JOB SEARCH SKILLS

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Macalester
**HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**
Advice on how to find and secure employment is ubiquitous. Similarly, the paths to finding gainful and meaningful employment are diverse. This guide offers you concrete steps to structure an efficient and successful job search that is tailored to your needs. Once you have put the preliminary planning in place, meet with a CDC counselor to develop and hone job search skills, and best utilize job search tools.

**STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR JOB SEARCH PARAMETERS & PRIORITIES.**
By first identifying your goals, you can be more efficient with your time.

What are the **parameters** for your job search?

**Financial**: What do you need to earn? What financial obligations do you need to meet (living expenses, rent, loans, health insurance)? *Use the CDC Graduation Guide for a full list of potential expenses and budgeting resources.*

**Timeframe**: When do you **ideally** hope to start? When do you **need** to be employed?

**Geographical**: What area/city are you looking? (Try to focus on 1-3). Do you need to be near public transportation?

**Schedule**:
- **Commitment Type**: Full-time, Part-time
- **Length of commitment**: Permanent, Contract, Short-term
- **Type**: Day, Evening, Variable

*Permanent* = typical position that people can continue to work in for several years or longer.  
*Contract* = the posting includes a clear start and end date. Ranging in duration from a few months to a few years. Common for fellowships and Americorps positions.  
*Short-term* = position that your duration of work may be measured in weeks.

**Citizenship**: Do you have citizenship in the country you are seeking employment?

*Your parameters:*

What are your **priorities** for this job search? Examples include:

- Enhance a skill set in a new environment
- Clarify a career interest or topic
- Develop a new skill set
- Strengthen skills for future graduate/professional school applications

*Your priorities:*
STEP 2: FROM YOUR PARAMETERS & PRIORITIES, DEVELOP A JOB SEARCH GOAL STATEMENT. This helps you articulate your intentions to any and all people that may be able to help you. The goal statement also helps prepare to speak about strengths and skills, along with goals, in a professional manner.

Develop your job search goal statement that incorporates your parameters and priorities.

I am looking for a _______position in _________ that utilizes these _________.

(schedule parameters) (geographical location) (experience & skills)

Examples:
“*I am looking for a full-time position in Boston that utilizes my quantitative research skills and proven commitment to health policy.*”
“*I am pursuing a part-time, evening/weekends position in Oakland-area restaurants that uses my experience in the service industry.*”
“*I am looking for a fellowship in the Atlanta area that focuses on teaching and youth empowerment for the upcoming academic year.*”

Your statement:

Given the information you gain from the above questions, you can then identify organizations to research and explore to meet your given needs. Using Alumni Networking and LinkedIn searches by city, industry and job function can greatly assist in this research.

STEP 3: PRIORITIZE AND DEVELOP JOB SEARCH SKILLS. The CDC staff can assist you in tailored development in each of these skill areas. Essential skills that contribute to a successful and efficient job search include:

- Self-Awareness & Advocacy
- Career & Field Knowledge
- Professional Job Search Writing
- Networking
- Informational Interviewing
- Job Interviewing
- Professional Online Presence
- Etiquette
- Prioritizing Work & Sustaining Momentum
SELF-AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

• Identify areas of interest and potential questions about fields/career paths
• Concisely describe goals & plans post-graduation in your job search goal statement
• Briefly outline long-term career goals. Name 3 positive qualities you bring to your work

CAREER & FIELD KNOWLEDGE

• Articulate 3 discrete fields of interest
• Identify and develop systems for using field-specific job search sites and tools
• Read and observe industry trends, news and follow leaders via news & social media

PROFESSIONAL JOB SEARCH WRITING

Writing application materials (resumes, C.V., cover letters, essays) require thoughtful preparation and editing.
• Create a ‘master resume’ that is error-free, professional, and adaptable. Craft professional cover letters and emails consistent with appropriate etiquette, structure and format
• Tailor your application materials to highlight your strengths and work within industry and field-specific trends and parameters. Review drafts with a CDC counselor, mentor, supervisor and peers.

PROFESSIONAL ONLINE PRESENCE

All of our online presence is interpretable to prospective networking opportunities and employers. What message do you want to send?
• Conduct an inventory of online presence (what comes up when you search yourself?)
• Review online presence of industry leaders, mentors, and peers in the field for ideas and strategies
• Develop and sustain professional online presence that includes complete and professional Linkedin profile

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Brief (20-45 minutes) interview with an individual in your field of interest
• Develop professional presentation skills to utilize in identifying contacts, scheduling, conducting and following up for successful info interviews
• Conduct several informational interviews to obtain qualitative information on field, strengthen professional relationships, access current and candid career info, and discover opportunities that are not advertised.

