

Job Search Handbook

Your go-to guide for finding a job at any stage of your career



This handbook demystifies the nuances of job searching by laying out everything you need to know. You'll find checklists, do's and don'ts, templates, external resource links, and advice for every step of your search.

No matter if you're just starting to search for your first job post-Lambda, or if you're a seasoned grad looking to grow, this handbook should be your first stop! In it, you'll find resources on:

Resumes

So you know how to stand out in your field and make a stellar first impression

Applying

So you can convince any employer you're someone they want to know

Networking

So you can learn about your field, get a foot in the door, and find mentorship in your field

Interviewing

So you can highlight your strengths and accomplishmen ts in the most impressive way possible

Negotiating

So you can secure offers that respect your value as a candidate and allow you to grow your wealth

Some of the companies Lambda School graduates work at:









stripe

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Resource Center Careers and Partnerships Team



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Careers and Partnerships Team

Before you start

Before you start your job search, make sure you have done all of the following so you're ready to put your best foot forward.

Ensure all your documents and artifacts are ready-to-ship. This includes:

- Resume
 - Find your track-specific resume requirements <u>here</u> and run it through CV Compiler to catch little errors.
- LinkedIn

 Find LinkedIn requirements <u>here</u>. Make sure LinkedIn matches what's on your resume.
- Online presence: portfolio, blog, app store

 Full Stack Web: an updated portfolio with all projects to date in it

 UX and Data Science: a blog, website, or other long-form written

 description of your projects with visuals. Install Grammarly to

 catch typos
 - iOS and Android: at least one fully-functioning app on the App Store/Google Play store with well-written description and screenshots, and a blog, website, or other long-form written description of your projects
- GitHub (Web, DS, and mobile tracks only)

 Most impressive projects in your top 6 and be active daily to maintain green squares
- Social Media
 - If using for your search, remove any unprofessional content and post regularly about tech. For personal accounts, make them private employers will search you!



Endorsement

Endorsement means that you are eligible to apply to jobs with Lambda School partners. Careers Endorsement status is granted by a career coach, and you must meet the following expectations to maintain your endorsement. For more in-depth information on Careers Endorsement, including all requirement and resources, please reference the <u>Careers Endorsement Handbook here</u>.

- Polished, coach-approved resume
 Find detailed requirements by track here.
- Polished, coach-approved LinkedIn Find detailed requirements <u>here</u>.
- GitHub (Web, DS, and mobile tracks only)

 Most impressive projects in your top 6 and be active daily to maintain green squares.
- Demonstrated teamwork/collaboration skills

 This is evaluated through your participation in Build

 Weeks and is continually evaluated throughout Labs

 and Computer Science.
- Active, professional online presence
 Web Dev: an updated portfolio with all your projects
 to date in it. Find guidance here.

UX and Data Science: a blog, website, or other long-form written description of your projects with visuals. Install Grammarly to catch typos iOS and Android: at least one fully-functioning app on the App Store/Google Play store with well-written description and screenshots, and a blog, website, or other long-form written description of your projects



Applying to Lambda Partners

Lambda School's Hiring/Solutions team works diligently to create leads for students by forming relationships with hiring partners. Partners are companies that have hired or are excited to interview and hire Lambda students. Once eligible, you'll be able to utilize this resource to assist in your job search and help represent Lambda!

☐ Gain eligibility

You'll work with a Careers team member and Hiring/Solutions team member to ensure you're up to speed on your careers materials and preparation for the interviews that will be scheduled for you.

■ Be an ambassador

Many companies are curious to know what Lambda grads are all about; show them what you and your peers can do by communicating thoroughly, preparing well for interviews, and asking for help from a coach or member of the partnerships team when you need it. You will help pave the way for future grads to access opportunities!

■ Keep Lambda in the loop

Have an interview? No longer interested? Unsure about how to proceed? Got an offer? Let Lambda know! Message Courtney Untiedt or talk to a coach during daily office hours.



