

Searching for a job is a skill that can be successfully learned and developed. It can be time-consuming and a lot of work, so persistence, patience, and attention to detail are all important. An average job search can take 3-6 months, and often it is not the most qualified but the best prepared candidate who gets the job. Job search strategies must vary by industry of interest. For example, the busiest hiring time for teachers is the summer, whereas many corporations conduct interviewing and make offers in October (for May graduates!). Speaking with a career counselor in the Twardowski Career Development Center (TCDC) can help you utilize the best, most applicable strategies for your areas of interest.

### Getting Started:

1. Conduct a thorough self-assessment. Know your interests, your strengths, and the types of education and experiences you have had that demonstrate your knowledge, skills, and abilities.
2. Develop a plan:
  - a. Clarify what you want: job title, industry, location, size of organization, salary, advancement potential, and training benefits.
  - b. Identify and research strategies specific to your industry.
3. Develop and get advice on your resume. Be sure to tailor and target your application materials to your specific job and industry interests (generic resumes and cover letters are not effective).
4. Identify professors, work supervisors, and mentors who will be willing and able to provide References for you when you apply for positions.
5. Develop or update your LinkedIn profile, for networking, researching companies, and tapping into job postings: <https://students.linkedin.com/>
  - a. Start by connecting with friends, work colleagues and supervisors, faculty members, family friends, and alumni. Join professional association groups to grow your network.
6. Begin to identify potential employers by using a variety of resources:
  - a. Attend [Career Fairs](#) and other on-campus events.
  - b. Investigate online. Use our [Research Employers](#) handout as well as the FHG Library's Company Research page: <http://subjectguides.wcupa.edu/companyresearch>
  - c. Talk to people (faculty, advisors, alumni) familiar/within the organization. This is a great way to use LinkedIn: look for WCU alumni at organizations of interest and reach out to them to learn more!
  - d. Professional and business directories, available at certain associations, public libraries, and chambers of commerce.

### Job Search Methods and Tools:

1. *Ram Career Network*: West Chester University's database for students and alumni to connect with employment opportunities. The system also includes the On-Campus Interviewing Program, career fairs, and an electronic Resume Book that employers can search. <https://wcu-csm.symphlicity.com/students/>
2. *Directly Contacting Employers*: Go right to the organization's website to look for openings. No matter how you learn about a job, you usually at some point MUST officially apply via the organization's website or job application system.
  - a. Conduct some research to identify who is the person with the power to hire you and contact them directly with a letter/email of interest with your resume.

- b. You may also make contact via telephone or LinkedIn. While LinkedIn is primarily a networking site, many organizations and people post job opportunities.
- 3. *Online Job Boards*: Industry-specific sites are usually more effective than general job search sites. The career center has compiled a list of some good places to start: <http://www.wcupa.edu/services/stu.car/resources.aspx>.
- 4. *Networking and Informational Interviewing*: The most effective methods!
  - a. Networking is a process of building relationships. Successful networking is about building your personal brand, learning about best practices in a career field or industry, and making meaningful connections with individuals with whom you can engage in mutually beneficial exchanges of information.
  - b. Informational interviewing is talking to people in your career field, people in targeted organizations, or potential employers. Interview them to find out about the field, organization, opportunities, job leads, etc. through a 30-minute session, preferably in person. (You should not be asking for a job at this point.)

#### **Additional Methods and Tools:**

1. *Third party recruiters* – staffing/recruiting agencies refer entry level applicants to employers, sometimes on a temporary basis. A fee is paid, sometimes by the company, sometimes by the applicant. Going through these agencies can serve as a gateway from temporary to full-time employment.
  - a. Be a wise consumer and avoid paying up front. These organizations are limited in their contacts. Their interest often is just getting you placed.
2. Volunteer to gain experience and contacts.
3. Take a related job to develop skills for your goal and to build a network with professionals.
4. Contact former employers to identify leads on prospective jobs or companies/organizations.
5. Join networking organization or job search support group.
6. Examine continuing education or gaining specialist training needed for specific occupations.

#### **REMEMBER...**

1. Recordkeeping is important. Set up a system that will work for you, to track who you contacted and when, what you sent them, and when it is time to follow-up. Download and save copies of job postings, as they could be taken offline at any time and you want your own copy for reference.
2. Prepare for rejection. Recognize that it's not personal, it is a normal and frequent part of the process; you and the organization are both looking for the best fit.
3. Prioritize employers in order of your interest. Perhaps create an A, B, and C list with A being your highest interest or best prospects, on down to C being your "backup plan."
4. Persistence is important. Keep contacting new employers. Be careful not to overstep, though, and become an annoyance.
5. Employment outlook varies by geographic regions and industry sectors, so depending upon your goals you may have fewer or more challenges in your search.
6. If you are considering a long distance job search:
  - a. Subscribe to newspapers/magazines from that area and watch for trends online.
  - b. It helps to have friends/family in the area and schedule trips to scout and schedule interviews.
  - c. Include your relocation plans in your correspondence, so companies will know that you plan to move.
  - d. Be careful about relocating without strong job leads or a plan B.