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Lesson Proper for Week 17

The New Graduate's Guide To Job Search

Searching for your first job is hard work, and we're here to guide you every step of the way. The resources below will help you find, apply to, interview for and get the job that's right for you.

As you learn how to approach the job search process, remember that even seasoned professionals are continuing to develop their job search skills. In a recent survey, 91% of employed adults said they look for jobs at least a few times a year—so for many people, job searching is a regular activity.¹ Like any activity, you'll get better with practice. The steps that follow are meant to help you hone your search skills and land the job you want.

If you have questions that aren't answered by this guide, get in touch with our helpful support team. You can find them on Twitter, Facebook and our help center.

Choosing a career path

As graduation approaches, chances are you're starting to consider the ways you can turn your hard-earned education into a meaningful and rewarding full-time job. As you begin to plan your post-college career path, the first step is to consider which direction you'd like to take your educational credentials.

Think about what you really want to do at work. Depending on the type of educational path you've chosen, you might plan to apply your degree directly in a role that requires your specific expertise, you might have a wide range of professional options available to you, or you might choose to pivot slightly toward a field, industry or role that complements your educational background. Think about the following:

§ What type of work can you get lost in?

- § What do you feel strongly about?
- § What could you do every day and not get tired of it?
- § List the activities you do that you love to spend time on.

In any of these cases, you'll need to get specific about the job you're looking for: both to decide where to focus your search and so you can confidently answer interview questions about why you're attracted to a particular role.

To learn more about the ins and outs of certain industries and jobs, talk with your favorite professors or work with your academic advising center to identify opportunities to shadow professionals in your field for a day or week.

Key takeaways

- Take stock of what you've accomplished in your academic career and internships, your personal aspirations and what industries you'd like to pursue.
- Know Your Strengths. Think about the skills you feel most confident in and those attributes that make you unique, these can be valuable selling points for potential employers. It's common for students and new grads to have limited work or internship experience. If this is true for you, consider any roles you've had in your community or school, volunteer work you've done and other experiences where you applied your skills and interests.
- Before you begin your job search, review your social media profiles and check your privacy settings. Potential employers may look at these pages.

Researching jobs and employers

It's time to learn about the kinds of jobs that are available to people with your educational background and how the job market for different industries is evolving.

You may want to open up your search to a handful of cities or an entire country, or you might choose to search close to home or in the area near your college or university. You'll want to research how much you can expect to be paid in different jobs and locations to gain a solid understanding of your options. Indeed provides several resources to help you tackle this research:

1. Explore salary trends

This tool lets you see the salary trends for specific jobs. Enter the job title you're interested in learning more about and you'll see the job's salary range and the average salary at popular companies. To home in on salaries for new graduates, try including "entry-level" or "junior" in front of the job titles you're interested in. You can get national trends or select individual cities.

At the same time, start to research companies that capture your interest. There are a lot of ways to research companies. Here are a few:

2. Create a target list of employers you'd like to work with

Your academic advising center might be able to point you toward these companies, or you can learn about prominent area employers at university job fairs. Visit their careers page and their Indeed company pages to get a wealth of information like reviews, videos and current job openings. From a company page, you can choose to "follow" that employer to get email updates when they post new jobs.

Visit a company's social media pages to learn more about the day-to-day of their business. Browsing a company's website is another great way to learn about its values, products and work culture. Pay special attention to the kind of language they use throughout and any photos or videos they may have about their staff. You can also search for recent news articles about the company so you're up-to-date on the latest developments.

3. Use your network to learn more about your target companies

Reach out to people you know who work at the companies on your target list. In these conversations, come prepared with specific questions. For example:

- What opportunities for students or recent graduates exist at this company?
- How did you find your job at this company?
- How would you recommend I learn more about what jobs are available here and whether I'm a good fit?
- What is your favorite thing about working here? What are the downsides?
- What advancement opportunities exist at the company?
- What is your relationship with your supervisor or manager like?
- I've seen a job that interests me, what is your referral process like? Would you be open to referring me?

Some important etiquette to keep in mind: Never expect that a contact at a company can guarantee you a job. Put the responsibility on yourself to learn as much as you can from them and to turn the information they give you into actions. Thank them for their time. If you're meeting them in person for coffee or lunch, you should offer to pay.

Searching for jobs

It's important to keep track of jobs you're interested in and to stay organized in your search and application process.

§ Create a free Indeed account

Start your search by creating a free Indeed account. With this account, you can save jobs that you want to apply to later. These jobs will appear on your My Jobs page so you can return to them when you're ready to apply. And once you've applied, you'll be able to track your status from the same page. It's the easiest way to keep track of all the opportunities that catch your eye.

