

## Ten Steps to a Successful Job Search – Graduate Students & Post-Docs

- Take time to assess your interests, abilities, and short- and long-term career goals...determine your career-related strengths and skills and what you have to offer an employer (it is crucial that you convey your related skills to employers utilizing specific 'stories' for **behavioral interview** questions...include 1) Specific Situation, 2) Action You Took, and 3) Results for each story)
- Create the appropriate documents: a **résumé** (industry positions) or CV (academic, some government, international positions), draft a **cover letter**, research summary (2-3 pages, include pictures/charts/graphs), educational philosophy and/or other application documents (depending on your career-path) and have them critiqued
- Check vacancy listings and apply for positions of interest at least once per week (this can be a challenge when you are also trying to finish your academic work/research, but setting a few hours aside each week for your job search will make it more manageable and will help ensure your success)...utilize ACS/C&EN Careers (<http://chemistryjobs.acs.org/jobs>), NatureJobs (<http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/science/>), AAAS (<http://www.aaas.org/careers>), Chemjobs.net, AIChE (<http://careerengineer.aiche.org/>), or the campus Handshake @ Illinois system
  - You can also check out CareerBuilder, SimplyHired, LinkedIn, or Indeed (though none of these sites may be as specific to your field as those listed above)
  - See the 2<sup>nd</sup> page for additional academic job search sites
- **Network** with fervor...Faculty advisor and collaborators, other students & lab alum, family members and friends, and engage in online networking
  - Utilize the 'Search Employers' section in Handshake @ Illinois to find potential employers
  - Set up a profile on LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) (& be sure to join the School of Chemical Sciences Networking group also!)
    - Use the 'Alumni' tool to find alums who may be working at companies you're interested in (search by your University name and then click on the 'Alumni' link...you can then search by a number of fields including what they studied, geographic location, company, etc.)
    - Start by visiting their individual profiles and selecting the 'connect' button (rather than from the alumni list page)
    - Re-write the standard message and mention that you also are an Illinois alum and you'd like to learn more about their company
    - Once they've accepted your connection request, send a direct email (not through LinkedIn) with a few questions that help you learn about the company/their experience
    - If/when they reply, respond and ask if they have any advice for you as a job seeker OR mention a position you've seen online and ask if they can tell you whom you should talk with about that position or the process for securing positions at their organizations
- Conduct one or two **informational interviews** with people who have careers you think you'd enjoy
- Attend conferences related to your field and connect with professionals – even if they can't tell you about potential jobs – who may work for your employer(s) of choice to learn more about the employer itself
- Attend career-related workshops and as many company information sessions and career fairs as possible (Note: The majority of company information sessions and on-campus interviews occur during the Fall)
- Schedule a **Mock Interview** through the SCS Career Services office
- Put together an interview **suit** (include a leather portfolio, professional briefcase/purse, and quality pen in addition to suit, shoes, and accessories) and **business casual** outfit for information sessions
- Prepare a condensed version of **paper** slides of your research (4-7 total slides, picture-heavy, text-light), a research summary, and other materials you can utilize in an interview (if you are pursuing an academic position, also prepare information about your lab needs, a tentative budget, and classes you are interested in teaching and/or developing). Also, organize and compose two presentations of your research (with slides and handouts) that you can use for site/campus visits...one should be a basic, 30-minute version and the other an in-depth, 60-minute version

## **Academic Job Search Urls**

- Chronicle of Higher Education: <https://jobs.chronicle.com/>
- Higher Ed Jobs: [www.higheredjobs.com/](http://www.higheredjobs.com/)
- Academic 360: [www.academic360.com/](http://www.academic360.com/) (provides links to other sites by discipline)
- Academic Keys: <http://www.academickeys.com/>
- Academic Careers Online: [www.academiccareers.com/](http://www.academiccareers.com/)
- Higher Education Recruitment Consortium: [www.hercjobs.org](http://www.hercjobs.org)

Another great way to look for positions if you have a specific geographic location in mind, is to search an institution's site directly. If you choose to look for the sites of a specific institution or need to find what schools there are in a specific field or geographic location, you can use the following site links:

- Peterson's: <http://www.petersons.com/>
- GradSchools.com (for only schools with graduate programs): [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com)