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Job Search Techniques and Networking

An effective job search is an important tool in building a successful career. There may be times in your professional life when you need to simply ‘find a job’. However, a job seeker who chooses a job related to their career goals will be better prepared to begin a career on the right track. Preparing for and conducting an effective job search may seem like a lot of work but the more prepared and efficient you are, the more likely you are to find a job you want.

Throughout this guidebook, we will focus on some of the key steps involved in conducting a successful job search. A key component for a successful job search is effective career planning. Therefore, we will also include some information on career planning and on the technique of ‘informational interviewing’, a career planning tool.

Steps to Successful Job Searching

The Career Centre has identified 5 key steps to effective job searching:

- Step 1** - Self Reflection
- Step 2** - Career Research
- Step 3** - Preparing Job Search Materials
- Step 4** - Targeted Job Searching
- Step 5** - Follow-up

As you review this guidebook, you will find information on how to successfully navigate these steps. Some of the steps mentioned above are covered in depth in other Career Centre resources or workshops. Where this is the case, alternate locations will be indicated for this information.

As you begin the job search process, you should consider compiling some of the information you gather to create a ‘Portfolio’. Your portfolio is simply a collection of information relevant to your career and job search.

Your Portfolio may be comprised of:

- Career Profile
 - Personal profile
 - Career research
- Job Search Material
 - Resumés and cover letters
 - Samples of your work
 - Other documentation such as certificates, recommendation letters, etc.

- Networking Information
 - Contact lists
 - LinkedIn
 - Social media
 - Follow-up information
 - Information on professional organizations and affiliations

The Traditional Job Search

For many job seekers, the job search involves applying to advertised job postings. This traditional job search method usually involves:

- Job posting websites
- Registering with employment/temporary agencies and recruiters
- Completing applications

If you are conducting a traditional job search, you are missing as many as 75% of all possible jobs. The traditional job search taps into only a small portion of the actual job market. The more effective method of seeking employment is a non-traditional job search.

The Non-Traditional Job Search

The non-traditional job search is an informal job search. The key to undertaking a successful non-traditional job search is to conduct an active job search. If you have ever heard of the phrase, 'the hidden job market', you have heard of a non-traditional job search.

Service Canada reports that many job openings are not advertised and information about these job openings is circulated through various managers' networks, business associates, friends and other personal contacts. According to this research, over 60% of job seekers reported locating jobs through the hidden job market.

As you speak to people and research job search techniques, it becomes clear that the hidden job market and a non-traditional job search can significantly increase your chances of locating employment.

The Four Stages of a Job Opening

The successful job search process can take many forms and there is no one path which works for all job seekers. To understand how to search for work effectively, it is important to understand the evolution of most job openings.

Stage 1 - There is no job now	Stage 2 - No formal opening exists, but insiders know of the possibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers always look for good employees • Gain an inside track by making contacts before there is a job opening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need is there, but not addressed • Someone is leaving but has not announced it to the supervisor or Human Resources • Someone is about to transition from the role
25% of jobs filled at this stage	By stage 2, 50% of jobs are filled
Stage 3 - The job opening exists, but has not been advertised	Stage 4 - The job is advertised
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources may not even know of openings at this stage • Referrals and applications are encouraged, often received from insiders or contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openings only reach this stage if not filled previously • Job is open to everyone, therefore increased competition and fewer jobs left
By stage 3, 75% of jobs will be filled	Only 25% of job openings reach this stage

Adapted from **The Very Quick Job Search**, by M. Farr

If approximately 75% of all job openings are filled prior to being advertised, you can understand why it may take longer to locate an appropriate job opportunity when conducting a traditional job search.

The key components of the non-traditional job search involve:

- Researching
- Networking
- Prospecting

As we examine the Steps involved in an effective job search, you will see why these components are vital to your job search.

The Long Job Search Process

It is not uncommon to take several months to successfully target a job and gain employment. That is not to imply that you cannot find a job quickly. However, if you want to find a specific job in a specific industry or organization, the process could take between three and nine months in a good economy. It is not unrealistic for a job seeker searching for a higher-level position to spend 6 to 12 months before locating a suitable opportunity. That is why the earlier you begin, the better.