Networking events

Whether it's a tech talk, hackathon, speed networking, hiring fair, or any other number of events where you'll meet others in the tech field, know what you need to make a memorable impression (and have fun doing it)!

- **□** Research the presenters and/or attendees
 - Some networking events release the attendee list ahead of time; if so, try to find people with whom you share an interest, and strategically strike up a conversation with them at the event. Or, if not, then research the speakers/presenters/organizers.
- Ready your pitch
 - You'll have many opportunities to introduce yourself to new people; ensure you have a 30-second pitch that highlights your strengths and interests ready to go for anyone who asks, "so what do you do?"
- Prepare conversation-starters

 Especially good for nervous networkers, having some pre-packaged conversation starters ready to go can alleviate awkward silences. Find some ideas here.
- You may not need hard copies, but it's a good idea to have them on hand. Print at home or a print shop.
- Be in the know

 Especially for tech talks or other events that have a topic or theme,

 doing some advance research can help you talk the talk, and start

 informed conversations with other attendees.
- Send a follow-up email to anyone you meet within 24 hours of the event. Pro-tip; subtly jot down notes after you talk to each person so you can remember who's who the next day. Find email templates here.

Informational interviews

Informational interviews are one of the lowest-stress, highest-impact forms of networking. They are when you invite a professional who works in the field or company you are trying to break into to have a casual conversation about their knowledge and experiences.

- ☐ Identify people to meet with
 - Whenever possible, start with your warm contacts to get an introduction to new people, but you can also message cold to ask for an introduction! Focus on anyone who works in your goal job, or at a goal company. Find networking how-to's here, email outreach templates here, and LinkedIn templates here.
- Research the person before you meet

 Review their LinkedIn to learn more about their background.
- Prepare questions ahead of time
 While you want to let the conversation flow naturally, you also want to be prepared with some questions to kick things off. Remember, this is your opportunity to learn, so take advantage of it
- **☐** Ask for recommendations

Don't leave an informational interview without asking, "is there anyone whom you'd recommend I speak with to learn more about X field?" or "what next steps would you recommend for someone interested in X field?"

- Just like in interviews, don't let this one slip! Templates here.
- □ Do not ask for a job

 Informational interviews are your chance to learn, and are not the right time to ask for a job. Continue to foster the relationship, and later on the person may be willing to be a reference.
- Stay in touch

 Don't let the person forget about you; keep them posted on your progress.

Resume checklist

Resumes are often your first impression. In other words, they matter. Don't fall victim to the common resume mistakes! You can find Lambda's resume deep dive here.

Content

- Links to your artifacts (portfolio, GitHub, blog, website, etc.) and social media (if relevant) are included
- ☐ All relevant projects (min 3) from Lambda School are listed
- ☐ Relevant experience is prioritized over less relevant jobs
- Bullets are in the form of power statements, starting with an action verb and include quantifiers/qualifiers and results

Format

- Margins are aligned throughout
- ☐ Font size is minimum 11pt and clean (calibri, helvetica, etc.)
- ☐ Date, bullet, heading, etc. formatting are all consistent
- Colors or graphics are not distracting
- Resume is no more than one page in length
- □ No picture or street address are included (only city/state)

Editing

- You have uploaded to CV Compiler and implemented relevant feedback
- ☐ At least two people have proofread your resume
- You ran your resume through a spell check to find typos
- You read every line of your resume out loud to yourself, starting from the last bullet up (this makes it easier to catch errors)

Track-specific recommendations:

- Web Dev
- <u>UX</u>
- Data Science
- iOS and Android



Tailoring a resume, cover letter, or your interview prep

Every job is different, and to really stand out, you'll need to tailor your approach. You don't need to start from scratch for each job, but you should not be sending the same application in or giving the same answers for every job you are going after.

