

# Job Search Strategies

*How to land that dream job!*

OFFICE OF CAREER EDUCATION  
**BRIDGE FROM  
COLLEGE**  
*to Career Success*

## JOB HUNTING PRELIMINARIES

### TIMELINE

Your job search timeline will depend on several factors such as knowing what type of work you want to do, understanding industries of interest, and knowing when these organizations typically hire.

Regardless of career field, you should start preparing early for your job search and learn what resources are available to assist you when you are ready. **It typically takes the average job seeker 6 months to land a**

**job** and may take even longer in a tightened job market. Typically, the larger organizations can predict their hiring needs for May graduates and can recruit to fill those positions early in the academic year, starting as early as September.



### CHOOSING A DIRECTION

If the thought of choosing a career direction feels overwhelming; you are not alone. It may be useful for you to spend some time reassessing your interests, skills, and values. You may also need to learn more about occupational options. A great resource for this is What Can I Do With This Major at [www.arcadia.edu/majorstocareers](http://www.arcadia.edu/majorstocareers) which showcases typical career paths by major as well as major specific job search resources. Additionally, Vault ([www.arcadia.edu/vault](http://www.arcadia.edu/vault)) provides career advice, videos, industry guides and employer information.

The Office of Career Education (OCE) offers a variety of services and resources that can greatly assist you with this process. Some of these include: career interest inventories, individual career counseling, online career resources, peer advising, on-campus interviews, career events, and Arcadia's alumni network. Meet with a professional Career Educator to get advice; schedule a consultation via Handshake <https://app.joinhandshake.com/appointments>.

### ASSESSING YOUR SKILLS

Knowing and presenting your skills both on paper and verbally, are important factors of an effective job search. Most skills are transferable, meaning that you can transfer the skill from one environment to another. For example, if you are able to orally present and defend a paper effectively in seminar, chances are that you could also present a proposal to a client. The transferable skills in this case may be: verbal presentation, organization and facilitation. Focusing on transferable skills allows you to link your experiences to the type of positions you are seeking. One way to identify your skills is to follow the steps below.

- ❖ Make a list of your strengths, being sure to include examples from past experiences that illustrate each skill.
- ❖ Identify the skills that are necessary for the types of positions you are seeking.
- ❖ List concrete skills developed from your academics, work experience, internships, activities, and volunteer work.
- ❖ Use the Skills Identification Sheet below this guide to get started with brainstorming your skills.
- ❖ Transfer this information to your resume and cover letters and practice talking about your skills in practice interviews.
- ❖ Review resume, cover letter and interview prep materials online at <https://careerlaunchpad.arcadia.edu/channels/prepare-apply/>
- ❖ Have your materials reviewed during Express Advising times <https://www.arcadia.edu/expressadvising>.

## Skills Identification Worksheet: Identifying Transferable Skills

<i>Description of Skills</i>	<i>Acquired?</i>	<i>How have you used this skill in the past?</i>
Communication – Ability to communicate effectively with others, both written and verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Strong Work Ethic – hard worker; dedicated to the job he/she performs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Teamwork – ability to work effectively with others in a group	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Initiative/ Motivation – one’s drive, energy, and enthusiasm; A “go-getter”; does not wait until told to take action	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Interpersonal – ability to relate to and get along well with others	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Problem Solving – Ability to look at a problem and break it down in order to solve it effectively	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Analytical – Ability to anticipate potential problems or outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Flexibility/Adaptability – capable of adjusting to new, different, or changing situations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Computer/Technical – Working knowledge of basic computer software such as MS Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Attention to Detail – Having a keen eye for details	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Organizational/Planning – Ability to follow specific procedures when planning or organizing important events or schedules	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Leadership/Management – Experienced in leading others or in successfully overseeing peers, coworkers, or projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Honesty/Integrity – honorable, reputable, and trustworthy. Employers can count on you always being truthful	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Ability to Handle Pressure – Able to handle stressful situation or conflict in an effective and healthy manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Creativity/Originality – Able to offer innovative and creative ideas and suggestions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Decision Making – Exhibiting prompt and firm ability to make important decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Dedication/Perseverance – Devoted to one’s job; continues to achieve a goal no matter how difficult it may be or how many obstacles get in their way	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Dependable/Reliable – Someone an employer can always rely on; responsible	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No	