As a Laurier student or alumnus, you will find that many employers post jobs during the fall and winter terms, even though the jobs may not begin until spring or summer of your graduation year. If you are seeking a job following graduation, it is worth your time to begin an active job search at the beginning of your final year.

Step 1 → Self Reflection

To begin a successful job search, you should first know yourself and the types of careers or jobs in which you are interested. Even if you are only seeking a job to pay the bills, you will be in a better position to locate a job you will also enjoy if you know what you want and what you have to offer.

If you are unsure about how to begin this process, the Career Centre offers career planning workshops and appointments with career consultants who can assist you in generating this information. During these workshops and appointments you will be provided with assessment tools to help you identify your skills and generate a personal profile which could include your personality type, values, interests and work preferences. In addition, there are many resources in the Career Resource Centre and on the web to assist you during this step in the process. Contact the Career Centre or visit the Career Centre's website for more details at students.wlu.ca/career.

Once you successfully complete Step 1, you will be ready to create the first part of the Personal Profile component of your Career Profile. This part of the profile may contain an inventory of the following:

- Skills and Qualifications
 - Identify what you think are your main skills or qualifications.
 - Identify your 'transferable skills' (attend a Transferable Skills workshop).
- Interests, Values and Motivations
 - What types of hobbies, activities and interests do you have?
 - What types of things are important to you – money, fun in a job, social issues?
- Personal Preferences
 - What is your personality type? How do you interpret and interact with the world around you? How do you process information, learn and make decisions?
 - What are your core or natural strengths and preferences?
 - What do you need to be satisfied or fulfilled in a career/job?
- Experiences
 - What have you done in the past – work, school, volunteering, clubs, activities, etc.?
- Work Preferences
 - Where would you like to work (geographic location, remote or in-person)?
 - What is your ideal work setting?
 - With whom would you like to work?
 - What would you like to work with – your hands, information, people, data, etc.?

The information you gather in this step will make up a key part of your Career Profile.

Step 2 → Career Research

Now that you have completed the first part of your job search (Step 1, Self Reflection), it is important to learn about the jobs and/or careers which you might wish to consider.

To assist you in identifying potential job/career objectives, both for short-term jobs and long-term career planning, the Career Centre provides you with many resources:

- Appointments with career consultants to match your profile (skills, interests, personality and values) and your major with potential careers or career fields
- Workshops on how to conduct career research
- Workshops for various majors to learn about potential career options
- Panel events with information on specific careers ('Careers in Human Resources', 'Careers in Communications', for example)
- Experience Guides and website information relative to all majors offered at Laurier
- Website information and links to relevant websites
- Graduate survey data (employment information from previous graduates)

Research current job postings to familiarize yourself with requirements employers are seeking, and look for industry-specific websites or use one of the following resources:

- **National Occupation Classification (NOC)** – noc.esdc.gc.ca
- **Career Cruising** - careercruising.com (Username: wlu Password: laurier)
- **Government of Canada Career Tool** – jobbank.gc.ca
- **Job Search Engines** - Eluta.ca or ca.indeed.com
- **Google Alerts** – google.ca/alerts

As you conduct this research, you might want to consider gathering and assessing the following information about potential jobs:

- What are the key or main responsibilities of this type of job?
- What are the requirements for this job (education, experience, skills)?
- What are the conditions of this job (setting, hours, wages, remote or in-person)?
- What is the future outlook for this job, career or industry?

As you gather this information, your goal should be to compare what you find with the information you compiled in Step 1, your Personal Profile. You are trying to select careers which are of interest to you, and ones that match your personal profile (including your personality, skills, values and interests).

You may need to work with a career consultant if you are not able to identify potential careers or figure out which careers match your profile. Career consultants can work with you to identify and research many potential jobs or careers which may match with your profile and/or your major. Do not limit yourself at this stage. You may want to identify as few as 10 or as many as 50 careers or jobs to consider and research.

You can also identify career options when you consider opportunities which match your:

- Education and Training
- Work/Volunteer/Life Experiences
- Labour Market Trends and Opportunities

Labour Market Research

More than ever before, it is important for job seekers and anyone interested in planning a successful career to be aware of information related to the labour market. The labour market is driven by information, and information is constantly changing. To thrive in the current market-place, job seekers must have an awareness of labour market trends, skills in gathering and assessing labour market information, and the ability to anticipate and prepare for changes in both the labour market and in their chosen career field.

