

# SENIOR

# Job Search

# Guide

by Eric R. Anderson and Jan Rich



Provided by Capital University Career Development  
Blackmore Library, Second Floor, 614-236-6606  
**WEB:** [www.capital.edu/CareerDevelopment](http://www.capital.edu/CareerDevelopment)  
**EMAIL:** [CareerDevelopment@capital.edu](mailto:CareerDevelopment@capital.edu)

**Capital**  
**University**  
Ask. Think. Lead.

# **This guide provides steps to follow as you search for jobs during and right after your senior year.**

## **Follow the guidelines for the timing of your job search**

Check out the job search timeline table on page 3. You'll see the steps of the job search. Since students graduate at different times of the year, the job search steps specify the amount of time remaining before graduation.

## **Use our other resources with this guide**

This guide explains the big picture of the job search, and then refers you to our other specific career guides and resources when appropriate. Be sure to pick up or download our other career guides to help you as you go. You can find them at our website, [www.capital.edu/CareerDevelopment](http://www.capital.edu/CareerDevelopment).

## **Make an appointment with a Career Development staff member**

Each job search situation is unique. We strongly encourage you to set up an appointment to receive personalized job search assistance by scheduling an appointment on Handshake, or emailing [CareerDevelopment@capital.edu](mailto:CareerDevelopment@capital.edu).

# Keep track of your job search

*Organizing your job search and keeping track of all the details is important!*

You might think you will remember the details. You likely won't. Don't get caught answering an employer's call and forgetting what you applied for!

## TOOLS FOR STAYING ORGANIZED

Keep track of job postings, application dates, and networking/employer contact information. Group your documents in folders so they're organized and easy to find.

### OPTION 1:

**Use a spreadsheet for your job search data, and save documents in employer-named folders.** Excel has already created the spreadsheet for you! Just open Excel, go to "file", select "new", and then type in "job application log" in the search bar. Then download the spreadsheet, which includes columns for keeping track of your job applications, contact information, interviews, and status. How easy is that?

### OPTION 2:

**Use a 3-ring binder to save documents like job postings and cover letters.** If you like hard copies and having everything at your fingertips – try this method.

### USE EITHER OPTION TO KEEP TRACK OF THESE ITEMS:

- Copies of each job posting you have responded to
- Copies of the resume and dated cover letter for each job
- List of questions you might want to ask the employer when you get an interview
- Notes about any contact with the employer, names and titles, and dates of that contact
- Notes about any interviews: significant topics discussed, follow-up questions, details that could be important for the thank-you letter and for the second interview
- Copies of your post-interview thank-you letters

## NETWORK TRACKING

Also keep a spreadsheet on your computer or in your binder to track the people you meet in your career field (name, title, organization, phone, email, etc., what you talked about, and the date as well as the names of other contacts you received). This works for employers you have contacted as well as for people in your network.

Keep notes on this spreadsheet for informational interview requests, dates, and any additional information you want to remember. Visit this spreadsheet regularly to touch base or to follow up after a meeting.

# Job Search timeline

Time	Task	Resources
AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE	Build your network	How to Get your Foot in the Door <a href="http://www.capital.edu/career-how-to/">www.capital.edu/career-how-to/</a>  LinkedIn
	<p>This job search tool is more important than your resume. It's even more important than your parents (although they might play an important role here). Most students won't use this <i>enough</i>, which is possibly why networking is so effective. Most students will check employer web sites a few times each week (necessary, but probably not sufficient). YOU will develop and maintain crucial relationships with internship supervisors, family friends, job co-workers, and others, resulting in an avalanche of interviews.</p> <p>Networking may not benefit you immediately. It takes time to see results. Put energy into long-term professional relationships that allow you access to the majority of jobs – the jobs that aren't advertised.</p>	
START OF SENIOR YEAR	Write your resume	How to Write a Resume <a href="http://www.capital.edu/career-how-to/">www.capital.edu/career-how-to/</a>
	<p>You probably already have a resume if you have applied for internships in your junior year. Update your resume now (or create it for the first time), and keep it up-to-date throughout your senior year as you add more internships and other career-related experiences.</p>	
FOUR MONTHS BEFORE GRADUATION	Find positions	Networking <a href="http://www.capital.edu/career-how-to/">www.capital.edu/career-how-to/</a>  Employer websites  Professional Networking sites  <a href="https://capital.joinhandshake.com/login">https://capital.joinhandshake.com/login</a>  Job Fairs (Collegiate Career Fair & CareerFest)  <a href="http://wwwIndeed.com">wwwIndeed.com</a>
	<p>Many students ask when they should begin searching for jobs. It's difficult to give each student an ideal target time because differences exist between career fields and organizations. A general guideline is to begin exploring available job opportunities approximately four months before graduation (but start your network sooner). You may have to wait until closer to graduation to apply for some positions. <i>Some large companies hire during fall semester for positions that will begin the following May or September. Ask us about federal government job search timelines.</i></p>	

