

THE JOB SEARCH



This guide was created by Gwynedd-Mercy College Career Services and is designed to help you develop effective job search strategies.

GUIDEBOOK CONTENTS

- Additional Resources p. 2
- Keep These Things in Mind p. 3
- Six Steps to a Successful Job Search p. 4-7
- Email Correspondence p. 7
- Job Offers p. 8-9
- Organize Your Job Search p. 9

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to this workbook, Career Services has an abundance of other resources to help you. These materials can be found in our Career Library and/or GMC's Library.

Schedule an appointment with Career Services to learn more about effective job search strategies. We can be reached at ext: 230 or careerservices@gmc.edu.

- More than **80% of job openings available are never advertised**, according to the Harvard Business Journal.

- This packet will explain techniques to find and get these jobs.

KEEP THESE THINGS IN MIND

DO WHAT YOU LOVE, LOVE WHAT YOU DO: Finding a job that fits your interests and qualifications is a process that's unfortunately not always quick or linear. Expect your job search to take time, so don't wait until the last minute. Ideally, you should begin your search 3-6 months before you'd realistically like to start working. The intention of this job hunting guide is to make this process a little less overwhelming, and to provide you with useful tips to make your search more efficient.

First, let's establish some common ground from which to work:

- 1) **YES**, there are jobs out there. However, you must be willing to take chances and look at all opportunities.
- 2) **YES**, it is a competitive job market. There are many college graduates looking for positions just as you are. What's going to set you apart?
- 3) **YES**, it is true that employers are looking for the "best" candidates. While grades are important, so too, are your work history, extracurricular activities, and the functional skills you've developed through these activities.
- 4) No, there is **NO ONE WAY** to approach the job search. The best job search tactics are the ones that work for you. Using a combination of tactics usually produce results.
- 5) Know that **REJECTION** may be a part of this process, but don't take the rejection personally. Remember, employers are not rejecting you as a person; they don't know you. They make business decisions based on many different factors.
- 6) Keep a **POSITIVE OUTLOOK**. Don't become discouraged by rejections, but remember, each rejection you receive brings you closer to getting the job offer you want. Be positive, be persistent, and be confident.
- 7) While you cannot control others, you do have control over yourself. This means that you must discipline yourself to maintain and sustain an active job search...it will bring **RESULTS**.

SIX STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH

STEP 1: KNOW YOURSELF

Get to know what you are all about. Identify your values, skills/abilities, and interests. Identify your accomplishments or achievements. Detail any special skills you have (i.e., technology skills, language skills, research skills, soft skills).

If you'd like to get help determining these factors and characteristics make an appointment with a Career Counselor to take a self-assessment inventory.

STEP 2: VIP DOCUMENTS

➤ **RESUME:**

See the Career Service's Resume and Cover Letter Writing Packet for information on how to perfect these documents (also available on our website, www.gmc.edu/students/careerservices). Meet with a career counselor if you have any questions or would like it reviewed.

Your resume should reflect your significant skills, experiences, and educational background. Employers will pay close attention to see if you have highlighted key transferable skills for the position you're applying.

➤ **COVER LETTER:**

"Do I need to send a cover letter?" Unless the employer specifically states that they do not require a cover letter, the answer to this question is...yes! A cover letter provides you the opportunity to let the employer know what you are seeking, what you have to offer, and why you would like a position with their company. More information, along with samples, on writing a resume or cover letter can be found in our Resume and Cover Letter Writing Packet, also found on our website.

➤ **REFERENCING:**

Choose individuals who know you and your work ethic well. References might include professors, advisors, work or internship supervisors, or others in professional positions who can speak to your strengths. It's important to ask them if they feel comfortable serving as a reference for you. As a courtesy, provide them with your resume and job description for the position for which you are applying. Don't forget to write them a thank you note.