As part of your career research, you need to learn more about the careers and career sectors you are considering.

To assist you in researching the labour market, the Career Centre offers a wide range of information and resources. The Career Centre staff can assist you in locating print and online resources in the Career Resource Centre and through the Career Centre website, students.wlu.ca. You can also attend workshops and schedule an appointment with a career consultant. The information you gather at this stage will be equally valuable for career decision-making and job search preparation. When you begin contacting organizations during your job search, you will be a stronger and more informed candidate and have the potential to conduct a more effective job search.

Once you conduct print and online research on a variety of career options, your next step should be to make contact with people within these career fields.

Informational Interviewing

During this stage of your career/job search, it is recommended that you spend some time talking to professionals in the career fields you are considering. To assist you in making your career decisions, you should go beyond the print and online research, beyond talking to career consultants, and speak with professionals in the career fields you are considering. This technique is called Informational Interviewing.

What is Informational Interviewing?

Informational Interviewing is a method of conducting research for the purpose of gathering accurate and up-to-date information about possible career options and/or potential employer organizations. Informational interviewing enables you to make in-person or online contact with people who may be in positions to provide you with relevant information, suggest potential job leads or even offer you a job. Conducting research into careers and employer organizations can

be very helpful, but the most valuable information comes from meeting people who are in a career field or organization of interest to you.

How to Begin Making Connections

First, you need to know what you are seeking and in which careers you are interested.

Once you have identified your career options and conducted basic research into the relevant career fields, you will be ready to make contact with relevant professionals. Remember, you must have an idea of the basic tasks and requirements of a career before you connect with relevant people. You can then begin to contact specific individuals, organizations and associations who have relevant information.

After you identify a specific contact person or organization, do some homework and gather basic information about the industry and the employer organization. While you are meeting with a person to gain more information, you should be prepared with some industry and organizational information so you can ask intelligent questions.

Meeting with an Industry Contact

Emailing or calling a stranger to ask for a short meeting (not an interview) can be quite intimidating. However, if you have taken the time to conduct some research and acquire an individual's name, and you are clear and specific about the kind of assistance or information you need, people generally want to be helpful. You are expressing interest in their chosen line of work and you are asking for their professional guidance to assist you in making important decisions in your life. You are not asking for a job, but the opportunity to learn from a professional.

During an informational interview you can gather valuable information on:

- the major advantages and disadvantages of the career field
- personal opinions and observations about day-to-day job activities
- inside 'tips' on how to get started in the field/occupation/organization
- the type of entry-level jobs available and where to find them
- accurate information regarding salary, earning potential, career prospects
- volunteer, summer or internship opportunities related to a career field
- opportunities for advancement and/or lateral moves in the field
- the most up-to-date information/trends about a career field
- the 'tricks of the trade' on how to break into the field or organization

You also have the opportunity to:

- put yourself, your skills and personality in front of people in a position to help
- observe first-hand, working environments, expectations and requirements
- demonstrate your interest and initiative to potential employers

See pages 21 - 23 for information on how to make successful telephone contact. The method for making contact for the purposes of informational interviewing is very similar to the process for making telephone contact when job searching.

Outcome of an Informational Interview Meeting

During a meeting, you are trying to obtain information and gather relevant information. You are also trying to learn about other sources of information. During the meeting you should gather information on:

- Relevant professional associations and/or events
- Industry magazines, journals, websites and discussion groups which professionals in the industry find valuable
- Suggestions for other professional contacts in the industry

The Option of Taking a Resumé

Some experts say sharing your resumé is appropriate because it shows you are prepared for any outcome. Others are against this practice because you have told your contact that you are connecting for information/research, not to apply for a job. If you are interested in working for the organization in the near future, you could share your resumé and request feedback on it. If you are asked for a resumé and do not have a targeted one, you could say that you would be pleased to send one. Returning to an organization may give you a second opportunity, however brief, to make another contact with a potential employer. An alternative to taking a resumé is to develop and take your 'Networking Card'. You can read about this card on page 18.