## **DEVELOPING TARGETED MATERIALS**

Applying for positions with a general resume and cover letter is **NOT recommended**. It is better to take the time to create tailored application materials so that your resume and cover reflects the skills and experiences that the employer is seeking. You can find this crucial information in the job description in the “Skills and Qualifications” sections. While creating tailored application materials generally takes more time, it is a much more effective job search strategy often yielding more interviews than a generalized approach.

Additionally, be aware of applicant tracking systems (ATS) as you apply. These are computer systems used by organizations to manage the flood of applications received. The ATS will read your resume, and then rank and score your qualifications against the job description. Only those applicants who receive high scores will get a call for an interview. Follow these tips to greatly increase the likelihood that your resume will rise to the top of the list.

- **Do not use templates!** Use a standard Word document, and save in **.doc** format: File/Save As/Word 97-2003. Not all ATS systems can read .docx, PDF, RTF, and JPG formats.
- **Use simple formatting.** Do not use headers (including for contact information), footers, templates, borders, lines, symbols (bullet points are fine) or shading.
- **Customize each resume** for the specific position being sought using language from the job description. "One-size-fits-all" does not work with applicant tracking systems. Incorporate relevant, targeted keywords and phrases for the position being sought. Be specific -- i.e., "Adobe Photoshop" instead of "image-editing software")
- **Use keywords and phrases *in context*.** Incorporate them into descriptive achievement- oriented bullet points; do not just include them as a list of skills or competencies.
- **Edit carefully:** The ATS will not recognize misspelled words. And, if your resume survives the ATS screen, it will next be reviewed by human beings so it must be error-free.

## **EMPLOYMENT SOURCES**

**It is crucial that candidates diversify their job search strategies and don’t rely solely on one method for finding jobs.**

The job market consists of available positions that may or may not be advertised. The percentage of all job openings that are actually advertised is under 25%. The rest, roughly 75% of all positions, are in the hidden job market.

Identifying these opportunities takes work and perseverance.

### **ADVERTISED JOBS**

Handshake (Arcadia’s online career hub)  
 Internship and Career Fairs  
 Networking Events  
 Organization Websites  
 Online Job Search Sites

**-versus-**

### **HIDDEN JOB MARKET**

LinkedIn Connection  
 Arcadia Alumni  
 Your Friends and Family  
 Faculty/Staff Referrals  
 Organizations You May Know  
 Professional Associations

## **NETWORKING**

Without a doubt, one of the most effective, and most underutilized, methods of obtaining employment is through networking (building professional relationships). Your network is a group of people who know the types of position(s) you are seeking. This group includes friends, family, faculty, and professional connections as they may keep you abreast of job openings and introduce you to people with the authority to make hiring decisions. These individuals may also be able to provide valuable information about their industry or organization, and expand your network by giving you names of other professionals. They won't take over the responsibility of your job search, but they may provide valuable advice and assistance. See our *Informational Interviewing* career guide at <https://careerlaunchpad.arcadia.edu/resources/informational-interviewing-making-connections-for-your-future/> .

### **NETWORKING AT EVENTS**

The Office of Career Education coordinates events throughout the year designed to facilitate connections with employers. These events include *The Office of Career Education Networking Events*, *Healthcare Careers Exploration* and the *Internship and Career Fair* to name a few. Sign up for these events (and others held off campus) through Handshake. Prior to the event, research the attending organizations online. If you conduct a little research before the event, you will feel better prepared and make a great first impression.