# Job Application steps

Time	Task	Resources
WHEN YOU SEND EACH RESUME	Write cover letters	How to Write a Cover Letter <a href="http://www.capital.edu/career-how-to/">www.capital.edu/career-how-to/</a>
	Plan to write a new letter designed for EACH job for which you apply; you should explain briefly why your experience is a good fit for their open position! Don't use generic cover letters; impress your employers with a personalized example of your writing skills.	
AS EARLY AS THREE MONTHS BEFORE GRADUATION	Apply for positions	Career Development staff
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>When you find a job that matches your qualifications, follow the application instructions on the posting EXACTLY.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This may include sending a copy of your resume and personalized cover letter, letters of reference, a <i>list</i> of references, transcripts, writing samples, etc.</li> <li>If you are asked to email your materials, please see the last page of Career Development's "How to Write a Cover Letter" career guide for more specific information.</li> <li>If you send materials via U.S. Mail, make sure you have your materials printed on resume paper (not copy paper) and use a large envelope with a typed label.</li> <li>You might need to upload application materials through the employer's website.</li> <li>You might need to apply in person, but this is uncommon.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Understand the employer's timeline.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two months can easily pass as you apply for the position and wade through the bureaucracy, so it's okay to apply early.</li> <li>If your early application results in an offer prior to graduation, you can still say "yes"! You can either defer your start date until after graduation, or offer to begin working sooner on a part-time basis. This is probably the nicest "problem" you could hope for.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
<p><b>An important note:</b> You can also apply for positions for which you appear somewhat under-qualified. The requirements are often thought of as a "wish list." The employer might not get the "ideal" candidate that they are defining in the job listing, so they'll interview candidates who do not meet the ideal description.</p>		

# Interviewing steps

Time	Task	Resources
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>CAN RANGE FROM DAYS TO MONTHS AFTER SUBMITTING APPLICATION, DEPENDING ON EMPLOYER</b></p>	<h2>Interview for positions</h2>	<p>How to Interview  <a href="http://www.capital.edu/career-how-to/">www.capital.edu/career-how-to/</a></p>
	<p>Interviewing can be intimidating. Interviewing is NOT natural, casual conversation, and you probably have NOT had enough experience with it.</p> <p>DO YOUR HOMEWORK! Research the company and be ready to answer questions about what they do. Review the position description and know how you qualify.</p> <p><b>Schedule a mock interview with a Career Development staff member.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These “simulation” interviews prepare you for the pace and style of interviews without the pressure and stress of the real thing.</li> <li>• Send a copy of the job description or posting along with your resume, and we can prepare personalized questions that might come up in your real interview.</li> <li>• After 15 minutes of simulation, we’ll review your responses, and suggest areas to improve.</li> </ul>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>WITHIN 24 HOURS AFTER INTERVIEW</b></p>	<h2>Follow up</h2>	<p>How to Interview  <a href="http://www.capital.edu/career-how-to/">www.capital.edu/career-how-to/</a></p>
	<p>Follow-up is essential. Employers often base their job offers on which candidates have followed up. No follow-up with an employer might mean <b>no</b> employment opportunity.</p> <p><b>1. “Thank-You” email/letter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can find samples in the “How to Interview” booklet.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Follow-up letters (sent when you wonder if they’ve forgotten you)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A letter or email can be sent to politely remind the interviewer of your continued interest in the position.</li> <li>• It’s difficult to say what the right exact amount of time is to wait before following up; each situation is different, so call or email Career Development if you’re wondering.</li> </ul>	

# Additional job search tips

## REALITY CHECK

- Be realistic about how long the job search will take. Students who have been actively involved in the process while in school are often hired in their field of choice before or soon after graduation.
- If you wait until you graduate to begin your job search, it can easily take six months or more.

## EMPLOYMENT and TEMPORARY AGENCIES

- **Resist** the temptation to use employment agencies. Their entry-level job resources are usually limited, many have fees, and some require that you accept the first position that is offered to you. If you still want to use them, be sure to read everything before you sign it!
- Some staffing or temporary agencies can be a good source of leads for employers looking for temporary help or who want to “try out” candidates before they offer them permanent positions. Temporary agencies are almost always paid by the company and will not require a fee from you.

## SMALL EMPLOYERS

- Don't overlook small employers! While many larger employers are downsizing or freezing their hiring, many startup companies are looking for entry-level help, and will usually give you more responsibility and broader experience than you will get in a large company.

## NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- People do get paid for working full-time at non-profit organizations! Opportunities exist in many of the same fields as for-profit companies, including Human Resources, Finance, Marketing, and Public Relations.

## MENTAL HEALTH

- It's easy to get frustrated if you're not reaching your goals...so re-focus your goals! Instead of the long-term goal of finding a job, focus on shorter-term goals. For example, you might try to call ten people each day, and schedule five informational interviews per week. You'll feel better about your job search as you accomplish these manageable goals!

## ISOLATION IS YOUR ENEMY

- You must get out to meet people. Calling from home to make initial contacts and to arrange appointments is great; take it to the next step and talk to people in person. This is what will truly make a difference.

## IT'S NOT WHO YOU KNOW...IT'S WHO KNOWS YOU

- Remember the importance of maintenance letters and other personal contact. Your name should be the first one on their mind when they hear about a position opening.

## VOLUNTEER TO GET EXPERIENCE or TO STAY CONNECTED

- Ask employers if they have unfinished projects that would take 100 hours or less to complete, and offer to coordinate and/or finish them.
- A few hours each week in your field will show prospective employers that you are serious about your career.

## What's next?

### Putting these pieces together

Making sense of all these steps can be difficult. Don't do it alone! Make an appointment with Career Development so that we can explain how this will work best for YOU.

### Assistance after graduation

Our commitment to you continues after you graduate! Expect to hear from us; we want to know what you're doing, and we want to help you if you're stuck in your job search. Take the initiative and contact us if you need us.