

BOSTON UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES

Job Search Strategies



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www.bu.edu/careers



Office of the Dean of Students

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JOB SEARCH – ARE YOU READY?

- Know Yourself
- Get Ready
- Get Started

1. KNOW YOURSELF

- Identifying your **skills, values, interests** and **personality** will give you a solid sense of which career options you might prefer.
- We can meet with you either individually or in our “**Career Exploration Group**” and guide you through the self assessment process. If you are interested, just call our front desk at **617-353-3590**.
- Taking the time to decide exactly what type of job you are looking for will ultimately lead to a faster and more successful job search.

2. GET READY

Here is a quick checklist to see if you are ready to move into a job search:

- I know myself: my skills, personality strengths, interest areas, values and interests
- I have made a connection between my skills, interests, values, personality strengths and my potential career options
- I know in which career field/industry I want to work
- I see a match between what I want in my work and a specific career choice
- I know what companies or organizations exist in this field/industry
- I have a basic understanding of what types of jobs exist in this field/industry
- I can articulate my strengths and how they connect to my chosen field
- I have written a resume and had it reviewed by a career counselor

3. GET STARTED

- Looking for a job is a process which takes time and involves using multiple approaches.
- It is best to begin with researching career options in general to see which fields/industries are most compelling.
- Next, focus your research and spend a large percentage of your time on using creative job search techniques. (Covered in more detail on page 6-8.)

JOB SEARCH INVOLVES RESEARCH

- Getting Started
- Directories
- Professional Associations
- Trade Publications
- Career Advisory Network

1. GETTING STARTED

General questions to ask yourself when researching*:

- Is the organization's business or activity in keeping with your own interests and beliefs?
- How will the size of the organization affect you?
- Should you work for a start-up or an organization that is well established?
- Does it matter to you if the company is public or private?
- Does the industry have favorable long-term prospects?
- How important is the job to this company?
- Does the job require long or irregular hours?
- What are the opportunities for growth?

*Adapted from OOH at www.bls.gov/oco

Where do you begin this career research?

To begin researching information on industries here are a few websites to check out:

- The Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco). This site includes helpful information such as salary (national breakdown), job outlook and training needed.
- The O*Net Online. (<http://online.onetcenter.org>). This site gives descriptions of specific occupations by skills and values. It also includes salary information.
- Vault (www.vault.com). This site gives valuable information about industries and companies.
- Wetfeet (www.wetfeet.com). This is another site that gives you both industry and company information.

Once you have decided which industries you are planning to look into, you will want to identify specific companies and develop a more detailed understanding of the field.

2. DIRECTORIES

Directories list companies or organizations in a particular field. They include the names, websites and addresses, and may include a brief description of the company and the name of a contact person. Some of the bigger directories include:

- Hoover's www.hoovers.com
- Dun and Bradstreet Million Dollar Directory, www.dnbmdd.com/mddi/
- JobBank Book Series (broken down by city or state), available at our Career Resource Library
- Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries www.uniworldbp.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/search.php

- *Idealist* www.idealist.org (non profit organizations)
- *Human Services Referral Directory of Massachusetts* available at our Career Resource Library

3. PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Identifying professional associations related to your field of interest can get you more detailed information about recent trends. In addition, members of professional associations can be a potential resource for an informational interview.
- Associations frequently have their own websites which may contain helpful information about members, related links in the industry or they may publish directories for the profession you are targeting.
- A directory of professional associations organized by category can be found at <http://www.google.com/Top/Society/Organizations/Professional/>.

4. TRADE PUBLICATIONS

- They can keep you updated about ongoing developments and trends in a specialized area and you can get information about which people you might want to contact to learn more about the field.
- A directory organized by category can be found at http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Business_to_Business/News_and_Media/Magazines/Trade_Magazines/.

5. CAREER ADVISORY NETWORK (CAN)

- The Alumni Relations office and BU Alumni Association have established this network which identifies 5,000+ alumni who have volunteered to speak with you to provide information about their career field.
- To access this on-line database of BU alumni go to www.bu.edu/alumni/careers/can.

CREATIVE METHODS OF JOB SEARCHING

- Networking • Social Networking • Targeting Employers • Professional Associations

1. NETWORKING

Networking involves talking to people about your career goals, seeking advice, and spreading the word about what you are interested in. You can talk to anyone and everyone.

- Networking is one of the most successful job search approaches.
- Seventy to ninety percent of jobs are found via networking.
- Do *NOT* ask for a job. Instead seek advice, feedback, and referrals (which hopefully will lead to a job).

Who do you network with?