Additionally, be sure to develop your introduction or elevator pitch. An elevator pitch is a brief and persuasive speech that allows you to “sell yourself” to an employer in 30-40 seconds. A good elevator pitch focuses on your work/internship experience, background skills, accomplishments and goals. Try to touch on “the past”, “the present” and “the future.” Practicing your pitch out loud before the event allows you to smoothly answer the question “Tell me about yourself.” Your first impression is always the most memorable and you want to display a professional look that is conservative and appropriate. This means no jeans, sneakers or flip-flops! Read our *Dress for Success* career guide at <https://careerlaunchpad.arcadia.edu/resources/dress-for-success/> .

Networking may feel uncomfortable or seem nerve-wracking; however, try to remember that it is just a conversation between two individuals who are getting to know one another. Remember to listen as much as you speak to an individual; some enthusiastic networkers forget this and tend to dominate the conversation. Instead, ask questions to get to know the person well and what they value in an employee. Additionally, don't be afraid to discuss your accomplishments! This is your opportunity to turn your conversation into an opportunity. Highlight your skills and experiences to show how they may relate to the organization. Remember to be yourself while you network. Show up and ask questions to see how you might fit into the organization's culture. Finish your conversation with “I've really enjoyed speaking with you. Can I get your business card or connect via LinkedIn?”

Networking is not a one-time thing. If you are interested in an employer, you need to continue to make contact after the

### **Develop Your Elevator Pitch**

Demonstrate that you know something about the organization (their industry, services etc.)

Express why you are interested in the organization

Be able to relate your background and skills to what you know about the employer's needs

Talking points include: your education, your skills, your career aspirations

#### **Example:**

My name is \_\_\_ and am a \_\_\_ major. My understanding is that your organization \_\_\_\_. I am very interested in \_\_\_\_\_. As you can see in my resume I been involved with \_\_\_\_\_ at Arcadia. My most recent experience has helped me to develop strong \_\_\_ skills which I would bring to your organization. I'd love to hear more about what you are looking for in candidates.

event to cultivate a relationship. Send individuals a thank you email after the event letting them know how much you enjoyed meeting them. Personalize your note and mention specific conversations you had at the event. Check in with the individual from time to time, keeping them updated on your job search.

### **NETWORKING ONLINE**

The best way to get a feel for a certain position or industry is to talk with people currently employed in your target area. These conversations are called "informational interviews," and if done properly, can put you head and shoulders above your competition. To begin the informational interviewing process, you should contact people within your personal network. This may include your family, friends, parents' friends, friends' parents, past employers, mentors/coaches and professors. Ask these contacts for names of people within occupations or organizations that interest you. In addition, develop your own LinkedIn profile ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) and use it to find connections. Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive resume. It's a summary of your professional experience, interests, and capabilities that is designed to attract the attention of important people who are searching for you online — recruiters, networking contacts, and grad school admissions officers. A strong profile is a key differentiator in the job market. Be sure to visit a Career Peer Advisor (CPA) in Knight Hall, Suite 100 during Express Advising hours ([www.arcadia.edu/expressadvising](http://www.arcadia.edu/expressadvising)) for help building a great profile. A CPA can even take a professional picture of you for inclusion on your profile. After building your profile, start connecting with individuals. The most effective means of making contact with potential sources of information begins with a request to connect through LinkedIn. In this e- request, be very specific about your interest in career information, not your desire for a job.

LinkedIn also has a job search database. Additionally, jobs can get posted to various employer pages as well as groups on LinkedIn. As a current student or Arcadia alumni, you may also join the Arcadia University Alumni Group. Learn more about building a great LinkedIn profile, connecting with alumni and searching for jobs on LinkedIn at <https://careerlaunchpad.arcadia.edu/resources/linkedin-profile-checklist/> .