STEP 3: IDENTIFYING EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Once you nail down your values, strengths, and interests, it's time to do some research and narrow down your options. What career fields fit best for you? Not sure? Here are some helpful resources to get you started:

- **Career Resources Library:** Review and research books and magazines on the industries of your choice.
- **A Few Websites to Get You Started:**
 - **Occupational Outlook handbook:** www.bls.gov/oco
 - **O*Net:** <http://online.onetcenter.org>
 - **What Can You Do With This Major?**— These sheets can be found in our Career Library in the Career Services Office or on our website, www.gmc.edu/students/careerservices.
 - **Company Websites**—If there are companies or organizations that interest you, check out their website to learn more about them. Items to pay attention to include mission statement, population they serve, special recognitions, etc. Note their “human resources” or “employment” links for job postings.
 - **Informational Interviews**—Learn more about fields of interest through informational interview with professionals who have taken similar paths. Keep in mind, you are not asking for a job; rather you are gathering information on a particular profession. A more detailed explanation of this process and appropriate questions can be found in the Career Services Office. For additional information go to http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html.

STEP 4: EMPLOYER OUTREACH

When conducting your job search, it's essential to use a mixed-method approach—don't rely just on monster.com or the want-ads. Instead, use a variety of the strategies mentioned below.

- **COLLEGE CENTRAL**—Gwynedd-Mercy College's premier job search database: www.collegecentral.com/gmc. Simply create an account. It is a FREE service for GMC students and alumni.
- **CAREER FAIRS**—Don't miss the face-to-face time with employers. GMC Career Services sponsors/co-sponsors some of the career fairs and also finds other job fairs of interest for students. Refer to the Job Fair Tip Sheet for assistance on succeeding at a career fair. Check the Career Services website, www.gmc.edu/students/careerservices or the College Central bulletin board for a complete listing of career fairs.

- **NETWORKING**—As you may have heard, networking is the #1 access point to career opportunities. Think about those who are in your network—family, friends, church members, professors, GMC alumni, internship supervisors, your roommate’s parents, etc. Ask people in your network for referrals so you can begin to “grow” your network. Don’t be afraid to ask.
- **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**—Most career fields have a professional association that offers professional development resources, networking opportunities, and sometimes job postings. You will likely have to pay for membership, but most associations offer discounted rates for students or first time members. If you’re unsure if there’s an association for your field of interest, ask someone in your academic department, conduct a Google search, or check out a professional directory:
http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Organizations/Professional/.
- **INTERNET SURFING**—Websites focused on specific job areas (e.g. “Art jobs online”) are typically more productive than those that attempt to cater to every type of field. Check our website for a listing of general job search sites.
- **LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**—Locate your at www.uschamber.com. You can use the Chamber to locate business/companies/organizations of interest to you.
- **LOCAL CAREER SERVICES OFFICES**—If you are relocating, and it’s difficult to take advantage of Gwynedd-Mercy College’s alumni career services from a distance, contact local career services offices at other schools and ask what services you can have access to. They may charge a minimal fee.
- **NEW PROFESSIONALS LOCAL NETWORKS**— The Young Professionals Network (YPN) of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber, www.ypnphilly.com.
- **EMPLOYER WEBSITES**—Identify companies that hire for the positions you are seeking, and regularly check their job postings.
- **DIRECT MAILING**—If the company you desire to work for does not have openings posted on their website, send a resume and cover letter which clearly states your interest in their organization, what type of position you are seeking, and your qualifications. This does not guarantee they will respond to you, but they may see something in your materials that piques their interest.

STEP 5: THE INTERVIEW

Pick up a copy of our Interviewing Packet in the Career Center, and take advantage of our Practice Interview Service. The Career Library also offers additional books and information on interviewing.

