

HOW TO FIND A JOB

Candidates looking for jobs and employers seeking candidates find each other in a variety of ways. In any economy, a job search should utilize many strategies including resources that are unique to one's career field.

Not every graduate launches into a career immediately upon completion of a degree. Depending on your personal situation as well as the economy, it may be more appropriate to seek a short-term position. The question to ask yourself before you begin your search is "What kind of job will help me begin my career?" rather than "What am I going to do for the rest of my life?"

Whatever your ideas, it will be important to get organized. Recognize that you must start early and make time to research and develop plans. Schedule time each day to do *something* related to your job search. This proactive approach will minimize the angst sometimes related to looking for a job.

Are You Ready to Begin a Job Search?

It is important to begin by clarifying what you want and what you offer. Ask yourself these key questions as you begin to assess your job search readiness.

1. Do you know what you want?

- What kind of work do you want to do? (I'm flexible is not enough)
- What are your interests, motivations and passions? The things you love and truly care about can be a key to identifying the kind of organization where your skills talents and values can be best utilized.
- What skills do you like to use *and* hope to develop further? Remember, just because you have a skill doesn't mean you want or need to use it.
- What do you value? Money? Work-life balance? Being able to make a difference? Knowing this will help you assess opportunities and organizations.
- What kind of workplace would you most enjoy? In what kind of environment would you be most comfortable? An office setting? Outdoors? Very structured and organized? Constant public contact and interaction? How would you like to dress every day? These can be very significant in determining where you'd be your happiest.

2. Do you know what employers want?

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the top 10 qualities/skills employers seek are:

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| 1. Communication skills (verbal) | 6. Problem-solving skills |
| 2. Strong work ethic | 7. Communication skills (written) |
| 3. Teamwork skills (works well with others) | 8. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others) |
| 4. Analytical skills | 9. Computer skills |
| 5. Initiative | 10. Flexibility/adaptability |

3. Do you know why you are a good candidate?

Knowing what you offer greatly increases your job search effectiveness, separates you from other candidates, and increases the effectiveness of your cover letter, resume, and interview. Look at the list above. Which do you excel in? How have you demonstrated these?

- Can you identify your skills and abilities?
- Are you confident in those skills?
- Can you give examples of how you've demonstrated your skills?

4. Do you understand how to:

- Effectively market yourself through resumes, letters, email and interviews?
- Identify and effectively network?
- Conduct the necessary research?
- Articulate your strengths or the value you can add to the organization?

Take Stock of Your Skills

Everyone has skills. In fact, everyone has hundreds of skills that can be related in some way to one or more occupations. A skills inventory should precede any communication with employers. This will make your résumé, cover letters, and job interviews much more effective. Skills gained from volunteer work, hobbies, education, and other life experiences should be examined in addition to those skills gained from paid work.

The competencies employers want can be developed in various ways and fall into three categories:

- **Transferable Skills:** skills you have acquired during any activity in your life -- jobs, classes, projects, community service, hobbies, sports, virtually anything -- that are transferable and applicable to your job. Basically these are our ability to effectively work with people, information (data) and things.
- **Adaptive Skills:** personality traits, behaviors, attitudes that allow a person to accept and adjust to the physical, interpersonal and organizational conditions of a job. Many of these may be innate to some, but they can also be developed and honed through activities, internships, volunteer work, etc.
- **Job Specific Skills:** abilities required for a specific job, or abilities related to mastering a specific body of information. (i.e. programming, balancing spreadsheets, nursing skills, performing a surgical procedure).

Review item #2 on the previous page of qualities/skills employers want. Most of them are transferable or adaptive skills that you have probably already developed and demonstrated in various ways. Begin your job search with a clear sense of your skills and how you have demonstrated them.

How to Create a Skills Inventory

- Write a brief description of all paid and unpaid positions you have held (internships, jobs, volunteer, campus and community organizations, etc).
- Identify the most important function you performed.
- What skills were necessary to effectively perform these?
- If you were to meet with a supervisor what achievements would you discuss?

Review your skills inventory as you apply for a position. How do your skills connect to the employer's needs?

