



Job Search Strategies for Seniors and Recent Graduates

Most job seekers find that it takes many months of preparation, research, making contacts, and interviewing before they secure their first job. Career Services is here to help you get started and to guide you every step of the way.

THE FACTS

The most successful job search methods are:

- Networking
- Direct contact with companies
- Working with Career Services
- Using the Career Services website
- Job fairs

Who does the hiring?

(from the Bureau of Labor Statistics)

- Large businesses (500+): 21%
- Medium companies (100 – 499): 24%
- Small companies (<100): 55%

THE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH

1. Self-assessment—Will help you focus on appropriate jobs, write a strong resume, and interview effectively.

- Identify your skills, strengths and interests.
- Know what motivates you – your values and preferences.
- Create a list of what you've done in the past. Include all academic, internship, extra-curricular, volunteer, and work experiences. Think about the skills you developed in each settings.
- Make an appointment with career services to complete formal or informal self-assessment instruments.

2. Research & Networking—Helps you learn about the field, develop contacts, and hear about the opportunities that go unadvertised.

- Conduct an informational interview with a professional in your field of interest. Identify potential contacts by talking to everyone in your network of family and friends. For tips on conducting an informational interview, go to: <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/career/tutorials/interviewing.cfm>
- Create a positive online presence on LinkedIn. Connect with your network of friends and family. Ask to be introduced to their connections. Search for alumni who may be good sources of information on the Clark LinkedIn page: www.clarku.edu/linkedin. Join professional groups in your field of interest to learn about current events and trends.
- Develop a “30-second commercial” about yourself to use as an introduction at an informational interview, a career fair, or an informal networking opportunity. Be sure to mention your degree or academic preparation, areas of interest, strengths, and career goals.



3. Use All Job Search Methods Available—Don't focus on only one or two approaches.

- Leads from networking contacts—Often people “on the inside” have the best scoop.
- Clark Recruiter—Clark's online database of jobs and internships. Go to <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/career> and click on the Clark Recruiter logo.
- Professional associations—Great resources for industry information, professional contacts, and job listings. Look at the “What Can I Do With this Major” and “Spotlight on Careers” sections of the Career Services website for associations. <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/career/resources/careers.cfm>
- Targeted websites—Skip the huge websites that attempt to cover every career field in favor of those specific to the type of job you are seeking.
- Career fairs—Attend fairs on campus, at other schools, and through professional organizations.
- Placement agencies—Can be a useful complement to your other job search strategies.

To obtain usernames and passwords for the resources listed above, contact Career Services.

4. Write Effective Application Materials—Your resume and cover letter needs to make a positive first impression.

- Tailor your resume and cover letter to the specific job and organization to which you are applying.
- Have your materials critiqued by a Career Services graduate assistant through drop-in hours (15-minute first-come first-served time slots every weekday from 12 to 4 p.m.) or our 48-hour email critique service.

5. Practice Interviewing—Even before you have an interview scheduled, come into Career Services to talk about how best to present yourself. Practice by scheduling an in-person mock interview.

- Interviewing tips: <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/career/tutorials/interviewing.cfm>

6. Follow-up—Always send a thank-you note to those who assist you in your search as well as the employers with whom you interview. Keep in touch with networking contacts. Offer to help them whenever possible so that your relationship becomes mutually beneficial. Follow up with employers by phone if you do not hear back within the stated time frame.

- Writing Thank You Notes: <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/career/tutorials/interviewing.cfm>

7. Negotiate and Assess Offers—Request all of the details of a job offer in writing, including the job title, description, start date, location, compensation package, benefits, and response deadline. Politely ask for a couple of days to consider the offer before responding.

- Salary websites: <http://naceweb.org/home.aspx> or <http://www.salary.com> or <http://www.payscale.com>
- Finally, be sure to read the Life After Clark page with tips on compensation and benefits, credit/debt, budgeting, and the first year on the job. <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/career/tutorials/life.cfm>

Questions? For further assistance, please contact Career Services at cservices@clarku.edu.