STEP 6: HELPFUL HINTS

Consider the following suggestions when you are conducting your job search:

- **Answering machines/voicemail:** Make sure it's professional—nothing funny or cutesy. If you are expecting calls from potential employers, be sure to alert your roommates as well. Always answer the phone in a professional tone.
- **Professional communication:** No slang, use capital letter and appropriate punctuation. Always remember to have your materials edited by a peer, professor, and/or career counselor before you send them out to potential employers. Any mistakes can count as a strike against you.
- **Attitude:** Make a conscious effort to maintain a positive attitude. Remember that many good, qualified people never get a call back or experience rejections, so get back on your feet and forge ahead.
- **Support network:** Surround yourself with people who will offer encouragement and support you through the job searching process.
- **Thank you notes:** This is a very important part of the process. If you meet a new contact who provides you with information related to your job search, send them a thank you note. The same goes for individuals who participate in an informational or job interview.
- **Procrastination doesn't pay:** Don't wait until the week of graduation if you expect to land a position for the following week. Start early, and set achievable goals to keep yourself motivated.
- **Keep records:** Keep track of your networks and places you're applying, and remember to follow up. Refer to the Keeping Track of your Job Search part in this packet.
- **Never too late:** It is never too late to build your experience. Consider an internship, part-time job, volunteer experience or co-curricular organization to become involved in. These are great resume builders.

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Email can be a powerful tool in the hands of a knowledgeable job-seeker and it's often the preferred method of communication between candidate and employer. Use it wisely and you will shine. Use it improperly, however, and you'll brand yourself as immature and unprofessional.

When you are communicating with prospective employers there is no such thing as an inconsequential communication. If you are sloppy and careless, a seemingly trivial communication will stick out like a sore thumb.

Follow these general guidelines when emailing cover letters, resumes, thank you notes and replies to various requests for information:

- Use a meaningful **subject header** for your email—one that is appropriate to the topic and includes your name.

- Be **brief** in your communications. Don't overload the employer with a lot of questions in your email.
- You can either cut or paste your **resume and cover letter** into the email document or you can send them as two attachments. Be careful though, sometimes an employer's company may have "no-opening-attachments" policy. Ask the employer which they prefer.
- Do not use **strange fonts**, wallpapers, or multicolored backgrounds.
- Stick to a **standard font** like Times New Roman or Arial, 12 point.
- **Sign your email** with your full name and contact information.
- Avoid using **slang**.
- Be sure to **proofread**, spell and grammar-check your email before sending.
- A professional tone should **always** be maintained.

JOB OFFERS

Congratulations, you were offered a position. Before you accept or decline an offer, there are several factors to assess. Some will weight more heavily than others.

JOB-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

- Job responsibilities
- On-the-job training
- Promotion and advancement potential
- Supervisor and co-workers
- Degree of autonomy and teamwork
- Quality of higher management
- Professional development
- Support of continuing education
- Philosophy and reputation of the organization
- Stability of the organization/industry
- Evaluation of your work
- Transferability of skills/experience from job

GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Location/community type and size
- Availability/cost of housing
- Cultural/recreational opportunities
- Proximity to family/friends

MONETARY CONSIDERATIONS

- Starting salary
- Potential salary
- Benefits package
- Cost-of-living
- Bonuses/commissions
- Expense account

LIFE-STYLE CONSIDERATIONS

- Working conditions
- Work schedule and travel requirements
- Commuting to work
- Social life for singles/couples
- Dress code

OTHER TIPS

- If an offer is extended verbally, ask for it and the details in writing, including job title, starting date, salary, location, and any other important information. If anything appears vague, ask for clarification before accepting the offer.
- If it sounds too good to be true, investigate.
- Make your acceptance in writing, restating the important details.
- If you are going to reject the offer, do so in writing as soon as possible. Thank them for their confidence in you...don't burn any bridges.
- Accepting or not, always follow up with appropriate thank you notes.
- It is unethical to accept a job offer and continue actively seeking until a better offer comes along.

ORGANIZING YOUR JOB SEARCH

To have an effective job search it is crucial to stay organized. You should know when you sent materials such as a resume or cover letter to an employer and if you did follow up with a thank you note. Here is a sample graph of how to monitor your job search.

Name of Employer: Contact of Employer:				
Letter of Inquiry				
Cover letter and Resume				
Follow-up				
Thank You Letter				
Interviewed Scheduled				
Job Offer Received				
Rejection Letter Received				
Contact Terminated				
Career Services Notified				