

Job Search Guide ♦ 2011

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Career Development Services

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FGCU Career Development Services supports the mission of the University and the Division of Student Affairs by promoting student learning and development and helping students fulfill their career expectations. Within this context, we assist students in developing and implementing career, education, and employment plans and decisions.

Overview of Services

Job and internship search advising, including resume/cover letter assistance and preparation for employment interviews and salary negotiation.

Advising on career and major selection, including assessments, major and career information, and assistance in the decision-making process.

Graduate school planning, including assistance with resume/CV/personal statements, graduate school research, and preparation for interviews.

Campus student employment, through the use of a web-based job listing system, College Central Network.

Job Search Timeframes

One aspect of the job search that most students don't realize is that it can take, depending on the field, between 3 – 6 months of active searching (more than 15 hours per week) to find and obtain the job they want. It can be even longer in a tight job market. With that in mind, here is one way to plan your time:

One year from graduation – experience stage

- Concentrate on gaining related experience through internships, part-time jobs, service learning, volunteering, or involvement in the student club related to your field.
- Start building your network and developing your references (from supervisors and faculty.)

Six months from graduation – preparation and research stage

- Get all your job search materials in order. Have your resume and a version of your cover letter reviewed by Career Development Services staff. Develop your interviewing skills, one of the most important elements of the job search.
- Determine your job search strategy based on the type you are pursuing.
- Conduct research on the industry and on all the companies you are interested in.
- If you are considering moving to another city, conduct web research on the companies in that city.
- Talk to people in the field to learn the most effective ways to break into it. Keep building your network

Three months from graduation – application stage

- Ensure you have professional business attire for the interview process.
- Start applying to active job postings and as well as sending out prospecting letters.
- Start using and keep building your network.
- Put a professional sounding message on your phone voicemail that includes your name. Use a conservative, easy-to-use email address. As for your Facebook page, consider removing all inappropriate content and/or adjust your Privacy Setting to "Only my friends." Also, make sure your profile picture is professional!

The job search strategy you utilize may depend heavily on the career or field you are pursuing. Every field – whether it is public relations, hospitality, education, health care, law enforcement, or sales – has aspects of the recruitment process that are *specific to that industry*. Part of your preparation for the job search will be to become more knowledgeable in your field's recruitment process. Also, if you are conducting out-of-area job searches, your strategy will likely have to rely on more web-based resources than in-person networking. Overall, the most effective job searches usually involve utilizing a combination of strategies and resources.

Online Job Posting Sites

Most job posting sites, even the large ones like Monster.com and Careerbuilder.com, represent only a small portion of the job openings available. The appeal of these sites is understandable: everybody knows about them and they are easy to use. That can also be a problem. With so many job seekers using them, there is tremendous competition. Some jobs postings receive hundreds of resumes from applicants. If you want to use one or two large commercial sites, that's fine, but don't spend any more than 10% of your job search time with them.

- You are better off using “niche job boards.” These are sites specific to a particular field. If you don't know of any, simply use Google to search for them. For example, if you were looking for a job in sports management, simply Google “sports management jobs” and you should get plenty of options. Pick one or two to use.
- College Central Network, the job board that is linked to the FGCU Career Services website, is a good resource for primarily local jobs. Also, only FGCU students and alumni can use it, so it limits the competition. (The College Central Network website is operated by College Central Network, Inc, a third-party provider of career/employment technology solutions. College Central Network is NOT an FGCU website.)
- Most fields or industries have a professional association, and most of them have a website. Check the website of your professional association to see if it has a section for job postings. Not sure of the professional association in your field? Google it! More companies are starting to post on these sites instead of the large commercial sites so that they don't get bombarded with unqualified applicants.
- One of the most helpful resources on the Internet is a site called www.indeed.com. Unlike a job board, this is a search engine that scours the web for job postings based on your search criteria. Since Indeed.com pulls job postings from major newspapers, other job posting sites, and company websites, it can serve as a nice “one stop shop” and save you from having to use ten different job sites. The listings from company websites are helpful so you can go directly to that company's site to check for additional job postings.
- If you are relocating to another part of the country, there may be some job boards specifically for that area. Some are linked from Chamber of Commerce websites.
- **Strategy summary: Easy to use but employer response rate can be inconsistent. However, if you don't have a specific career goal, these sites can be helpful for you to see what is available. Perhaps you will see something that interests you.**

Many students that rely on online job sites will quickly reach a point of diminishing returns, where they have applied to all the jobs they are interested in and have stopped seeing any new postings on the sites. Spending *more* time on these sites is not going to help. Other strategies are discussed later in this guide will require you to be more proactive in your search, but will probably yield better results.