- Family
- Relatives
- Neighbors
- Friends
- Friends of your Parents
- BU Alumni
- Work/Internship Contacts
- Professors

Contacting people

Don't be shy about asking for help. People generally like helping others.

- Before you call, know what you are going to say. It's important to be prepared.
- Determine your goals: Are you seeking advice, an informational interview, feedback?
- Be enthusiastic.
- Clearly identify yourself.
- Name the person who referred you, or how you found them (i.e. Career Advisory Network).
- Be specific about why you are calling, and how they can help.
- Always ask for additional contacts.

Remember to follow up

- ALWAYS send a thank you note. You want to be remembered.
- Reference something that was discussed. Ex: Your suggestion to... was excellent; or I took your advice to...
- With your note, consider including your resume. Ex: I've enclosed a copy of my resume. Feel free to pass it along if you hear of any openings.

BU alumni

The Alumni Relations Office and BU Alumni Association have established a volunteer network of alumni who will speak with students.

As noted earlier, the Career Advisory Network (CAN) can be helpful not only for researching industries and jobs, but also for speaking directly with people in their career fields about their career experiences.

When contacting these alumni volunteers, send them a brief, but formal email introducing you as a BU student. Explain that you are writing to arrange a time to meet/speak with them about _____. Let them know how to reach you.

Log into the Career Advisory Network at www.bu.edu/alumni/careers/can.

2. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Use on-line social networking to increase your opportunities of networking and finding a job. There are many sites, a few of the more popular are:

- **LinkedIn.com**- This is a site that allows you to connect to people who know you and gives you access to their connections, greatly increasing your level of potential networking contacts. (For more information about how to use LinkedIn in a job search visit <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/networking/a/linkedin2.htm>.)
- **Twitter.com** – This is a social networking and mini blogging service based on interest areas. (For more information about using Twitter for networking visit <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/networkingsites/p/twitter.htm>.)
- **Facebook.com** –This is a site that lets you connect with your friends, primarily created to get to know others on your campus or school. It is now being used for job searches as well. (For more information about Facebook and its job search uses visit
 - <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/networking/a/facebook.htm>.)

Caution: Remember that posting information on any web site means it is viewable by others. Many employers will search the web and view your social networking profiles. Think about what you post and the image that you are creating. A good guideline is if you wouldn't show it to your family members then don't post it.

3. TARGETING EMPLOYERS

- Identify specific companies or organizations that match your selected industry, field or position choice.
- Seek contacts within these companies for informational interviews.
- Visit these company websites to look for job postings.
- Contact companies directly to express your interest in a position even if there are no openings posted.

Steps to contacting companies directly

- Identify the names of contacts within these companies by calling the main number and asking the receptionist for the name and title of the hiring manager for the department you are interested in. You don't want the name of the Human Resource person as they won't have specific knowledge about the department.
- Other strategies to get contact information are to research the company online, and to network with family, friends, and alumni. You can also research using social networking sites such as LinkedIn.
- Develop a targeted cover letter that includes the skills and experiences that you can bring to the company and which match the company's needs.
- In approximately 1½ weeks follow up by phone. Ask for the person you addressed the letter to. If the person is not open to discussing job possibilities you may want to ask for an informational interview instead to gain further insight into the field.

4. PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

These are organizations for people who all work in the same field, but for different companies. They provide opportunities to meet and talk with others who share your same interests.

Why join?

- Meet professionals who work for a variety of companies in a range of positions.
- Access member-only job postings.
- Looks great on your resume because it shows a commitment to your field.
- Keep up-to-date on issues and trends in your field.
- Learn about and attend conferences and meetings.

Note: many associations have reduced student fees.

Finding the best professional association for you

- Ask professors or professionals already in the field.
- Look in the Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco) under the "Sources for Additional Information" section of occupational listing.
- Look on our website (www.bu.edu/careers) under "Career Exploration."

TRADITIONAL JOB SEARCH METHODS

- BU CareerLink
- Employer Information Sessions
- On-Campus Interviews
- Career Fairs
- Job Banks
- Newspapers
- Niche Websites
- Placement Agencies

1. BU CAREERLINK

Search job postings from employers who are looking for BU students and new graduates. You will find jobs for this area as well as around the country. Be sure to check BU CareerLink regularly, new jobs are posted daily.

To access CareerLink:

- From www.bu.edu/careers click on BU CareerLink (lower right).
- Logging in – your user name is your BU ID (example: U12345678) and your default password is your date of birth (example: 03171982).
- To begin searching click on “Jobs and Internships.”
- To upload your resume click on “documents” and then “add new.”

2. EMPLOYER INFORMATION SESSIONS

Throughout the academic year, companies will come to campus to give presentations about their companies and positions that they are recruiting for. For a list of sessions, visit www.bu.edu/careers and click on “Employer Information Sessions” (right side).

