

## Job Searching

**Congratulations! You are about to take part in one of the most rewarding and challenging times of your life...job searching.** The challenging part involves spending hours searching for open positions, updating your resume and cover letter for each job application, and taking part in multiple job interviews. But the rewards outweigh the challenges, the reward of putting your college degree to use in a career that is fulfilling. But careers and jobs are not guaranteed to everyone, so here are some very important tips and guidelines to follow when you start the job search or internship search process

1. **Start Early!** You should start job searching approximately 6-9 months before your projected graduation date. If you graduate in May, then you should start job searching and applying for jobs in the previous fall semester. Feel free to schedule an appointment with a staff member via Handshake if you want assistance with the job search process.
2. **Create a resume if you do not have one**, and have it reviewed by a Career Center staff member. We can also review your cover letters, once you have decided on which jobs to apply to.
3. **There are many websites to utilize during the job search process.** Please review our extensive list of Job Listings sites. You also have access to our free career development platform Handshake . This is an on-line system where students can create an account and upload their resumes into a resume book which can be viewed by potential employers. This system is free of charge, is simple to use and allows students to access a variety of employers and jobs.
4. **Utilize your personal and professional network.** You need to tell your friends and family that you are job searching and that you would appreciate them referring you to any job openings that they hear about. You should also reach out to prior supervisors, coworkers, internship sites, etc. The majority of jobs are filled due to networking and "knowing the right person" at the company. Send your resume to your personal and professional connections so they know what you can offer a potential employer.
5. **Network some more!** Try to expand your network during your job search, in order to increase your chances of finding employment. Attend a conference related to your career field, meet new people, and collect their business cards. Be friendly and "get-to-know" those around you on-campus, at the doctor's office, at the bank, etc.
6. **Attend one of our Career Fairs.** We host a Fall Career Fair and Spring Career Fair every year. These career fairs bring in over 60 companies who desire to hire WIU graduates and interns.

7. **Use social media websites**, including LinkedIn and X to build your professional identity and search for open positions at companies.
8. **Have an internship completed before you start job searching.** With a very competitive job market, more employers are expecting graduates to have some sort of experiential learning in their profession completed before a student graduates. So, while it is not necessary, internships can only increase your chances of securing a job.
9. **Practice your interviewing skills** before you start interviewing for jobs. Schedule a mock interview with our office to make sure you are presenting your skills and experiences in an appropriate manner. Utilize BIG INTERVIEW, a web-based interview assistance tool. It is free to all WIU students and can offer exceptional assistance with forming the appropriate responses to common interview questions.
10. **Determine WHO will be your three professional references.** Contact these individuals immediately to politely ask them if they are willing to serve as a reference for you.
11. **If you get a job offer, be sure to check out our guidelines for salary negotiation and information about benefit packages.** You do not want to miss out on a great offer, just because you have not looked into regional salary information and benefits. What may seem like a low paying job, may in fact have great health insurance. So be sure to analyze the entire job offer before making your final decision.

Once again, these tips and suggestions WILL NOT guarantee that you will find a job or discover your dream career. But you will be at a greater advantage than those people who do not implement these strategies. If you would like further assistance with job searching, please log on to your Handshake profile to schedule an appointment with a staff member.