Using College Central Network

The College Central Network (CCN) website is operated by College Central Network, Inc, a third-party provider of career/employment technology solutions. College Central Network is NOT an FGCU website.

1. Go to: www.collegecentral.com/fgcu
2. Select either the “**Student**” icon or “**Alumni**” icon.
3. Go to the “**Register Now**” link. (If you have already registered, select “**Log in at Student Central.**”)
4. Enter *Florida Gulf Coast University*
5. Create an **Access ID** and **Password**
6. Select “**Continue Registration**”
7. Enter all the information requested.
8. Submit registration and select “**Go to My Home Page**”

Off Campus Job Search:

- From your homepage, select “**Search for Jobs/Opportunities Posted to My School,**” enter criteria specific to the type of job you are seeking, and then “**Begin Search**”
- **Search Tip:** Selecting several search criteria will narrow your search. Focused searches are good, but you may also want to view all jobs posted (by leaving all the search fields blank.)
- If you are searching for jobs across the state or country, check out CCN's Jobs Central[®] national job board. Select “**Search for Jobs.**”

Internship Search:

- Utilize CCN's Intern CentralSM national internship board by selecting “**Search for Internships.**”

On Campus Job Search:

- From your homepage, select “**Search for Jobs Posted to My School**”
- Go to “**Job Location,**” choose “**On Campus,**” then “**Begin Search.**”
- All the current On-Campus Jobs will appear for you to search.
- Follow the “**Application Instructions.**”

Resume Entry:

From your homepage, select “**Upload a Resume.**” Browse for the file, select it, and then upload your resume. Please be advised that by uploading your resume into College Central Network, you are making your resume accessible to all employers that have registered in the system. If you want to upload a resume in order to send it to potential employers but you do not want an employer to search your resume, you **MUST** select the **FOURTH** authorization option in the "Resume Authorization" section.

The Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Career Development Services acts only as a referral service, and makes no particular recommendations regarding off-campus employers. Career Development Services is not responsible for safety, wages, working conditions, or other aspects of off-campus employment. Due to the high volume of jobs received by our office, we are unable to research the integrity of each organization, business, or person listing a job with us. Therefore, you, the student or alumni, are urged to undertake this responsibility yourself.

Targeting, Prospecting, and a Foot in the Door

Targeting: Instead of waiting to see what positions turn up on job boards, you should be “**targeting**” the companies where you want to work, and then visit the company website to check for job postings.

- To find company lists, check the professional association website for the field you are pursuing – these sites often have company membership directories. Try using the “Find Companies” tool at www.zoominfo.com.
- **Strategy summary: Requires more time and energy than using big, commercial sites, but likely to access more and better opportunities**

Prospecting: What do you do if you go the company website and there aren’t any job posted? “**Prospecting**” employers is the process of presenting yourself to a company as a candidate for employment, even though there may not be any visible job postings.

- When you are on company website, try to identify the most appropriate person in the company to contact. It may be the person in charge of recruiting or human resources, or the director of the department you want to work in. Use your best judgment.
- Email a “prospecting letter,” which is similar to a cover letter. The goal of the prospecting letter is to:
 - 1) Express why you are interested in working for the company.
 - 2) Briefly summarize your qualifications.
 - 3) Communicate your willingness to further discuss possible employment opportunities.
- DO NOT send a generic letter. Customize it to the company.
- The best form of communication is probably email. A phone call can catch someone off-guard and unprepared to have a discussion. Also, if you send an email to the wrong person, it is very easy for them to forward your email to the right person. Include a copy of your resume in the email.
- **Strategy summary: Highly time consuming, and no guarantees that you will even get a response from your letter. However, this job search approach has worked for FGCU graduates. And remember, nothing ventured, nothing gained.**

A Foot in the Door: Many companies like to hire/promote from within, so it sometimes pays to get a “**foot in the door**” at a company. One study conducted on how companies fill positions indicated that 30% came from internal transfers and promotions. Here are four possible ways to get your foot in the door and try to “prove yourself.” While there are no guarantees any of these approaches will lead to your ideal position, hopefully you will expand your network, gain experience, and meet people who will give you a good references.