Remember to:

- Dress professionally.
- Take notes.
- Be prepared to ask questions (although this is not required).
- Bring a copy of your resume (just in case).

3. ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

Many companies target new graduates and come to campus to conduct interviews. The recruiting season typically begins in October and runs through April. For a list of sessions, visit www.bu.edu/careers and click on “On-Campus Interviewing” (right side).

- To search and apply to On-Campus Interview Positions:
 1. Log into BU CareerLink, select “Jobs/Internships for BU Students.”
 2. From the “Show Me” drop down box, select “All Interviews” & hit search.

4. CAREER FAIRS

Each year the Career Services hosts a career fair in October and March. Companies in attendance seek students from many majors. Students attending can:

- Learn about career paths/positions.

- Meet and network with employers.
- Collect company literature.
- Submit a resume, to the companies that are accepting them

In addition to the career fairs hosted by Boston University, many others are held annually in the Boston area. To learn about upcoming fairs visit www.bu.edu/careers and look under the “Events” section.

5. JOB BANKS

There are many large job databases available online. Each will have hundreds of postings organized by industry or location. A few popular ones include:

- www.careerbuilder.com
- www.Monstertrak.com
- www.indeed.com

6. NEWSPAPERS

Regional newspapers may continue to be a good source for job listings. Most will have their postings online.

- For a list of newspapers by state check out www.newslink.org.
- For Boston, use the Boston Globe at www.boston.com/jobs.

7. NICHE WEBSITES

Many sites are geared to specific industries or career fields. To find ones for your area of interest, visit www.bu.edu/careers and select the “Job Search” button. From the drop down menu click on “Websites,” then click on the “Websites by Major or Field” link.

8. PLACEMENT AGENCIES

- Placement agencies are hired by a company or organization to identify candidates to fill job openings.
- This service is often free to the job seeker, but you should always confirm this.
- Many have multiple divisions including administrative support, scientific lab support, legal, and finance.

Stay in touch

- Even if an agency does not have a lead for you right now, you never know when one will come in.
- Follow-up to let the agency know that you are still interested.

Agencies

A few well known agencies include:

- Robert Half
- K Force
- Kelly Scientific

LONG DISTANCE JOB SEARCH/RELOCATION

- Questions to Consider
- Strategies to Help with Researching
- Reciprocity
- Additional Ideas
- Suggested Books

1. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why are you considering relocating?
- Have you researched the new area(s) for cost of living, and lifestyle options?
- Does it make more sense to move first and get settled or to get a job and then make your move based on the offer?

To help you consider these questions, we encourage you to try and learn as much as you can about the new area you are moving to. There are many internet resources to find out about things such as the cost of living or the cultural options. Some websites to help you with this are:

- www.bestplaces.com
- www.findyourspot.com
- www.salary.com
- <http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/costofliving/costofliving.html>

2. STRATEGIES TO HELP WITH RESEARCHING

All the strategies listed in the previous sections on job search will apply such as utilizing directories, networking, professional associations and other contacts who may know about the region or the industry.

You may also want to stay up to date on the regional trends for your new location through researching local on-line newspapers and trade journals. A website to begin this search is www.usnpl.com (US Newspaper List).

In addition to the cost of living, consider the following:

- Transportation options.
- Community organizations.
- Support (i.e. family, friends, groups, etc.)
- Cultural options.
- Types of housing available.

3. RECIPROCITY

Reciprocity involves using a college's career office in the new location you are moving to. It's easy to do. First find a college or university close to your new location. Call their career center and ask if they offer reciprocity, if they charge a fee, how much it is and what services are available to you. Then call our office at 617-353-3590 and request a letter of reciprocity be sent to the college you have chosen. When calling our office, please be prepared to supply the name and contact information of the reciprocal school's career office director.

4. ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Contact the regional Chamber of Commerce in the new area for information on local businesses and recreation.
- Follow trends through the paper and journals to see which companies are growing.
- Utilize temporary agencies to gain contract work and potential networking contacts in your new location.

5. SUGGESTED BOOKS

- *The Moving Survival Guide: All You Need to Know to Make Your Move Go Smoothly* by Martha Poage
- *Smart Moves: Your Guide Through the Emotional Maze of Relocation* by Audrey T. McCollum, Nadia Jensen and Stuart Copans

Good luck with your job search!

NEXT STEPS:

- Be sure to keep in touch with Career Services by visiting www.bu.edu/careers or calling 617-353-3590.
- Also after you graduate, you can take advantage of additional resources by logging on to the BU Alumni Online Community at www.bu.edu/alumni.