to identify UP graduates working in particular fields, locations, or for specific employers and seeking their advice. Many alumni want to help so take advantage of this resource. As you continue your search, you need to spend at least 70% of your time talking to people and maintaining contact. Connecting with contacts should not be a one-time occurrence; networking is an ongoing process that should continue even after you have obtained a position.

Use Events, Resources & Services at the University of Portland

Many employers connect with UP candidates through the Career Education Center. It is important to make the most of what is available right here at the University. The CEC collaborates with other departments and sponsors programs and events where students and alumni have an opportunity to learn from and network with employers. Events include industry nights, career crawls, lunch and learns, and several career fairs. Bring a resume and dress appropriately to make a good first impression. Visit www.up.edu/career for a calendar of events, and check Engage regularly.

Consider Short-Term Service Opportunities or Temporary Positions

It's possible to acquire applied experience through positions that are temporary, educational, or service-oriented. Short-term experiences can serve as a way to gain relevant knowledge, increase self-confidence, earn money, and perhaps lead to something more permanent. A good way to secure "bridge" or "interim work" is by "temping" through a temporary employment agency. Search online for lists of local employment agencies.

Depending on one's personal situation, the period immediately following graduation or in between jobs could be a "window of opportunity." Creatively exploring this "window" can have a profound effect on one's future. It can be an exciting time to experiment with careers of interest or perhaps experience another culture; what is gained can be life changing and move you closer to clarifying long-range career goals. Consider public service programs such as VISTA, Peace Corps, HealthCorps or Teach for America. The Moreau Center for Service and Justice (www.up.edu/moreaucenter/) at the University of Portland can assist you in identifying service opportunities.

Keep at it!

An internship or job search rarely produces immediate results. It takes time and effort. Some leads will take you to dead ends, and, unfortunately, a normal part of the process is receiving rejections. Try not to be discouraged by them and use them as a learning tool. Follow up with phone calls to the employers to get feedback as to why you were not offered the position. Remember, it is important to be courteous during these inquiries. Be sure to track your progress and keep in touch.

Position Yourself for the Future

While you may have to accept a position that isn't your dream job, keep in mind that many kinds of experiences can be career stepping-stones. Make choices that will lead to future options. Learning new skills, volunteering in a field that professionally interests you while working "just for money," thoughtfully investigating graduate school, and effectively networking are positive steps to take for the long term.