Finding Potential Contacts

To assist you in researching specific occupations and organizations, the Career Centre, in conjunction with Alumni Relations, offers Ten Thousand Coffees which matches Laurier students with alumni for inspiring career conversations. Laurier's Ten Thousand Coffees community provides students with convenient and meaningful opportunities to build job-ready networks. Sign up to create a profile on tenthousandcoffees.com/schools/Laurier.

Other resources to consider include:

- Employer/industry directories
- Professional associations
- Newspapers
- Relevant magazines and industry journals
- Career Fair and Job Fair
- LinkedIn
- Professors or other professionals you know
- Networking events
- Community organizations

Sample Questions for Informational Interviewing

You should prepare your own relevant questions which address issues unique to the line of work you are considering. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

1. How did you decide to get into this field? What background do you have?
2. What qualifications/education/training are required to get into this field?
3. What would a typical day/week look like for you?
4. What do you like best about this line of work/organization?
5. What are some of the frustrations/difficulties you experience?
6. What do you feel are the most important skills, interests and attitudes that would make a person happy/successful in this job?
7. What type of personality is best suited for this work?
8. What do you feel is the best training route leading to this position?
9. Could you describe some other environments where a _____ might work?
10. Are there similar or related occupations which require less/different training?
11. Who might be able to give me information about similar or related fields?
12. What do you see as future trends for this occupation?
13. What work/volunteer experience would benefit me in targeting this career area?
14. Are there any professional associations I could join? Which would you recommend?
15. What else should I be doing to increase my chances for success in this area?
16. Are there many opportunities for advancement in this field? Into what kinds of positions might one be promoted?
17. What are the starting salary ranges and earning potential in this field? (Do not ask the person about their own salary, ask for entry-level and potential salaries.)
18. Is there anyone else you would recommend to whom I could speak in a similar or related area who might give me another perspective?

The informational interview is an excellent way to gather information about careers of interest and, in the end, it is also an excellent way to lay the ground work for a future job search.

Identify Clear Career Targets or Job Objectives

At the completion of Step 2, you should be in a position to establish clear career targets. Combine the information you gathered during your self analysis and the information you gathered from your career research (including Informational Interviews) to help you narrow down your options to a clear set of career targets. Once this is completed, you are in a much better position to conduct an effective job search.

Step 3 → Preparing Job Search Materials

A successful job search is an active, targeted job search. To improve your chances of success, the materials you develop for your job search, including your resumés, cover letters and other portfolio material, should be created with specific jobs or industries in mind.

To assist you in preparing effective, targeted resumés and cover letters, the Career Centre has created a Resumé and Employment Letters Guidebook (available for free in the Career Resource Centre or the Career Centre website – students.wlu.ca/career). The Career Centre also offers Resumé Writing and Cover Letter Workshops, various print material including resumé books (with sample resumés), as well as sample resumés available on the Career Centre’s website. The Career Centre Consultants and Career Centre Peers are also available to meet with you to review your resumés and cover letters.

In addition to your resumés and cover letters, your job search portfolio should contain:

- a list of references (3 professional references), reference or recommendation letters
- samples of your work (see discussion on page 12)
- performance evaluations
- certificates or other training certification (copies of certificates, diplomas or degrees)
- awards

All of your job search material should be reviewed and updated frequently. It is important that your job search material be designed to target specific career options. This may require you to prepare several versions of your resumé and cover letter.

References

Frequently you will be asked to provide references as part of the job application and interview process. In the following section, you will learn about who to use as references, what to do about the possibility of negative references and the distinction between letters of reference and letters of recommendation. A letter of recommendation is preferable to a letter of reference. However, both are often referred to as a ‘letter of reference’. In recent years, many employers have preferred to be given three professional references but it is not uncommon for an employer to ask for a personal reference.

In general, a professional reference is any individual (other than a family member) who can comment on the quality of your work or your work style. As a result, anyone who has seen you in a work setting (paid or unpaid), is an appropriate reference. Usually, you should include at least one person who has acted as a supervisor or manager. As you job search for your first position following graduation, you may be asked for an academic reference. Select a professor who is familiar with your accomplishments in the classroom.

A personal reference is usually an individual who has known you for several years (at least three) and is not an immediate family member. These are people who can comment on the type of person you are, your personality and your personal traits.