Strengthen Your Candidacy and Make Connections

If you are completing your degree this year, what are you doing now to build your resume? Are you interning, volunteering or actively involved on campus or in the community? Many employers recruit interns for their full-time openings. If there is an organization that you'd really love to work for, think about how you can position yourself within it to enhance your chances of 'being at the right place at the right time' should an opening occur.

Take Responsibility and Focus on the Positive

Realize that getting a job is your responsibility, while simultaneously recognizing that there are external factors beyond your control. Don't waste precious energy and time on "woe is me" or other negatives.

Compete!

Apply to openings and do so often. If you don't apply, you will definitely not get the job. Take what you hear about the job market in stride; don't let it immobilize you. Apply and let people know you're looking. Be smart and conduct a quality job search.

Budget Time, Energy, Money

An active job search requires budgeting more than just money. It also requires time and energy. Develop a schedule! Your week may involve classes, studying, a job, volunteer work, clubs/organizations, socializing, and doing laundry. If you're really serious about finding a job, make it a priority and do something constructive each day. Identify first steps and set goals. To assist with covering the costs of job search and other professional activities, the Fleishman Center offers the [Career Advancement Program](#) (48 kb pdf) through a generous gift from the May Company. This short-term loan can help offset job search related expenses, such as purchasing interviewing attire or traveling to interviews (if not covered by the employer).

Evaluate Your Personal Situation

Your level of interest in a particular position will depend on your circumstances. You may be really excited about one position because the job description sounds great. Another position may sound attractive because you're concerned about school loans or other debt. Different jobs sound viable for different reasons. Remember that this is a beginning and not the last job you'll ever have.

While it is important to identify your wants and needs, it is also important to prioritize your most pressing needs or non-negotiable variables. For example, sometimes job seekers limit the geographic parameters of their job search too quickly. Remember that the larger the geographic area one considers, the greater the number of openings one may find. Another mistake first-time job searchers frequently make is focusing on salary too quickly and rejecting positions that don't meet minimum criteria. However, if the job description sounds perfect, try it anyway. You may find that the benefits package for the lower salary position is better than the higher salary job (i.e. better health insurance benefits, fewer work hours, etc) and that when you sit down and do the math the two positions are fairly equal in total compensation.

Prepare Effective Job Search Documents

What to Send When You Apply for Any Position:

- **Resume:** This highlights education, experience and skills relevant to the job to which you are applying.
- **Cover letter:** This is a business letter that should be tailored to that specific employer clearly indicating the type of position for which you'd like to be considered. In your letter highlight particularly relevant aspects of your background that equip you to perform the work you seek.

Use Fleishman Center programs, review services, as well as [Resume Writing](#) (288 kb pdf) and [Writing Cover Letters](#) (36.5 kb pdf) Quick Reference Guides (available in Fleishman Center and on the website) to prepare effective documents.

How to Find Job Openings

Employers use many methods to identify candidates. How they approach filling a particular position depends on many variables including the qualifications for the position and how quickly the position needs to be filled.

When looking for work it's important to strike a balance between looking for advertised openings and unadvertised openings (the hidden job market). Because many job openings are not advertised it is best to concentrate on the hidden job market. This requires being proactive and taking initiative.

1. **Networking:** This is the NUMBER ONE way that people identify openings and get jobs. Estimates indicate that up to 80% of jobs are found through networking, so you should spend up to 80% of your job search on networking activities. It is the most proactive job search strategy and taps into the hidden job market through the development and cultivation of contacts and relationships. Don't let the word 'networking' intimidate you. It is about creating relationships with people and asking for advice.

Rather than passively relying on chance, the smart job seeker CREATES opportunities to meet people who work in or who may know someone who works in their field of interest. Start by telling everyone you know (relatives, friends, faculty, supervisors, and neighbors) that you're looking for a job. You never know who may know someone who can provide valuable information or a valuable contact. For more information on effective networking, review the Fleishman Center's [Networking and Informational Interviewing guide](#) (64.5 kb pdf).

A critical networking resource is the [Binghamton University Alumni Association Professional Network](#) on LinkedIn, where you can tap an expansive group of alumni for networking. If you're a current student looking to learn about career fields, expand your professional network, and or improve your job search strategy, we encourage you to join the LinkedIn subgroup specifically for student-to-alumni professional networking. Included in the Student-to-Alumni Professional Network subgroup is a network of Binghamton alumni who have volunteered to be contacted by current students regarding their career.