### **APPLYING ONLINE**

**Be sure to start your job search on Handshake, Arcadia's online career hub** <https://arcadia.joinhandshake.com/>  
Handshake features thousands of domestic and international opportunities posted annually from employers seeking to hire Arcadia students and alumni.

When you're looking for a new job, many of your applications will be completed online either directly on an employer website or via an online job site such as Handshake. Before you start job searching, you should first prepare to complete online job applications. It requires gathering all the information you'll need such as your resume, a cover letter for some jobs, your employment history, and names & contact information for references. Additionally, some positions may ask for supplemental materials such as college transcript or answers to essay questions.

When you look for jobs online, the most effective way to search is to use job keywords to find jobs in the career fields and industries you are interested in. Keywords can be more effective than using the predefined search options because they search the entire listing (job description, job title, contact information, etc.) for the keyword(s) that you use. Be sure to also use filters to narrow your search. Additional helpful filters can include experience level (entry-level vs. experienced) and location. Many sites allow you to create search agents and get email notifications of new positions (based upon your criteria) as they get posted. This is a great time saver! As you apply to positions, be sure to save a copy of the position description. This will be helpful to you as you prepare for interviews. Note that job postings often disappear from websites once the employer has received a significant volume of applications.

## **CAREER FAIRS**

A career fair is an efficient and effective way to network with individuals working for several organizations, learn about organizations, and positions. Employers utilize career fairs as an opportunity to meet with potential candidates face-to-face, collect resumes and screen candidates for interviews. Typically, interviews are conducted within a few weeks following the career fair. However, some employers may decide to conduct a screening or introductory interview during the career fair itself. Either way, be prepared to make a great first impression, show what you know about the organization and discuss how your skills relate to the organization's work. Arcadia offers Internship & Career Fairs and networking events. Additionally, we co-sponsor the *Greater Philadelphia Teacher Job Fair* annually, also held in the spring. [Check Handshake offers](#) for details on these and other career fairs. Read our *Career Fair Tips* career guide at <https://careerlaunchpad.arcadia.edu/resources/internship-career-fair-tips/> for more information on how to prepare for career fairs.

## **SECTOR SPECIFIC JOB SEARCH ADVICE**

### **THE FOR-PROFIT SECTOR**

Entry-level positions are the first entry point into most organizations and provide training opportunities that allow you to gain related skills. Many for profit organizations recruit early in the academic year (September thru November) and post positions in Handshake and LinkedIn. Larger companies often have a university recruiting section on their website where they explain the opportunities and processes for recent graduates. Additionally, be on the lookout for on-campus interviews advertised in Handshake [https://app.joinhandshake.com/interview\\_schedules](https://app.joinhandshake.com/interview_schedules) and be sure to attend [employer sponsored events](#) to connect with employers.

### **THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR**

The not-for-profit sector includes tax exempt organizations that are educational, scientific, cultural, as well as government and social welfare institutions. Employment in the not-for-profit sector accounts for about 10% of U.S. employment. Like small businesses, not-for-profit organizations usually have entry-level openings only when a position has been vacated, or a new position is created. For graduating seniors who are not available until after graduation, applying for these positions typically occurs in spring and summer (closer to the time you are available for employment). Idealist.org is a great place to begin your non-profit job search. Additionally, many non-profits both post positions on Handshake and attend OCE events each spring.

### **THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR**

Liberal arts majors tend to do very well in federal jobs and often rise to leadership levels. Students with majors in mission critical areas will be highly sought over the next few years: science, engineering, mathematics, statistics and computer science. Only 16% of federal government jobs are located in Washington DC which translates to numerous opportunities across the country as well as internationally. Government positions are only posted to [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). Continuously check this website for positions as positions are constantly listed, and typically only stay open for 1-2 week; sometimes only a few days.

