

Career Development Project

The purpose of this project is to give you some experience planning your career options. It is worthwhile to develop a habit of periodically devoting some time to your professional development and career objectives.

This project is worth 1/3 of your final grade in this class, and consists of several assignments. Note that various assignments are due on different dates, and you must complete ALL assignments to receive credit for this project.

Assignment 1.1 (10 points) in class 09/02

Come to class and PARTICIPATE in a discussion about career opportunities and services. Prepare for this discussion by studying the information on the WKU Office of Scholar Development [website](#) and the WKU Career Development [website](#). Use these websites to find information about opportunities relevant to your career objectives.

Assignment 1.2 (10 points) in class 09/09

Come to class and PARTICIPATE in a discussion about the American Chemical Society (ACS) [career services](#) as well as ACS Publications ([scientific journals](#)). Prepare for this discussion by studying these websites; you may substitute a different scientific society and/or publisher with prior approval from the instructor. Select a high profile weekly scientific magazine that you will try to follow regularly. For example, C&ENews, Nature, or Science Magazine; you may follow a magazine different from one of these with prior approval from the instructor.

Assignment 1.3 (30 points) due 09/16

Write a resume or curriculum vita (CV) for yourself and prepare a cover letter for one of the items from Assignment 1.4. The resume should be a 1-page document high-lighting educational experience, work experience, and marketable skills. A CV is a longer document, typically used in academic professions listing a variety of teaching, research, and service experience. The cover letter is meant to introduce yourself in narrative form to a potential employer. This would be one or two pages depending on the job opportunity and your work experience. In some ways it is effectively a writing sample but also provides a measure of the prospective employee's interest in the organization. The most compelling letters will connect the applicant's prior experience with the mission of the organization. Specific examples with documentable results are the key to writing a convincing letter.

Assignment 1.4 (30 points) due 09/16

Develop a list of jobs opportunities, scholarships, Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), and/or graduate/professional schools that you would like to apply to in the near future. Your list must have a minimum of five organizations that contain at least one private sector job or corporate

internship, one REU or other significant scholarship, and one graduate/professional school. Certain exceptions to this requirement may be allowed. Ask/email the instructor about your particular situation.

Limit your selections to positions that you are actually qualified to apply for in terms of your education and work experience. For example, if the position requires the applicant to possess an MBA or PhD, then do not include that position in your list. You may include items that require a bachelor's degree in your major field of study. Do not include items that require significantly more experience than you actually have. Do not include items whose application deadlines are in the past.

For each item you should compile a list of relevant application information. Below are some examples of the type of information you should try to collect:

- What is the name of the organization and where is it located?
- Does the organization have a webpage, and what is its URL?
- How many employees, faculty members, or graduate students does the organization have?
- What services does the organization provide, or what products does it make?
- What is the title of the position you are applying for?
- How did you find out about the position?
- Is the position full/part time or contract?
- What are the required qualifications and job responsibilities for the position?
- Are the salary/stipend and/or benefits specified?
- When is the application deadline, and what information and/or materials do I need to provide in order to apply for the position, and how do I actually apply (by phone, email, or online form)?
- Is there any other relevant information for this position?

Tips for job searching

If you are totally uncertain about your career objectives, then visit the Bureau of Labor and Statistics and spend some time searching the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#). This is a great resource for learning about different career paths. On that website there is small search box on the left in the middle of the page; type in an occupation that you are interested in or just curious about.

The American Chemical Society (ACS) provides support for people looking for chemistry related jobs. You do not have to be a member to search the website. Start playing around with the search engine to find something that is appropriate for you. It is not completely straight forward, and so you should ask/email the instructor questions, as necessary. When you find something you like, you should copy and paste the information into a different document, such as MS Word; this is because items on the ACS website are not permanently posted.

Tips for scholarships and REU internships

Consider contacting the WKU Office of Scholar Development. They keep updated lists of available opportunities for undergraduate students.

Go to this National Science Foundation (NSF) [webpage](#). Browse the related links and read until you have a good understanding of the REU program.

Eventually make your way to this [webpage](#). Search for REU sites that are relevant to your particular interests. When looking at individual programs, CHECK THE DATE FIRST. If the date has already past, but you are still really interested in that program, then you might consider emailing the person in charge of the program to see if there are other related opportunities (such as a grad program) that you may want to apply for. Ask/email the instructor for advice, as needed.

If you notice that one of the graduate schools you are considering has an REU program, then you might also consider applying for the REU program there.

Tips for graduate schools

If you are considering graduate school, then you should pick several possible schools. Consider what division(s) or sub-discipline(s) of chemistry are most interesting you (analytical, biochemistry, organic, physical, etc.), then look up the faculty members in those divisions on the appropriate departmental websites. Read their bio information and look at the activities of their research group. List the professors that you might be interested in learning more about, and include their research projects/interests among the information you collect. After you have perused the faculty for a while, then find a webpage containing information for prospective graduate students, and begin collecting the information that you will need in order to make an application.

Assignment 1.5 (10 points) due 12/02

Schedule an appointment with WKU Career Development before this date, e.g., a mock interview. Write a few paragraphs (limit to 1 page) describing the experience and explain any strengths or weaknesses that came across during the interview.