It is important to note that the **Binghamton University Alumni Association Professional Network should not be used to overtly ask people for jobs**. By effectively using the network you'll gain an understanding of how people are hired, gain up-to-date information about who may be hiring, and learn what employers expect from candidates. Ask each contact, "Who else do you think would be an interesting person for me to speak with?", and "May I mention your name?" Even a casual referral can lead to information about openings not yet advertised, early information about anticipated openings, or information about openings not advertised in the publications you see.

Keep good records of the names and contact information of people to whom you've been referred. Identify specific names as often as possible. Keeping a master list of contacts can help, so approach reading the newspaper, participating in internships, or talking with friends and faculty with this in mind.

Many job hunters are using **social networking** in creative ways to find employment. More and more referrals and recommendations start with connections made through online networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn or by sending instant job search updates via messaging feeds like Twitter. Building connections through these can help you access jobs that aren't published in classifieds or traditional job postings. Never used LinkedIn? Not sure how to use these tools in your job search? Speak with a Fleishman Center counselor for more information or attend one of our programs on social media.

For further reading about networking, Fleishman Center's career library has the following titles among others:

- *A Foot in the Door: Networking Your Way into the Hidden Job Market*
- *The Fine Art of Small Talk: How To Start A Conversation, Keep It Going, Build Networking Skills, and Leave A Positive Impression*
- *The Networking Survival Guide: Get the Success You Want by Tapping into the People You Know*

2. Fleishman Events and Services

Many employers connect with Binghamton candidates through the Fleishman Center. Make the most of what is available to you right here at the University.

- Events.** Bring your resume, research participating organizations in advance, and dress professionally in a manner that will make a good first impression when meeting with employers. The **Job & Internship Fair** held in the fall and again in the spring, hosts employers seeking candidates for internships and full-time jobs. The Fleishman Center is also involved in consortium fair events that are not held on the Binghamton campus. For information on these events, visit the [Fleishman Center Sponsored Events](#) section of Fleishman Center's Programs & Events page on our website.
- hireBING.** The Fleishman Center provides a web-based system to use as part of your job search. Many employers contact Fleishman Center for assistance in identifying candidates for openings. By utilizing hireBING students and alumni can access job listings 24/7. All matriculated undergraduate and graduate students have unrestricted access to the [hireBING](#).
 - **Employers Interviewing On Campus.** Students submit resumes online, receive notification via email, and schedule interview times via the hireBING system.
 - **Employers NOT Interviewing On Campus.** Most employers who seek Binghamton candidates do not visit the campus to conduct interviews. Students and alumni can connect with these employers by either applying for positions posted on hireBING or by uploading a resume to hireBING resume books. Employers can use keyword searches to identify Binghamton candidates to contact directly.
 - **Employer Information Sessions:** Many employers conduct presentations to meet interested students and provide information about their organization. These are listed on the calendar feature of hireBING. It is important to attend sessions held by employers with whom you will be interviewing. Employers consider this part of the interview process, so don't skip out!
- Other Tools and Resources Available Through the Fleishman Center**

The Fleishman Center has many more resources for all students conducting job searches including mock interviews, career counseling, workshops, and our career library. The Fleishman Center subscribes to two valuable online resources to assist you with finding job and internship opportunities and researching employers:

- **WetFeet** is an excellent resource to utilize when you're trying to gather more insightful profiles of companies, careers, and industries. Check out this resource by visiting the "Popular Links" section of the [The Fleishman Center website](#) or at <http://www.wetfeet.com/Careers---Industries.aspx>. WetFeet provides extensive information on different career fields, including an overview, recent trends, job prospects, and the 'good' and 'bad' of a specific industry. Along with information about industries, WetFeet also provides information on job searching, interviewing skills, resume writing, and many other tips. They are written in a blog format so it makes the information easy to read and adds a personal touch. Go check out the website at the link above.
- **Going Global:** provides country-specific and USA city-specific career and employment information features 33 Country Career Guides, 43 USA City Career guides, corporate profiles and internship and job listings within the USA and around the world. Students can access Going Global on the Fleishman Center's website using their PODS user name and password.

