

Job & Internship Search Guide

**Although these suggestions are general and widely applicable, there are exceptions to every rule. We highly recommend and welcome you to visit the Career Center for a consultation with one of our career counselors.*

How do I prepare?

First, create or update your job search tools. In order to have a successful job search, you must make sure that your job search tools are ready to go – your cover letter and resume are updated, permission has been granted by all references to submit their names, and that your interviewing skills are polished. These elements are essential to a successful job search. The more prepared you are for the job search process, the more confident you will appear to potential supervisors or employers. For assistance in this process, be sure to make an appointment with a Career Counselor in the UNC Asheville Career Center.

What things should I consider?

Continue the Self-Assessment Process. If you have not started the self-assessment process with a Career Counselor or on your own, now is the time. Your personality type, interests, skills and values will determine the type of position and professional environment in which you are most likely to be successful and feel comfortable. For example, do you prefer to work in groups or on your own? Are you interested in a traditional weekday work schedule or do you want something more flexible or nontraditional? Are you interested in traveling or do you want to remain local? Additional items to consider are geographic preferences, salary requirements, and the need for additional training or formal education. Your Career Counselors can help you consider these preferences and there are a variety of websites and resources available in the Career Center to help you in this process.

What about internships?

First, meet with the Career Center Internship Coordinator or your Department's Internship Coordinator. You will want to discuss all of your options and determine the type of internship experience you desire. Make sure you focus your efforts on finding the right experience for you. Just as in the job search, you will want to create or update your job search tools. When you begin this process, be sure to read all you can (history, mission statement, etc.) about the places where you intend to apply. The more you know about an industry, corporation or business, the more directed your application materials will be. Also, be prepared to work without pay as many employers offer unpaid internships – however, some fields do offer internship that often pay well. Pay special attention to deadlines – you do not want to miss a great opportunity because you overlook the application deadline.

You will want to check your departmental eligibility qualifications if you are considering seeking academic credit for your experience. Each department that offers credit for internships has different requirements. Many require that you meet certain qualifications, complete specific paperwork and register for and attend a regularly scheduled class in order to receive credit.

How do I start my search?

There are many ways you can begin your job/internship search and several strategies that you can employ, however, some strategies work much better than others. Your search will be most successful if you give yourself the most options and employ several different search methods.

- **Network! Network! Network!** It is never too early to begin using this search strategy. Actually, 85% of jobs are best uncovered before they are advertised and inside opportunities may never even get advertised. This is not the time to be afraid to ask relatives and acquaintances for help. You will be

surprised by how many people will want to help you find an internship or job. Begin by putting together a primary networking contact list by brainstorming the names of several people who might help you. The people your primary contacts lead you to (secondary contacts) and the people the secondary contacts lead you to (tertiary contacts) are most often the ones who have information about internship or job leads. The Career Center has several resources available to help you with this important skill – even if you may be a little shy!

- **Target Specific Companies and Organizations!** The more targeted your job/internship search, the more successful your outcome! Begin by researching all companies in your geographic location that hire professionals in your field. There are several ways you can find this information. Try reviewing companies listed in the local Chamber of Commerce Directory or searching a directory of a professional organization of which you are a member. Also, consider employers who hire lots of people in different fields – local colleges, hospitals, resorts, etc. It is a smart idea to create a database or a list of all organizations in your target geographical area(s) where you might want to work and begin researching typical job titles, salaries, and contacts within target organizations. It is a good practice to search postings daily, but also express your general interest in the company with a carefully crafted cover letter stating how your expertise benefits the company. Every document you send must be specifically tailored to match the organization – your resume and cover letter must be tweaked before sending it to each employer. Submitting a generic cover letter and resume shows a lack of enthusiasm. If you were an employer, wouldn't you prefer to interview someone who is familiar with the company and has taken time to make their application materials reflect this?
- **Attend UNC Asheville Career Fairs!** The UNC Asheville Job & Graduate School Fair (Fall) and the Job and Internship Fair (Spring) are networking events that allow you to learn more about various organizations, different industries, and job/internship/graduate school opportunities. Remember that these are potential employers. Dress professionally and be prepared to promote yourself for potential opportunities.

Before the day of the fair, be sure to check out the list of organizations attending this year's events. Visit our website at career.unca.edu to see the current list and visit company websites. Make a list of the organizations that you want to meet. Prioritize them and thoroughly research each one so that you will be able to ask intelligent questions and respond to recruiters' questions with confidence.