§ **Set up job alerts**

Second, set up job alerts as you explore. Job alerts are regular email updates about new jobs that fit the criteria you're interested in. In today's competitive job market, timing can be everything, and job alerts are a convenient way to see new job postings as soon as employers post them.

You can create an unlimited number of job alerts to be sent to you either daily or weekly. From your account, you can manage alerts by setting how often you'd like to receive email updates and pausing or deleting alerts.

§ **Use advanced search**

Third, use advanced search techniques to narrow in on the right job. You can search for specific companies or job titles by adding "company:" or "title:" to your search. For example:

· **Refine with filters**

You can also use filters to refine your search. If you're using the Indeed Job Search app, enter the job you're looking for and then select "Find Jobs." Your job search results will display on the following page. To add filters, select the "Filter" button. From there, you can set your search distance and job type (full-time, part-time, contract etc.), and set your experience level to "Entry Level." Select "Update" to save your filters. You can update these settings at any time during your search.

If you're searching on a desktop, filters will appear on the left side of your search results page.

· **Be on the lookout for suspicious jobs**

At Indeed, we work to proactively identify and remove predatory content from search results. For your safety, review these guidelines for a safe job search. Above all, protect your personal information, never accept money for work you have not done and do not perform any financial transactions on behalf of a potential employer.

If you find a job posting that you believe is fraudulent, contact Indeed immediately to report the listing.

Writing your resume

The next step in your job search is to create or update your resume.

Indeed Resume is a flexible resume template that lets you fill in your relevant experiences and skills. There are 70 million resumes on Indeed today and employers search this database for candidates with skills that match their job descriptions.²

§ **Set resume to "Public"**

With Indeed Resume, you can set your resume to "Public," which enables employers to get in touch with you about new jobs (although your name and other personal information will not be visible). Or, you can set your resume to "Private," if you'd prefer to not be contacted by employers.

§ Upload or create a resume

You can also choose to upload an existing resume or create one directly on Indeed. If you upload a resume, you'll want to review the formatting to make sure your information has been entered correctly. Indeed Resume formats your resume so that it can be shared with employers on mobile, tablets and desktop.

You can download this document once you save it on Indeed. And, you can use your resume to apply to many jobs on mobile and desktop.

§ Customize your resume

If you'd like to create specific resumes for different jobs, we recommend that you use the Indeed Resume template to tailor your experience for each job, download that version and then create another version for another job and download that as well. To ensure you get maximum exposure, the resume you publish to Indeed should be an all-purpose resume that's rich in keywords employers are using in their job descriptions.

§ Highlight most relevant experience

For students and recent graduates with limited professional experience, it's important to showcase the most relevant work on your resume. One study found that the most important attributes employers consider when evaluating new graduates are internships and employment during college.

§ Include paid and unpaid internships

List any paid or unpaid internships, other jobs you've held while in school and volunteer activities. For each role, frame your responsibilities and accomplishments in a way that's relevant to the hiring managers you're targeting. Connect the skills you applied and the expertise you gained in each role to the specific skills and expertise needed in the types of jobs you're applying for.

You won't be prompted to apply to every job with your Indeed Resume. But because you can download it as a file, you can print it or attach it to job applications that allow attachments.

Key takeaways

- Create your resume using Indeed Resume.
- Enter past work experience, skills, relevant education and certifications.
- Set your resume to "Public" if you want to be contacted by employers searching for people like you. Your personal information will not be shown.
- Download this document as a file and print it if you need a hard copy.

Writing a cover letter

Including a cover letter is a traditional part of a job application that is not always necessary these days. As you go through your search, evaluate each job individually to determine if you need a cover letter.

In most cases, the purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself to a potential employer. You can use a cover letter to call out significant achievements or explain why you're attracted to a particular job and organization. Do not use your cover letter to reiterate what's on your resume. Instead, use it to highlight or flesh out a few of your accomplishments and aspirations.

Students and new graduates sometimes make the mistake of writing cover letters that are too long, too formal or too informal, or that emphasize what the student wants from the job or company. Avoid these issues by keeping your cover letter to about three paragraphs, researching the company so you can write with the appropriate tone and framing your letter in terms of what you can offer the employer. For inspiration, visit our list of [Recent Graduate Cover Letter Examples](#).

Sometimes employers may ask you to answer a specific question in a cover letter. If you come across a job description or application like this, make sure you follow the writing prompt closely. Employers include a prompt like this to assess your attention to detail and written communication skills.

