

Top Tips for Graduating (and Current) Students

Did your graduation date sneak up on you? Have you been too busy with the end of your semester to begin your job search? Here are some tips for recent graduates or current students to help you get your job search started.

Get Your Résumé in Order

There are many online resources for crafting a good résumé, but it is important to hone in on (1) the organization and look of your résumé (on average, an employer spends less than 10 *seconds* looking at a single résumé, so you want impeccable organization with clear headings and precise language); (2) the statement of work experience (be sure to include quantifiable accomplishments that highlight your skills, not a drab description of your job responsibilities); and (3) getting an external review of your résumé. Misspelled words, grammatical errors, or inconsistent tone are likely to ruin your chances for an interview. A good rule of thumb is to have your university career services center review your résumé.

Conducting a Job Inventory and Informational Interviewing

Where should you begin looking for a job? Yes there are plenty of websites out there that you will inevitably search at some point, but another idea is to take an inventory of the research facilities, companies, institutions, organizations, and government agencies (city, county, and federal) in your area to see which ones match your interests and needs. You can also check out GSA's Geoscience Job Board for current employment opportunities: www.geosociety.org/classiads/.

From there you can go through your personal contacts to see if there is anyone who might know someone who works at those institutions. If yes, then ask for an e-mail introduction. If you don't have a contact, you can identify someone online and set up an informational interview. This would just be a short meeting (30 min.) with

someone who works at the place you are interested in just to make an initial connection. It is not an *interview* per se; you're just making a new contact, finding out about what it's like to work in that industry, and hopefully building a relationship that may point you in the direction you want to go. GSA Annual Meetings also offer plenty of opportunities to network with potential employers or learn more about a particular field.

Professionalize Your Online Presence

Your online image is important and may be the first place a potential employer goes before scheduling an interview. According to a recent (2014) CareerBuilder survey, 43% of employers researched potential candidates through social media sites, and 45% used a search engine like Google. Take proactive measures to clean up your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., profiles. Consider changing your personal settings to hide images and posts. You can also filter through comments, photos, or information that may be unprofessional and delete them. Remember that posting content in the spirit of good humor may mean something else to a potential employer who does not know you.

While starting your job search can be daunting, it is inevitably a learning process. With each new step along the way, there are many lessons to be learned and applied. Don't be afraid to reflect on each step and make improvements and to reach out to your mentor(s), contacts, university career services departments, friends, and family to support you along the way.