- Keep a master version of everything
 - There will be transferable components in your interview responses/ resume/cover letter. Keep a master copy of everything that you can duplicate and work off of when tailoring your apps.
- Go through the job description and highlight any tools or responsibilities mentioned multiple times throughout the posting, as well as any mentioned in the first couple bullets. These are likely to be most important for the role.
- Identify your strengths

 For the most important skills, know which ones you're strong in, and how the company expects you to use those skills.
- Practice anything in the description that you're rusty in, or check out free online courses to build a foundational understanding of any new skills. You don't need to be a pro at 100% of the skills listed, but you should be able to speak to them intelligently.
- Write 5-8 relevant stories that highlight your core skills

 You should be able to tell a story in response to any aspect of the
 job description that highlights your experience with something
 similar. These don't necessarily have to be impressive examples; the
 important thing is that your transferable experience is evident.

Before an interview

Anytime you have an interview, plan to spend at least twice the duration of the interview preparing. I.e., for an hour-long interview, prep for at least 2 hours.

- **☐** Research the company
 - Know their products, history, and any recent news. Familiarize yourself with their culture so you know what to wear and how casual/formal it is.
- Research your interviewers

 Learn a bit about each of your interviewers via LinkedIn. Not sure whom you're meeting with? Ask the person who set up your interview for names.
- Map out the job description and practice answers

 Go through the description and highlight the expectations. Make sure you have at least one story to highlight your experience with all of the experiences. Practice your answers and tailor them to the job/ company. Find more on prepping STAR stories <a href="https://www.here.com/here
- ☐ Know your value
 - Salary may come up as early as the first conversation with a company; be prepared for this question by researching ranges on <u>Glassdoor</u>. More resources to prepare for this conversation <u>here</u>.
- Brush up on your skills
 - Be ready to get grilled on any of the technical skills in the description. Set aside time to practice both your skills and talking about them. For skills you lack, do research so you can at least speak to them with confidence. Find more on prepping for technical interviews here and here and here.
- Prepare questions for your interviewers

 Always bring at least 2-3 questions! But don't ask things you could easily

 Google for yourself. Find some ideas here.
- Plan for Murphy's Law
 Assume your bus will break down, traffic will be terrible, and that you'll get lost on your way. Leave extra time for the worst-case scenario.



In an interview

Impressions matter! Most interviewers decide within the first minute of meeting someone whether they may want to hire them, so be ready to impress

- **□** Don't arrive *too* early
 - If you prepared for Murphy's Law, you should arrive at least 10-15 minutes before your interview. Any more than 15 minutes, wait in your car or a local coffee shop. You want to seem organized, not desperate.
- Throw out your Red Bull, take off your headphones

 Having a water bottle or cup of coffee/tea is fine, but chuck the soda,
 energy drink, or gatorade (or put it in an opaque water bottle). Take your
 headphones off before you enter the building, and tuck your phone away
 so your attention is clearly 100% focused on the company.
- Smile, make eye contact, and give a firm handshake
 This is key when meeting people for the first time, and will help you project confidence, even if you're filled with butterflies.
- Treat the front desk staff well

 Many interviewers ask staff whether the interviewee treated them with respect; being nervous isn't an excuse for blowing off the receptionist!
- Want to seem comfortable, like you already fit in at the company? Look at your interviewer's posture and body language and mirror it.
- Don't get too comfortable

 It's ok to loosen up a bit, but keep your professionalism on point! You're

 still being evaluated in relaxed interviews, casual lunches, or happy hours.
- Jot down anything relevant or interesting your interviewer says so you can incorporate it into a future answer. Are they struggling with something you know how to automate? Slip that in later on in another answer!

After the interview

Your interview doesn't end once you leave the building; there are key next steps that you can and should take as a candidate to keep yourself top of mind.

- Send a thank you email within 24 hours afterwards

 Do not miss this step! It takes less than five minutes and can make the difference between you and another candidate, plus it keeps you fresh in your interviewers' memories. Find a template here.
- Don't wait for the company to reach out to you; check in once per week with the recruiter/point-person coordinating your interview process to stay top of mind, and to reaffirm your interest in the role.
- ☐ Check your email and phone regularly

 Don't ghost on a company at any stage in the process; make sure you add their domain to your safe senders list and respond to any messages within 24 hours.
- You might be invited for another interview on short notice; review the description regularly so it doesn't slip from your memory, and keep brushing up on skills you may need for an

interview (chances are, this won't be the only job you'll need them for anyway!)