Applying to jobs

Before you apply for any job, give your resume a final review. At this stage, you want to make sure it's the best representation of you and doesn't contain any typos or misspellings. You may want to ask a friend, family member, or university writing center coach to review it for you.

§ Apply on any device

Today, mobile job applications are the norm. In fact, 60% of all job search on Indeed takes place on smartphones.³ With Indeed, you can search for and apply to jobs on any device.

Job applications may look different for each potential employer. Follow the application instructions within the job description you've clicked on. For some jobs, you'll be able to attach your Indeed Resume and for others, you'll be prompted to upload your resume as an attachment.

Some employers do not have mobile-friendly applications but if you're logged in to your Indeed account, you can save a job from your phone and apply to it on a desktop computer later. You can see your saved jobs by going to your [My Jobs](#) page within your account.

Submit your application

Once you've filled in an application, submit it. It is highly unlikely that you will be able to edit your job application once it has been submitted, so be sure that you've completed it to your satisfaction before taking that final step.

It's important to remember that it can take several months to land your first full-time job after graduation. An important part of properly positioning yourself to get a job is casting a wide net. On average, new graduates apply to 23 jobs before they get hired.⁴ Job search is hard work, and consistently applying is a part of that effort. It's helpful to set goals for yourself—how many jobs do you want to apply to each day or week? As you meet your application goals, think of a way to reward yourself.

Your Indeed account is a hub for your entire job search. You can refer back to the jobs you've saved to keep tabs on the status of each job you've applied to. You can also see the recommended next steps for your applications.

Waiting for a response

An inevitable part of any job search is waiting for employers to get back to you. Some employers may send you an email confirming that they received your application and will be in touch if they want to move forward. Others may not get back to you at all.

How long should you wait to hear back before moving on? There is no standard answer to this question. The amount of time it takes to review a job application varies for each job and company.

While you're waiting to hear back, it's important to continue your job search. Keep researching new opportunities and applying to jobs. Set up job alerts and follow your dream employer's company page to get updates when new jobs are posted. And don't forget the power of face-to-face interactions: Take a classmate, professor, or family member to coffee and ask them about their career path. You might be surprised by what you learn and how it inspires you. Stay active in your academic community to make new connections.

We know this wait is frustrating, and not hearing anything back is difficult. We're here to talk. Reach out to us on Twitter or Facebook to share your job search story.

Interviewing

As a student or recent graduate, you'll probably be competing with other entry-level candidates for the same roles, many of whom will have limited professional work experience like you. This means it's crucial to make an impact in your interviews by conducting yourself with the utmost professionalism and showcasing the traits, expertise and values that make you unique.

The interview and hiring process is handled differently at different companies. Sometimes you may not have direct contact with anyone before your interview. If that's the case, you'll have to prepare on your own. Visit the Q&A section of this organization's company page to learn about other job seekers' interview experiences. You can also research common interview questions in your industry and practice your answers.

If you are communicating with a recruiter before your interview, you can ask them questions that will help you prepare. Here are some examples of questions to ask:

- ***What is the dress code like in your office?***

You want to look your best at an interview and knowing what the environment is like at this company will give you some ideas of what to wear.

- ***In addition to my resume, is there anything else I should bring to the interview?***

For some jobs, employers might want to see examples of relevant academic projects or your portfolio. The answer to this question will help you determine what to bring.

- ***How many people will I be interviewing with, and what are their names and titles?***

Sometimes it will be just one person, or you might talk to several people individually. Other interviews might be conducted by a panel. Knowing their positions will help you prepare well since the questions a supervisor would have for you could differ from those a peer might have.

· ***Why is the position open?***

This question will give you insight into the reason they need to fill this job and how soon. It will also tell you about the history of the position and the company's culture. For example, if the job has been vacated by someone who was promoted, that could indicate they like to promote from within. If the job is newly created, that might mean you'll be helping to define the job more clearly once hired.

In a recent survey of 1,000 hiring managers, we asked them to list the most important attributes of top performers at their company. The top five attributes they named were problem-solving, drive, self-direction, strategic thinking and initiative.⁵ As you prepare for your interviews, think of examples from your academic history, internships and work experience that embody these attributes and be ready with relevant anecdotes to share. Pairing your experience with what managers care about the most is a great way to make an impression.

Negotiating your offer

Entry-level salaries are often less negotiable than those for more experienced hires, but there's no harm in trying to negotiate your first salary, and doing so can have compounding effects that resonate throughout your career. Go into interview discussions with confidence by arming yourself with the latest salary data for your industry, role and location. Visit [indeed.com/salaries](https://www.indeed.com/salaries) to start your search. When you receive a job offer, you can use this information to negotiate your salary or pay rate.

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