Professional References

Manager, Supervisor or Director
Co-worker, Co-volunteer
Professor or Teacher
Coach (sports, music, games)
Client or Customer
Professional Colleague

Personal References

Neighbour
Roommate
Peer Volunteer
Long-time Friend
Teacher or Professor
Sports Teammate

Negative References

If you are concerned that you are going to receive a negative reference from a past employer, it may not be enough to simply omit the name of this person from your reference sheet. A prospective employer may see a job listed on your resumé and decide to contact the organization, even if you have not listed someone from that organization as a reference. In this case, you may decide to remove the job from your resumé. However, if omitting a job from your resumé leaves a gap in your history, this is probably not the best solution. There are two alternatives you can consider.

First, you could consider requesting a proof of employment statement (which confirms your employment with an employer but does not necessarily comment on your qualities as an employee) from the Human Resources Department or from a supervisor. Most organizations will provide a proof of employment statement which contains information including your dates of employment, job title and main duties. This differs from a letter of recommendation, which contains the same information as a proof of employment, but it also includes positive comments about your work performance and key strengths. Usually a letter of recommendation will end with a statement which suggests the person writing the letter would recommend you as an employee.

The second option is to request a reference from a co-worker, colleague, or manager of another department within the organization with whom you worked well. This is not ideal, but it will at least enable you to list a reference from the organization. Generally, if the prospective employer is provided with a contact name, they will not seek out an additional reference from the same organization.

Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

Many employers are pleased to provide a letter of recommendation for employees who left their organization on good terms. However, some may not know what to say or may innocently say something which is not flattering. It is a good idea to contact your potential references. State your request for a letter of recommendation, reminding them of your job and your key skills, and explain what you did well on the job. If they request that you prepare a first draft, write a fair letter and then send it to the reference. Indicate that they are welcome to make any changes or comments.

References are an important component of your job search. Contacting people and requesting that they act as references is also a great way to begin developing your network (for information on building your network, see Step 4 - Targeted Job Searching).

Sample Draft of a Letter of Recommendation

Date _____

Dear _____:

(The reference person may be willing to write to a specific organization or individual which makes a stronger impression.)

I knew Jordan Smith (your name) as an employee of _____(name of organization). Jordan worked for me as a _____(job title) in the _____(department) from _____(dates of employment).

In this role, Jordan's main duties were_____, _____and _____. In performing these tasks, I found Jordan to be very professional and diligent. Jordan's strengths included _____, _____. Their work on_____project was strong and they were particularly good at_____.

I found Jordan to be a capable employee who_____(include comments about how you worked with others). (Additional lines are appropriate.)

I enjoyed working with Jordan and am pleased to provide a positive recommendation for them as an employee.

Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert Cassman

Samples of Your Work

As a component of your job search material, you may include samples of previous work. Obviously, if you are an artist, architect or photographer, samples of your work are part of your professional portfolio. However, other professionals may also have samples of work to add to a portfolio. For example, if you are interested in marketing, you could take pictures of a display you developed for a local store. If you are working in a job in social sciences, you could take an example of an outline you developed for a series of workshops on a specific topic or an example of an information brochure you wrote.

If you do take samples of your work, be prepared for the employer to request that you leave them. It is recommended that you take both originals (if appropriate) and good-quality copies to leave behind.

You can never be certain what a contact person or a potential employer may ask to see. If you maintain an up-to-date portfolio of job search materials, you will be in a better position to provide required material in a timely fashion.

Step 4 → Targeted Job Searching

Focus on the Active or Non-Traditional Job Search

The active job search is the most effective type of job search. By conducting an active job search, you increase your chances of getting the job you want and not simply getting any job. The active, targeted job search is effective because it allows you to concentrate your resources and efforts on a clearly defineable and often connected series of industries, jobs and/or employers. As you target an employer or industry you will find connections to other related opportunities and develop more leads as you build your industry knowledge.

Once you have successfully completed the first three job search steps, you should be in a position to begin targeting specific employers and searching for specific jobs. At this stage, you are trying to tap into the first stages of the Four Stages of a job opening (discussed on pages 2 and 3). Targeted employer research is a key component of a non-traditional job search.