3. **Online Job Boards**

There are numerous industry specific and general websites where job opportunities are posted. The Fleishman Center has collected some [links](#) and categorized them for your use on our website. **JOB HUNTER BEWARE:** If you find a job posted online by a secondary source, we recommend you visit the employer's homepage and look for the careers link and see if that job is also posted there to ensure the secondary source is listing a trustworthy posting. Beware of phishing scams for your personal information only share your information with sources you trust.

4. **Off Campus Job Fairs, Recruiting Forums, Events**

Events held off campus provide opportunities to interact with employers. The format of these varies, so you'll want to consider how you can maximize their usefulness. Beyond the campus, there are job fairs held in major cities, such as Boston, New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles. Some focus on particular professions such as programmers, nurses, actuaries, or information systems. Check the [Other Career Events](#) section of The Fleishman Center's Programs & Events page for listings.

5. **Direct Application to Employers**

Selectively send your resume and cover letter (*inquiring* about potential openings) to organizations in your career field and geographic area of interest. Using directories or the internet, identify organizations and obtain contact names and addresses. Visit the organization's website to gain more insight about the nature of their activities and potential career opportunities.

6. **Professional Associations or Societies**

Formal organizations for practitioners exist for virtually every profession. Professional associations and societies often operate websites featuring job boards, resume banks or other employment-related services. Student membership and participation in local, state, regional, or national meetings may be available at reduced rates. The [Gateway to Associations Online](#) provides a comprehensive directory to web sites of business and professional associations.

7. **Short-Term or Temporary Positions**

It is possible to pursue professionally oriented positions that are temporary. Short-term experiences may serve as a way to gain experience, increase self-confidence, earn money, and they may lead to something more permanent. "Temping" through a temporary employment agency can be a good way to secure interim work. Depending on your personal situation, the period immediately following graduation or in between jobs could be a window of opportunity. Creatively exploiting this window can have a profound effect on your future. It can be an exciting time to experiment with careers of interest or perhaps experience another culture. What you gain can enrich your life and move you closer to clarifying long-range goals. For more information on short-term opportunities visit the [Internships & Other Ways to Gain Experience](#) section of the Fleishman Center website.

8. Take your Job Search Global

Perhaps this is the moment for you to see the world and work while you do it. In addition to using Going Global, consider some of the [resources](#) and tips offered on the Fleishman Center website for seeking international employment.

9. Resources for Unique Populations

There may be unique considerations for you as a job seeker if you are a PhD [applying for jobs in academe](#), a member of the [LGBTQ](#) community, a [US Veteran](#) or a [Student with a Disability](#). Every job search is unique and there are many resources available for those who may need support along the way.

10. Employment Agencies, Headhunters, Executive Recruiters

These organizations provide services to employers seeking candidates for particular openings. Their primary client is not the job seeker, but the employer who pays a fee. Nevertheless, you may contact agencies that are interested in candidates with your qualifications. Be a careful consumer and avoid signing anything you haven't read and avoid paying fees. Agencies can be found by conducting an internet search for the geographic location in which you are interested (i.e. employment agency Buffalo).

11. Newspapers

Check the Help Wanted section of the daily paper for the city where you hope to work. Classifieds from the newspapers of major cities as well as many smaller daily papers are available on the web. But don't rely on them exclusively, as research indicates that only a small percentage of hires found the opening in the newspaper. Sunday editions have the biggest classified sections.

Keep at It!

A job search rarely produces results immediately. It takes time and effort. Some leads will take you to dead ends, and, unfortunately, rejection is part of the job search process. Try not to lose focus and keep going. Pick yourself up and get back in the race.

Position Yourself for the Future

While you may need 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 increase your 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.

Identify Your Next Step

There is no magic formula for an effortless job search. It takes action and a positive mental outlook. Ask yourself, "What do I need to do next?" Identify a task to accomplish in a realistic timeframe. For example, if you don't have a resume, then put that at the top of your to-do list. If you get stuck and are unable to identify your next step then you may find it helpful to speak with the Fleishman Center Counselor. Call 777-2400 or check the Fleishman Center [website](#) for Counselor on Call times.