## **JOB SEARCH SUCCESS**

### **FOLLOWING UP**

Take the initiative and the responsibility for following-up with employers. Ask each interviewer for their business card before you leave the interview. Send a thank you email within 24 hours to everyone with whom you interviewed. Call a week or so after the interview to check up on the status of the position and to reiterate your interest (the time and

frequency of contact depends on the circumstances of the position open). These actions show that you are very interested in the position and are a professional candidate. Additionally, this provides you with further information about their hiring timeline and process.

## **MANAGING CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY**

### **IF YOU ARE SENDING OUT RESUMES AND RECEIVING NO INTERVIEWS**

Evaluate your materials. Have your resume and cover letter been reviewed by a trained career peer advisor or Career Educator? Does your cover letter communicate your skills and abilities relative to the job you seek? Is your cover letter “generic” or does it specifically state why you are interested in working in this position with this organization? Does the resume demonstrate your accomplishments and ways you made an impact in your jobs, internships, community service and activities? Review the positions for which you applied. Are you qualified for the job? Have you applied to enough positions? (Hint: more than three! Plan to apply to at least two dozen positions as you are getting momentum in your search.) Are you using all of the tools available to you? Be sure that you are using Handshake to seek positions posted specifically for Arcadia students/alumni.

### **IF YOU ARE INVITED TO INTERVIEWS, BUT RECEIVE NO OFFERS**

Have you completed a mock interview with a Career Educator or an industry expert? Interviewing is a skill that can be developed. Many students do not have adequate experience in the skill of interviewing and struggle to communicate their abilities to interest employers. Learn how to prepare and practice for interviews at

<https://careerlaunchpad.arcadia.edu/channels/ace-your-interview>

Are you applying exclusively to highly competitive organizations? If you apply only to organizations that accept a fraction of applicants, your chances of obtaining an offer are reduced. Do you really want the job? I know, it sounds ridiculous because you applied for it, right? Many students apply for jobs that they think they should apply for and their credentials (good grades, strong experiences) get them in the door, but they cannot articulate their strengths and motivation well because they don't really want the job. Sometimes, despite a candidate's fantastic grades and stellar summer experiences, there simply isn't a good fit between the candidate and the hiring manager or, more broadly, the organization. Research employer work cultures by visiting sites such as Vault ([www.arcadia.edu/vault](http://www.arcadia.edu/vault)) and Glassdoor ([www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com)). Talk with alumni who work at the organization to learn more about their organization's culture and what they are seeking in new hires.

### **GETTING SUPPORT**

**Be sure to schedule a meeting (via Handshake) with a Career Educator to get feedback and support throughout your job search.** Sometimes a small change to what you are doing can have a big impact. Are there more significant issues preventing you from succeeding? If you are experiencing high levels of stress, trouble sleeping or an emotional reaction to the lack of progress in the job search, visiting Arcadia's Counseling Services can help you process your experience. If you are facing challenges related to a disability, speak to staff in the LRN, who can walk you through your rights in terms of ADA requirements in the workplace.

## **JOB SEARCH AND RECRUITING POLICIES FOR ARCADIA STUDENTS**

- ❖ Anyone who accepts a job/internship offer by voice, email, or letter is making a binding agreement with the employer. Once an offer is accepted, for full-time or internship, you are expected to stop your search and are no longer eligible to apply to positions in Handshake or participate in on-campus recruiting events or interviews. It is unprofessional to continue searching once you have accepted an offer.
- ❖ Once an individual has accepted an offer, they should notify all other organizations where their application is pending and cancel any remaining interviews scheduled.
- ❖ Anyone who withdraws an acceptance (i.e. renegeing on an offer) after initially accepting will immediately lose all recruiting privileges. This action reflects poorly on the individual, The Office of Career Education, and the university, often causing that employer to discontinue recruiting at the university.

Arcadia University and Arcadia University's Office of Career Education disclaim any liability for the recruiting, hiring, or employment practices of employers using Handshake or participating in recruiting events. Employer access to

Handshake or recruiting events does not constitute an endorsement of that organization. Career Education is not involved in the actual transaction between employers and students/alumni.