Negotiating an offer

Negotiations can be intimidating, but they're an expected part of the offer process. Remember, earning potential compounds with age, so don't miss the chance to increase yours!

☐ Let Lambda know!

Reach out to Lambda when you get an offer (Courtney Untiedt is your point of contact!) so we can help you negotiate and consider your options.

■ Know your value

Research the market value for your position before your first conversation with the company; <u>Glassdoor</u> and <u>PayScale</u> should be your first resources for this. Be prepared to answer salary questions in the phone screen.

■ Always negotiate

You'll never lose an offer for negotiating professionally and within a reasonable range for your role. Even if an offer seems great, **negotiate!**

□ Prepare for different conversations

It might not go as planned; prepare plan b and c ahead of time. Sample scripts can be found <u>here</u>.

Everything is negotiable

Maybe they can't budge on pay, but can they budge on equity? PTO? Flexible hours? Education reimbursement? Your entire compensation package is negotiable.

☐ Get it in writing

Do not sign anything until it has your agreed-upon compensation (negotiations included) in writing.



Declining an offer

You never have to accept an offer, and there are ways to graciously decline that still keep you in that company's good graces. You never know if there will be future opportunities you'll want!

- Communicate

The most important thing is to **never ghost on a company** at any stage. Find templates <u>here</u> for withdrawing professionally.

- Express gratitude
 - Companies spend a lot of resources (money and time) to interview each candidate; make sure they know that you appreciate their time and consideration.
- ☐ Keep Lambda School in the loop

 If you're interviewing with a partner, make sure you let

 Lambda School know so we are aware why you're

 declining; your reason may be relevant to other students.



Accepting an offer

So you got the offer you've been dreaming of; congrats! Before, during, and after the acceptance process, make sure you do the following so you're not missing key steps.

☐ Talk to a coach!

We want to help you negotiate, evaluate your options, and feel great about your offer. Before you accept, reach out to a coach to discuss it.

☐ Make sure it's what you want

It is not good to accept an offer and later rescind it, even before you have started. If you are still interviewing with another company and need more time, work with a career coach to ask for this so you can take the right next steps. Find tips for considering offers <u>here</u>.

■ Negotiate!

See <u>here</u> for tips on negotiations. The most important thing is to always negotiate! Unless the company explicitly told you they don't negotiate up front, assume it's an expected part of the process.

☐ Get it in writing

Nothing is final until it's in writing and you have signed an official offer. Read this document well before signing to make sure you understand it.

■ Let Lambda School know

Whether your offer is with a partner or with a company you found on your own, we want to hear about it! Message Courtney Untiedt, and take a selfie with your offer letter and post in the #hired channel- you deserve to brag!

■ Let other companies know

If you're interviewing with other companies, tell them that you have accepted an offer elsewhere. Find templates for this <u>here</u>.

■ Be mindful of how you share the news elsewhere

Feel free to share an update on your social media or LinkedIn, as long as this isn't violating your contract, but avoid saying anything negative about the company, sharing details of the interview process, or publicizing other company details.



First three months on the job

While securing an offer is a major milestone that you should celebrate, now is not the time to relax or tone down the hard work! Think of the first three months on the job as an extended interview; this is a critical period for you to cement your place in the company.

- Ask lots of questions, but not the same one twice
 You're not expected to know everything; ask questions to make
 sure you understand expectations well, and take detailed notes so
 - sure you understand expectations well, and take detailed notes so you don't need to ask the same thing again.
- ☐ Get to know the team
 - Being the new kid on the block is the perfect excuse to schedule 1:1's with people on the team to get to know them and what they do. Don't be shy-strong relationships will help you down the road!
- You should have a 1:1 with your manager every 1-3 weeks; if you don't, ask your manager if you can schedule this. Use this time to share progress updates, confirm priorities, and ask for feedback.
- Don't get too comfortable

