

Job Search Strategies

(804) 289-8547 | careerservices.richmond.edu

Office Hours: M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. | Walk-in Hours: M-F, 2 to 4 p.m.



Alumni & Career Services

What are the goals of your job search? What are the important criteria you are considering? What is important to you in this first job? If you are unsure of your career direction or how your academic experience relates to jobs and industries, consult with a Career Services advisor. Once you have defined your goals, work with Career Services to identify ways you could realistically achieve them through the resources available to you and based upon your self-assessment. Your focus will be essential for identifying appropriate opportunities and cultivating a satisfying and rewarding experience.

STEPS TO GET STARTED

- 1. Define your search parameters.** Job searching can be overwhelming for students and recent graduates, often because search parameters are not clearly defined at the outset. Answer the basic questions about what you want before you begin digging for opportunities.
 - a. Where do I want to live?** Try to establish targeted regions, cities, states or metro areas to define the boundaries of your search. Where would you like to live, ideally? Are there places where you're unwilling to move?
 - b. What realities might affect my search?** Do you need to live close to family? Do you have a certain minimum salary requirement based on student loan repayment? Think about life issues that may directly impact your job search and use them to further establish search criteria.
 - c. What industries or organizations am I searching for?** When you don't know what you're seeking, it's really hard to find it! Before you begin searching for job postings, narrow your search fields to, at minimum, a few target industries, and if possible, specific companies or organizations.
- 2. Alert your network, and work to expand it.** 80% of jobs are filled through networking. That means that someone you know may be able to alert you to a great opportunity... if they know you're looking.
 - a. Alert:** Before you begin applying for positions, evaluate your current professional network contacts—this includes professors, friends, family members, and others you may know through those people—that you are beginning a search. Provide contacts with information about what you are looking for, and request help. Don't be afraid to ask network connections if they are willing to provide you with contacts in your desired field for informational interviews or job shadowing opportunities. Encourage them to reach out to you if an appropriate opportunity becomes available in your targeted organizations or industries.
 - b. Expand:** Use LinkedIn to expand your current network. Join the UR Career Connections LinkedIn group to contact alumni who've expressed a willingness to mentor and help Richmond students. Join other affiliated Richmond groups, as well as those that cater to the industries you seek. Group membership increases your likelihood of finding connections to companies or jobs you want. Use the Network tab, where you can select "Find Alumni" to search all Richmond alumni on LinkedIn by categories like location, company, major, and skills.
- 3. Search with purpose.** Do not Google for jobs! To find and apply for job postings, work with a Career Services advisor to identify the most helpful and relevant resources for your particular interests. SpiderConnect is an excellent place to begin your search, as the employers who post opportunities there are seeking Spider students and alumni specifically. Before jumping to large external databases like indeed.com or simplyhired.com, try to identify specific organizations in the geographic areas you're targeting and review their websites for postings directly- many organizations, especially small businesses and non-profits, may never post an opportunity on a large database. Visit the Career Services website for in-depth industry specific resources as well as reputable search databases.

AFTER YOU APPLY

Follow up. This may be the most important component to the job search process. A follow up phone call or email may be the difference between you and another candidate. Be sure that all follow-up is done in a professional manner. Practice what you will say and use formal writing techniques in ALL correspondence. Do not use abbreviated text. Do not be overly persistent (calling every day) and make sure to play by their rules (if they say no phone calls, do not call). Inquiring where the organization is in their search process or contacting them to ensure that they received your materials is a professional and subtle way to get your name across their desk once again. If you get nervous talking to people, script your conversation on paper so that you have a guideline to follow. Use InterviewStream or practice with a friend. This will help you get comfortable with these professional phone calls. Meet with a Career Services advisor to help clarify things— that's why we are here!

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Tips for Success

- Start early - it is never too early to start the process; prepare a résumé and have it reviewed by a Career Services advisor.
- Conduct an informational interview (see separate informational interviewing handout) — doing so can give you an edge in developing your application materials as well as demonstrate your interest to someone inside the organization.
- Be aware of application timelines for different industries; keep track of deadlines.
- Follow up with every application you submit (unless it states not to).
- Apply to as many opportunities as you can handle the follow up for.
- Read the application material thoroughly — know what is required.
- Use a combination of search strategies and resources.
- Create a way to track your sent applications: when you sent them, method of delivery, follow-up.
- Your job is to figure out exactly what this company is looking for and incorporate that into your application materials. To do this effectively, research the company and apply your skills in a way that matches the position's description. Knowing the industry is imperative.
- Don't stop the process until you have received and accepted an offer.