To assist you in targeting employers and focusing on your job search, the Career Centre has gathered a variety of resources. You will find the following resources in the Career Resource Centre:

- Information on specific employers and previous jobs posted by employers
- Directories of organizations
- Professional Associations

In addition, a variety of job posting websites are available through the Career Centre website, navigator.students.wlu.ca/career/student/job.

The Career Centre also hosts events to assist you in connecting with potential employer organizations. Events include:

- Annual Career Fair
- Annual Job Fair
- Employer Recruiting Sessions
- Networking events
- Professional Career Panels

Narrow Your Options

The resources identified in the last section can assist you as you begin to conduct an active job search. As you review these resources, you should compile a list of potential organizations you would consider. If you are not certain where to begin, consider:

- The type of organization in which you would like to work
 - Large, medium, small; national, local; new, established
- Your geographic preference
 - Country, province, region; urban centre, small town, remote or in-person
- Your chosen sector
 - Travel/tourism, social services, government, retail, manufacturing
- The types of products and services in which you are interested
 - Sports products, environmental products, financial services, social services
- Your own values
 - Are there certain ethics/values/practices/services which are important to you?

If you have an idea of the type of job in which you are interested, but not the sector, go back to your Career Profile and review your interests. For example, if your career choice includes marketing and your interests include the environment, you could target a marketing job with an organization which develops and markets environmentally-friendly products. If you are interested in a career in accounting and you like music, you could target an accounting job in a music distribution organization. It is important to think beyond the obvious (a marketing or accounting firm) and consider your interests when identifying potential target organizations.

To successfully complete this Step, you should be able to generate a list of specific target industries and organizations.

Job Search Tips

- Target a type of career, job or department
- Target a specific industry
- Target specific geographic locations
- Target specific people in organizations

Working The Hidden Job Market

Many job seekers find this step the most difficult because it requires that you begin actively contacting individuals to inquire about potential employment opportunities. Many people revert to a passive job search at this stage. While they may have been active up to this point, once they have identified specific organizations, many people simply decide to send good resumés. Sending numerous unsolicited resumés is simply a targeted passive job search.

How to Conduct an Active Job Search

The best way to connect with people as part of an active job search is to meet people in person at events. This is not always possible but it should be a component of your ongoing job search. However, if you cannot connect with people in person, you need to connect with people over the telephone or online, i.e., LinkedIn or other social networking sites.

Networking

You have probably heard the expression, 'it is not what you know, but it is who you know'. We prefer to say that, 'it is not necessarily who you know, but who you can come to know', that makes the difference in successful networking.

Warm Contacts

A successful network begins with warm contacts. Warm contacts are people you already know. Any person who knows your name is a warm contact. To begin to make warm contacts, sit down and create a list of people you know.

- Friends
- Professors
- Relatives
- Classmates
- Neighbours
- People with whom you volunteer
- People on sports teams or community clubs

1. List the people you know
2. Create a warm contact sheet (names, email and phone numbers)
3. Use warm contacts to generate additional warm contacts

People are generally willing to assist you if they are able, but if they are unaware of your job search or career plans they will be unable to provide you with tangible information.

Alumni Contacts

Use Laurier's Ten Thousand Coffees platform to connect with Laurier alumni to build impactful professional relationships. Alumni from a variety of disciplines and occupational areas participate in the program. In addition to Ten Thousand Coffees, use social media and networking sites to find Laurier alumni. For example, you can use the Alumni Tool through LinkedIn ('Find Alumni' under the 'Network' tab) to search for thousands of Laurier alumni online by field, organization, degree, etc.

Cold Contacts

Ideally, you want to use your warm contacts to reduce the number of cold contacts you need to make. A cold contact is a person whom you do not know or who has been referred by another contact. Although the majority of people do not enjoy making unsolicited contact to generate leads, it is a very effective job search and networking tool.

Identifying Cold Contacts

- Utilize directories, professional associations, LinkedIn and other social media sites, to compile a list of organizations and potential contacts
- Conduct research to identify specific people who work in these organizations
- Review organization websites for contact names
- Read press releases from the organization or online
- Review local or national newspapers for articles on the organization
- Contact local libraries for company information
- Read trade or industry magazine articles to gather names
- Create a list of contacts (names, contact information, organization information)

Attend Networking Events

When possible, make every effort to seek out and attend professional or community in-person or online events. These events provide you with an opportunity to connect with relevant professionals. These professional events could include Laurier-sponsored events such as Career Fair or Job Fair, Employer Recruiting Sessions held by employers interested in recruiting Laurier students and alumni, and other similar events. Attendance at these events is an excellent starting place, but these events represent only a fraction of the number of professional events available in the community.