1. Volunteer – This is usually most appropriate in non-profits since for-profit companies don’t often accept volunteers
2. Internship
3. Part-Time Job
4. Entry-level Full-Time Position
5. Staffing or Temporary Agency (Some companies hire staff through staffing agencies, with the potential of that position transitioning into employment with the company. We suggest using agencies where the employer pays any fees.)

Networking

You have probably heard the saying, “It’s not *what* you know, it’s *who* you know.” Perhaps there is some truth to that statement since having a robust network of contacts can be highly beneficial to your career success.

- Networking is basically about meeting people and building and relationships. Once people get to know you, they are more likely to share information that can help you in the job search, such as the names of companies that may be hiring, actual job openings, contact names within a company, referrals to colleagues or associates, and general job search advice.
- **Employee referrals** are perhaps the number one source for external hires. Therefore, if you know someone well who works for the company you want to work for, inquire as to whether they would be willing to refer you to their company.
- *Warning:* People do not generally like being “used” for their information and contacts. Build a level of familiarity and trust with someone before asking for help. Networking relationships should be mutually beneficial – be ready to reciprocate and help them when needed. And always communicate back to someone in your network that helped you – let them know how things worked out and express gratitude for their assistance.
- **Strategy Summary: Effective networking can be time-consuming and even a little uncomfortable at first. But it is often considered to be the most important strategy in the job search process.**

Who is in your “network”?

- Friends/Family/Relatives/Neighbors
- Classmates/former classmates
- Fellow Sorority and Fraternity members
- Former supervisors/colleagues
- Members of your religious congregation
- Friends of parents and relatives
- Parents and relatives of friends
- Current and former faculty

Networking Tips

- Join the student chapters of professional associations in your field
- Consider joining local “young professionals” networking groups
- Use “LinkedIn” to keep in contact with your connections and expand your network
- Join the FGCU Alumni Association after you graduate
- Volunteer in the community to meet people and gain experience
- Write thank you notes to anyone that helped you
- Set networking goals, such as meet one new contact per week
- Read a local and national newspaper frequently so you are knowledgeable of current affairs

Using LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest site for **professional networking**. While in some ways it has functionality that is similar to Facebook, its purpose is different. Facebook is a social networking site for people to connect and share their personal life. The content and relationships that people share on **LinkedIn** is professional. Check out the site at www.linkedin.com.) LinkedIn can be used to enhance your networking efforts during the job search. Here is a short tutorial that gives you an overview of how it can be used – <http://learn.linkedin.com/students/>

If you are interested in using LinkedIn, below are some steps for getting started:

1 – CREATE YOUR PROFILE

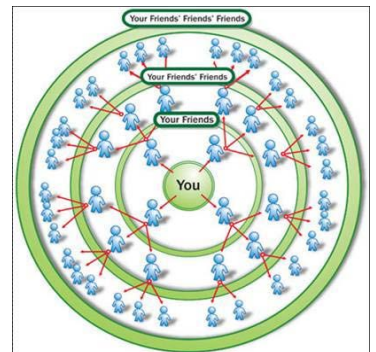
- Upload a professional photo (of you alone) for your profile picture
- In the “Summary” section, write a 3-4 sentence summary of your background. Make sure it is “keyword-rich” toward the field you are pursuing. For example:

Recent Management graduate with concentration in Human Resources. Over three years of supervisory experience in the retail and hospitality fields. Knowledge of recruitment strategies, employment law, and hiring practices. Organized, professional, and highly motivated.