Be Confident as you Approach Each Employer! The purpose of the Career Fair is for students and employers to meet and exchange information. Approach the company representative and introduce yourself. Don't sit back and wait to be approached. Shake hands, make good eye contact and tell the employer your name, major and interests. The more focused you are the better. If you are unsure just how you would fit into the organization, ask the employer some open-ended yet specific questions.

- What qualities, skills, and background do you look for in employees?
- What types of internships are available?
- What courses and experiences would you recommend someone taking before being hired?
- What are some things I could be doing on my own to prepare now?

Send follow-up letters! Ask for a business card before you leave an employer. This will ensure that you have the proper name and address of the representative with whom you spoke. Send a thank you letter, within a week of the event, to those recruiters you wish to pursue. Be sure to remind each recruiter that you met with him/her at the UNC Asheville Career and Graduate School Fair or Internship and Job Fair, and that you appreciate having the opportunity to discuss career opportunities with him/her. You may wish to include a copy of your resume with the letter. This will set the stage for future correspondence. ***You are only as good as your follow-up!***

- **Use Career Center Resources! (Remember, UNC Asheville graduates have lifetime access!)**
 - **RockyLink** – As a current UNC Asheville student or alum, you have access to the Job and Internship Posting system available through our website. We post over 2000 positions annually! These employers contact us and they want you!
 - **Attend Career Panels and special events** – The Career Center coordinates career panels each year. Faculty and local professionals in a particular field (example: International Careers, Food and Nutrition, Work with Nonprofits, etc.) are invited share their experiences and answer questions from the audience. This is an excellent opportunity to make some connections and get your questions answered! Check the Career Center website for upcoming topics and dates.

- **Participate in On-Campus Employer Visits**– Employers often schedule information sessions and on-campus interviews. Make sure to check the Career Center website and newsletter for updates.
- **Check Websites of Professional Organizations!**
It is a good idea to join professional organizations before graduation because membership is usually less expensive. As a member, you gain access to professional journals, conferences and internal job postings.
- **Use Online Resources to find Employers and Opportunities!**
 - **Chamber of Commerce Directories** – Search for employers in your target geographic region.
 - **Newspapers** – CareerBuilder.com pulls jobs posted from local publications nationwide and NewsDirectory.com is a great website for searching for local publications.
 - **Government Employment Websites** – The State Employment Office, Department of Labor, and the United States Government have job listings and information available on their websites.
- **Have Employers Find You!**
 - **Post your Resume Online and use LinkedIn** – Make sure the website is reputable and do be careful about where you post your personal information! Using LinkedIn is one example of how to share your credentials and create a professional presence online.
 - **Targeted Mass Mailing** – Try sending your resume to identified employers in your field with a letter of interest.
 - **Register with Third Party Employers** –Third-party employers are agencies, organizations, or individuals recruiting candidates for temporary, part-time, or full-time employment opportunities other than for their own needs.

Protect your image

- Don't include a link on your resume to any site which includes inappropriate content that is not appropriate for a business audience. Also, try “Googling” your name and see what happens.
- Be very careful what you put online. If you have a Facebook account, people you won't want to be reading your profile may be able to access it, even if you think nobody will read it. Do make your account private and be careful not to post anything that you don't want a prospective employer to read.
- Don't list your blog on your resume unless it's relevant to the career field / position that you are interviewing for. For example, if you are seeking employment as a financial planner and you have a personal finance blog, include it. If you have a blog about your dog, don't.
- Consider starting a blog related to your career interests. If you, for example, are interested in a career in real estate, consider blogging about industry trends, news and related topics.
- Do be careful what you write. Keep in mind that just about anything that is online can be read by someone - or everyone.

What's next?

Once you have identified (or connected with) organizations or individuals that have a job or internship that you are interested in, the next steps are to:

- Use your research to write customized cover letters and tweak your resume. Be sure to refer to the resume job search correspondence guides available in the Career Center and on the website.
- Mail or email your job search materials. This can include (depending on the employer's preference) an application, resume, cover letter, reference list, personal statement, writing sample, portfolio, or a copy of your transcript.
- Make sure to follow the employer's instructions for submitting information precisely.
- Follow up your initial contacts with employers by telephone and prepare for interviews.
- Stay positive and be persistent! Searching for a job or internship requires a lot of time and patience. If you go about this process in an organized, informed and determined fashion, your efforts will pay off!