Notes:
NETWORKING

Active and sustained participation in professional relationship building. Participation in groups, organizations across fields of interest.

- Knowledgeable of your existing network already built through personal, social and academic contacts including those at Macalester
- Confident in sharing a job search goal statement and elevator speech (concise response to “tell me about yourself”) in diverse social situations
- Successfully request information from networking contacts via email and adept at sustaining relationships

JOB INTERVIEWING

- Successfully conduct interview prep with CDC counselor to get a sense of general interviewing strengths & areas for growth
- Knowledgeable on ways to prepare for diverse interviewing formats (e.g. behavioral, group/individual, case) and mediums (in-person, phone, skype)
- Conduct appropriate and timely follow-up after interviews (thank you notes, potential inquiries on status of position)

ETIQUETTE

- Familiar with appropriate communication and etiquette to utilize during job search
- Demonstrate proven skill in interacting in professional environments through work, internships, volunteer service, and leadership
- Successfully research and adapt to styles, trends and nuances in communication, attire, and social behavior within my career field, geographic region, and organizational culture
- Demonstrate professionalism through attire and behavior during diverse professional environments (networking events, informational interviews, job interviews, work locations)

PRIORITIZING WORK & SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

- Able to navigate diverse job search tasks and ongoing prioritization of those that are most urgent
- Develop a sustainable personal system to track tasks, applications, contacts and necessary follow-up
- Sign up to receive job alerts for greater efficiency
- Identify and utilize sources of support to manage stress, reduce anxiety and keep moving towards goals

Notes:
STEP 4: UTILIZE STRATEGIC JOB SEARCH TOOLS.
Once you’ve strengthened skills, job seekers can utilize diverse tools to job search. There are unlimited avenues to search for jobs, which makes an already complex process frustrating and confusing. Use your job search priorities and skills listed above to systematically identify and use strategic tools. This guide offers a brief list of highlighted tools that Macalester and specifically the CDC find applicable to students and recent graduates. Often job seekers ask, “Am I using the right tools?” Helpful ways to clarify appropriate tools include:

- Are you using the same tools and resources everyone can use?
- Are you making the search personal?
- Are you relying on general postings through general search engines?
- Are there areas you can improve in? What skills you are under-utilizing or not at all?

TOOLS EVERY MACALESTER STUDENT SHOULD USE:

MACALESTER CAREER CONNECTION: MC2

- Features hundreds of diverse postings including opportunities from alumni

The following tools are accessible upon logging into MC2 (accessible via Macalester.edu/cdc)

- Liberal Arts Career Network: postings from 30+ liberal arts colleges
- Spotlight on Careers: Career field/industry tips written by 30+ liberal arts college career offices including field-specific advice from alumni
- VAULT industry guides
- Going Global: country-specific work abroad resources & searchable H1B database

CDC EVENTS WITH EMPLOYERS

The CDC offers diverse opportunities for students to meet with employers. Events occur on-campus, at local collaborating colleges, and throughout the country.

- On-campus recruiters (diverse organizations, fields). Employers conduct informational sessions with students and interview/select potential candidates.
- College-wide: Minnesota Private College Job Fair (February), Idealist Non-Profit & Government Job Fair (October), Temp Agency Fair (April), Virtual Job Fair-all via phone/skype (April)
- Exploreships & MacConnect: leadership opportunities for students with alumni
- Field-specific opportunities sponsored by CDC, academic departments, and collaborating colleges: examples include Teaching/education Fairs (each summer), Actuary Fair (early Fall)
CONNECTING WITH ALUMNI

Macalester College is proud to sustain an engaged alumni community. Many alumni benefitted from this community and want to help current students. Connect with alumni via opportunities including:

• On-campus events hosted by on-campus departments and organizations
• CDC Alumni Database Request: query the searchable database of alumni
• Exploreships & MacConnect: CDC-sponsored group opportunities to connect with alumni in other cities
• College-specific LinkedIn groups (e.g. College group, MC2 group, Queer Professional Network)
• College Facebook groups by career fields and interests (e.g. YMAC-Young Alumni Group, Public Policy, Scots Pride)
• Mac Direct: searchable public database of alumni offered from Alumni Relations

JOB SEARCH PLANNING SHEET

My job search priorities & parameters:

Variables that influence my job search:

Job Search Goal Statement:

Job Search Skills I want to develop or refine:

Strategic Job Search Tools to Prioritize:

Next Steps:
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Networking & Personal Branding:
- Tools to Access Mac Alumni
- Social Media Inventory
- LinkedIn Profile Review

**All guides are available for download on the CDC Web site.**

**Need help? Questions?**
- Scheduled 30- or 60-min. appointments
- Drop-in Appts: M-F: 2-4pm
- Appointments in person, phone & Skype.

**Connect with CDC**

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