- Use the “Specialties” section further describe your qualifications
- The “Experience” and “Education” sections should be consistent with the content of your resume.
- Use the “LinkedIn Groups” feature to establish new business relationships by joining alumni, industry, or professional and other relevant groups.
- Add additional information about yourself in your profile as applicable. All the content in your profile should use proper grammar and spelling. No txt msg speak. LOL!
- Once you get your profile established, start building it up by asking colleagues, clients, and supervisors for references.

2 – BUILD CONNECTIONS

The purpose of the site is to enable registered users to maintain a list of people they know and trust in business. The people in the list are called *Connections*. Users can invite anyone to become a connection. If you have limited work experience, your initial set of connections may be current/former classmates. The beauty of LinkedIn is that for each direct connection you establish, you are then linked to the connections of each of their connections (termed *second-degree connections*) and also the connections of second-degree connections (termed *third-degree connections*). As you can see from the image to the right, you can use LinkedIn to build a robust network of “warm connections,” or people that you share a common link with. (The “gated-access approach” (where contact with any professional requires either a preexisting relationship, or the intervention of a contact of theirs) is intended to build trust among the service's users.)



- When you send a connection request, you will be asked to identify your “relevance” to that person. Also, the default connection request verbiage is “I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.” If you are sending one to someone you haven't interacted with in a while, it is best to customize your invitation to more personally re-establish the connection.
- Respond to all connection requests and messages within one week.

3 – LEVERAGE YOUR CONNECTIONS IN THE JOB SEARCH

If you were talking to someone you knew, you probably wouldn't straight-out ask them for a job. Likewise, it would seem inappropriate to do it through a networking site. But you can use LinkedIn to stay in touch with your connections so they can let you know if they hear of any jobs, as well as have your closer connections serve as referrals for opportunities you are pursuing. To demonstrate this, we will use a fictional FGCU grad and show how he can use LinkedIn in his job search. Meet John Smith. He is a recently graduated FGCU student looking for an entry-level job in human resources.

Scenario #1

He sees that one of his former FGCU classmate and LinkedIn connections, Sally Jones, is an HR Generalist at a resort in Orlando. The goal for John is to touch base with Sally and let her know his situation.

Hi Sally,

I hope all is well in Orlando. Congratulations on your position at ___ resort. I am still actively looking for HR opportunities in SW Florida, but am expanding my search to other Florida cities, including Orlando. If you happen to hear about any HR opportunities, feel free to let me know. I will call you next time I am in the area and hopefully we can meet for lunch. I would really be interested in learning how you were able to break into the field. Thanks for your help!

John

Scenario #2

John sees that one of his second-degree connections is the Director of Human Resources for a company he would like to work for. John can contact his first-degree connection, a friend and former colleague, to ask for assistance in facilitating an introduction.

Hi Bill,

I hope you and your family are well. I noticed on LinkedIn that you are an acquaintance of Mr. Mike Brown, who is the Director of Human Resources at ABC, Inc. I recently applied for a position in their HR department. If you feel comfortable with it, would you be willing to facilitate an introduction between us, or perhaps put a good word in for me so that my resume gets noticed?

I truly appreciate any assistance you can provide and I look forward to a time that I can return the favor.

John

4 – CONDUCTING RESEARCH

LinkedIn may be especially helpful if you are considering relocating to another city or state. Using the "Advanced" Search located on the upper right of the home page, you can look for people, jobs and companies in specific geographic areas. For instance, if you are focused on accounting positions in Seattle you might:

- Use *People* Advanced Search to find Seattle-based members of the LinkedIn professional accounting group
- Use *Jobs* Advanced Search to find accounting jobs by title and zip code
- Use *Company* Advanced Search: to find accounting companies of a specific size or in a specific zip code

With these results, you can begin to connect to people to start to build your new local network.

Final Note: New technologies are emerging almost daily. We encourage students to explore any technological tool or resource that may enhance their job search and career development efforts. It is important, however, to balance those efforts with "old-fashioned" in-person networking. Use web-based systems to **enhance** in-person relationship building, not replace them. Most people tend to have a deeper sense of connection and trust with those that they know personally rather than virtually.