



## Avoiding Job Scams & Researching Potential Employers

225 LAWRENCE CENTER ● 610-436-2501 ● WWW.WCUPA.EDU/CDC ● CDC@WCUPA.EDU

It is important for you to educate yourself about potential scams related to jobs and internships.

### Signs that a Job is Probably Fraudulent:

- The promise of a large salary for very little work - especially those that state thousands of dollars of income per month with little or no experience required.
- Positions that ask you to give credit card or bank account numbers, or copies of personal documents.
- Jobs that ask you to send payment by wire service or courier.
- Positions in which you are offered a large payment or reward in exchange for allowing the use of your bank account - often for depositing checks or transferring money.
- While there are legitimate opportunities for individuals to work from home, be sure to research the position in advance of applying.

### What Should I Do if I Think I Have Been Scammed?

- You should never provide your personal information such as credit card numbers, social security number or bank account numbers prior to meeting with an organization in person and being certain of the legitimacy of the opportunity. Never spend any of your own money on an employment "opportunity" unless you are very certain that it is for a legitimate reason.
- If you doubt the legitimacy of an email or phone call, contact the Career Center at 610-436-2501 or [cdc@wcupa.edu](mailto:cdc@wcupa.edu).
- If you believe you are the victim of fraud, contact Public Safety at 610-436-3311 or local police.
- If you reply to someone using your WCU email, but later suspect it was a scam, we recommend you contact [Frank Piscitello](#) in WCU Information Security for additional steps to protect your account.

### Additional Information about Job Scams:

- Federal Trade Commission video about Job Scams: <http://ftc.gov/jobscams>
- Employment Scam Announcement - National Cyber Awareness System: <https://www.ic3.gov/media/2017/170118.aspx>
- Fraud Posting Red Flags: <http://www.symplicity.com/blog/2010/11/09/fraud-posting-tips/#sthash.rkTObgSz.dpuf>

### Researching the Legitimacy of an Employer or Employment Opportunity

The West Chester University Twardowski Career Development Center (TCDC) does not endorse any employer and urges students to use good judgment in all of their interactions with employers. We advise students to participate in job interviews in public places or places of business only.

The TCDC is not responsible for safety, wages, working conditions or other aspects of off-campus employment. Due to the volume of jobs received by this office, we may be unable to research the integrity of each organization or person that lists a job with us. The TCDC suggests that students request business references for unknown organizations before interviewing with them off campus or exploring job opportunities. If you ever have any concerns about any job posting or related correspondence you receive, contact the Career Development Center at [cdc@wcupa.edu](mailto:cdc@wcupa.edu) or 610-436-2501.

### **Why is it important to research each job opportunity?**

- Find out if the job advertisement and the company that offers it is legitimate.
- Find information to help you determine whether the company or job is a good fit for you.
- Find data to help you write targeted resumes and cover letters.
- Find facts to help you answer interview questions such as: Why do you want to work for this company?

### **Research the Job and Company**

Visit the company web site. If the company in question doesn't have a web site or the web site doesn't seem to match the advertised job, there may be cause for concern. Note the professionalism of the web site. Is there specific contact information? Are jobs and career information actually posted on the site? Lack of pertinent information is a red flag.

### **Find Company Profiles and News Articles**

Ask a Reference Librarian at FHG Library about how to conduct company research using databases such as Hoovers.com, Lexis Nexis, and many other available resources.

### **Use Personal Contacts, Linked-in or other Networking Sites**

Do you have any connections to help you find inside information? If you belong to a professional association, they may be able to put you in touch with people who can advise you. Search Linked-In by "People" and the Advanced Search Fields for "Company Name." Click the "Current Companies Only" checkbox to receive information on people currently listed as employed by this company.

### **Use Google**

Google is an excellent tool. Search by the name of the company to see what information you can find. You can also search by "<company name> scam" to see if this company has been reported as a scam.

### **Check with Consumer Services**

Two organizations to utilize are: the Better Business Bureau or the Federal Trade Commission to see if any complaints have been lodged against the company.

### **Investigate the Company's References**

If you aren't sure a company is legitimate, request a list of employees or contractors. Then contact the references to see how satisfied they are. If a company isn't willing to share references (names, email addresses and phone numbers), this is a red flag.

### **Poor Communication Skills**

Be careful when an employer cannot communicate accurately or effectively on the web site, by email, over the telephone, etc. If communications are sloppy, how professional is the organization?

### **Exercise Caution When Asked to Pay Any Fees**

Most legitimate employers will not charge to hire you! Don't send money for work-at-home directories, advice on getting hired, company information or for anything else related to the job. There are some well-known internship programs that do require payment to place you in internships. Remember that Ram Career Network and other data bases can provide WCU students with free help in locating internships.

### **Review Payment Information**

When information about salary isn't listed on a job posting, try to find out if you will receive a salary or be paid on commission. Find out how much you're paid, how often you are paid and how you are paid. If the company doesn't pay an hourly rate or a salary, be cautious and investigate further.

### **Caveat Emptor (Let the Buyer Beware)**

Read all information carefully. If the opportunity sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Just because a job lead appears in a legitimate publication, it doesn't mean that the job or company is, necessarily, legitimate. Forget getting rich quick.