 Even if other people on the team roll up at 10am, play foosball for an hour every day, and drink liberally at happy hours, that doesn't mean you should, too.
- Take new things on and go above and beyond

 Is there a project nobody else wants to do? A system you know you could improve? An awesome new idea you want to introduce? Go for it and own it- just make sure you communicate to any key stakeholders.
- Document everything

 Track all your goals, tasks, and accomplishments. This will help you prepare for performance evals (usually 3-6 months after starting)

Additional Links and Resources



Supplemental resource links

Resumes and LinkedIn

- Full stack web development
- iOS and Android development
- UX design
- <u>Data science</u>, <u>Data Science Sample Resumes</u>, <u>Data Science Action Verbs</u>
- Action Verbs for Technical Resumes
- How to Build an Amazing LinkedIn Profile
- Tech resumes 101

Careers endorsement requirements

- Full stack web development
- iOS and Android development
- UX design
- Data science

General interviewing preparation

- Lambda whiteboarding exercises
- Lambda technical interviewing guide
- STAR stories and behavioral interviewing
- Interview prep tool

Salary negotiations

- Know your worth and then ask for it Casey Brown
- Salary negotiations
- Considering the offer



Supplemental resource links (cont.)

Organizers

- Huntr
- Job search tool

General job boards

- <u>LinkedIn</u>
- Built In
- Stack Overflow
- angel.co
- The Ladders
- <u>Dice</u>
- CrunchBoard

Remote/relocation boards

- We Work Remotely
- Relocate
- Work From Home Jobs

DS boards

- BigDataJobs
- Kaggle
- DS Central

Mobile Dev boards

- Android Jobs
- Core Intuition Jobs (iOS)

Design boards

- Behance
- UX Jobs Board
- Krop



Supplemental resource links (cont.)

General

- <u>Financial Planning</u> with Justin Castelli (brown bag recording)
- Medium's Curation Guidelines
- Build a portfolio website
- Web design resources
- How to identify a <u>job scam</u>

Interview practice

- Pramp (free peer-to-peer interview practice)
- Interviewing.io
- LeetCode
- Interview Cake (not free)
- AlgoExpert (not free)

Networking resources

- Networking Guide for Introverts
- <u>Charisma on Command</u> (YouTube channel)
- <u>Tips</u> for remote communication

Templates

- Cover letter
- Networking and outreach emails
- LinkedIn outreach in 300 characters or less
- Conversation starters



Supplemental resource links (cont.)

UX resources

- <u>Jared Spool</u> on Twitter (for articles and periodic job postings)
- Lambda School's <u>UX Whiteboarding Training</u>
- Lambda School's <u>UX Interview Prep</u>
- UX Interview Questions and Answers
- Nick Basile on <u>Building a Portfolio</u>
- Strong <u>examples</u> of UX case studies
- What makes a <u>strong case study</u>
- 15 YouTube Channels that Designers Should Watch
- UX Writing Guide

iOS resources

• iOS Interview Guide

Data science resources

- Data Science Interview Study Guide
- <u>Tips for Data Science Interviews</u>
- Demystifying Data Science
- Unions in the Gaming Industry
- Kyso Blog



Careers, Mentorship, and Alumni Team



Katie Spencer Student Success



Jordan Isbell Student Success



Jamie Smallwood Mentorship



Fhiwa Ndou Alumni



Heather Spain
Careers



Lindsey Baltz Careers



Nilza Santana Careers



Kathleen Hunt Careers



Kelsey Johnson Careers



Rachel Cohen Careers



Caitlin Carter Careers



Austin Lieberman Careers

Hiring Solutions Team



Treyden Johnson



Andi Waters



DeWayne Johnson



Christian Elton



Jessica Mansuetto



Carolyn Giannini



Sam Brewer



Jeff Henriod



Christy Lehman



Trey Knowles



Tj Lokboj



Meaghan Barber



Josh Johnson



Megan Brewster



Benjamin Crane



Vishal Kumar



Michael Zimmerman Beau Hoge





Lindsay Gilson



Austin Truong