

Job Search Outside of Academia



Self-Assessment

- Begin your job search with a self-evaluation. Identifying your own strengths, values and interests will be useful in considering what careers would be a good fit for you and in promoting yourself to employers.
- Reflect on prior accomplishments and the skills that have enabled you to succeed thus far. This will help you to evaluate your transferable skill sets.
- Determine what you need from a career and specific job. Think about the qualities that you feel will create a satisfying work environment. Decide if you are willing to move, and where in the country you would like to live. These considerations can help narrow down employers and the types of positions that you would like to look for.
- Your personality also plays a part in how you fit with a particular employer. Tests like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator can be useful in determining how your personality could affect your preferences.

Research

- Utilize our Handshake site in order to research companies that may be of interest to you. Read their job postings and profile descriptions to gain a better idea as to what type of candidate they are looking for.
- Find organizations that you are interested in and apply for positions. The process itself will create more awareness of the field, firm and positions for which you are qualified.

Networking

- Connections are important in looking for a higher level job. Many jobs are never posted, so you need to rely on word of mouth to learn about these opportunities.
- Make a list of people you know and their contact information. Tell family and friends that you are looking for a job. Give some specifics rather than just telling them that you are looking for a job in the broad sense. Even if they have no knowledge of openings in a particular field, someone they know might.
- Contact Caltech alumni at companies you are interested in working for, as they may have internal knowledge of positions that are available. Conducting informational interviews with alumni or other employees can also give you a better sense of what kinds of jobs and employers you are interested in.
- Register for LinkedIn to interact with alumni and other professionals.

Face Time

- Attend networking events to begin the process of meeting prospective employers.
- Career fairs are a great opportunity for networking and learning about potential jobs. Even if you are not interested in the particular positions being offered by a company at the fair, getting to know a recruiter and obtaining contact information can be of great use in the future if you make a good impression.
- Join the professional organizations associated with your fields of interest and attend conferences and other events. Any contacts you make at these events are potential sources of jobs.

Apply

- Make sure you have an up-to-date, well-written and error free resume.
- Be sure that your reference writers are well informed (by you!) of your employment goals, skills and motivation for seeking a position in the target field. Provide reference writers with a brief summary about each firm and the position you are seeking to help them give you the best possible reference.
- Acquire appropriate attire and review etiquette practices.
- Make sure to get plenty of practice interviewing. You can schedule a mock interview at the Career Development Center.
- Keep a record of whom you have contacted and when, along with what follow-up action needed to be taken. Keep copies of applications, resumes, and cover letters so that you know what positions you have applied for and what information you have given to employers.