A quick review of the local newspaper and community websites may reveal a range of upcoming business and professional events.

These types of events can serve two key purposes. First, you can gain information about a career and an industry and second, you can make specific connections with individuals who work in these careers or industries. Many of these organizations have membership fees at a reduced rate for students or allow you to attend specific events without being a member (you may have to pay a nominal fee to attend an event).

Working the Room

Here are a few key tips on how to effectively work a room at a networking event.

Introductions and Greetings

- Be prepared to approach others, introduce yourself and begin conversations
- Always smile, extend your right hand for a firm handshake and establish eye contact
- Personal space in North America is .5 to 1 metre
- Introduce yourself using your full name and the title and last name of the other person
- Prepare a greeting and benefit statement:

“Good evening Ms. _____. My name is Kelly Smith and I am in my final year at Wilfrid Laurier University studying _____. I was very pleased to learn that your organization

would be represented here this evening. I enjoyed your presentation and was interested in learning about your new initiatives.”

- When approaching a group of two or more people, introduce yourself first.
- When introducing others, draw the new person into the conversation. For example:

“Mr. _____, I would like to introduce Robyn Jones. Robyn is a classmate at Wilfrid Laurier University. Robyn, (or Ms. Jones, depending on familiarity) this is Mr. _____ from ABC Company. Mr. _____ and I were just discussing _____.”

- If you are seated and you are approached by another person, stand up. You may invite the person to sit with you; if the person declines, remain standing.

At this time present a little more information about your skills and what you have to offer. Be prepared to discuss your main qualifications very briefly.

Effective Mingling

- Do not monopolize one person’s time; try to limit a conversation to 10 minutes.
- To end a conversation, excuse yourself, thank the person for their time, shake hands and withdraw. You may say something like:

“Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me, Ms. _____. You have been very generous with your time, but I do not want to monopolize your evening. Would you mind if I contacted you in the future?”

- When accepting a business card, look at the card and place it in a predesignated place (do not place cards in your back pocket).

Leaving an Event

- Be prepared to leave on time (as indicated on the invitation). Seek out the host and thank them before leaving.
- If you must leave early, seek out the host, thank them and apologize for leaving early.

Networking is a skill which you can develop with practice. You do not have to be the most outgoing person to network effectively. Be prepared to approach people and introduce yourself. In the end, you want to leave with at least one contact name and permission to call the person at a future time.

Develop a Networking Card

A Networking, Prospecting or Contact Card is an effective tool for providing people with your name and contact information when a resumé is not appropriate. A networking card is similar to a business card in that it contains your name, contact information and area of interest.



When you are in your graduating year, or if you are a recent graduate, you may include your graduation date on the card. If you are a current student, you could indicate your degree and major (BA Communication Studies).

You can vary the layout adding fonts, colour and even some simple graphics (depending on the field or industry). If you have access to a good quality printer, you can buy business card stock from an office supply store and print your own cards. If you do have access to a printer, you could print a small number of cards (each with a slightly different field or job objective). If you do not have access to a printer, please follow Laurier Printing Services on Instagram at [laurierprinting](#) to learn about options.

It is appropriate to offer your card at either the beginning or end of the conversation. The card is something people may keep, whereas they might discard a resumé if no opportunities exist at the time. You may even attach these cards to your resumé, take them along to Job Fair or Career Fair or hand them out at the end of an interview.

Networking Online

Using your online network to connect with people and organizations can be a very powerful tool. Networking online provides some unique benefits: in addition to making direct connections, you can connect with or follow people or organizations you may not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face, easily find and join groups or associations in which you are interested, learn about industry or association news and events, and have control over what material you are publishing.

Remember, when networking online, you are not asking for a job, you are making connections and/or asking to connect to people or organizations within your area of interest. Always take

the time to personalize requests for connection to give people an idea of who you are and why you are hoping to connect. Take the time to post thoughtful comments or questions to generate conversation, taking advantage of online opportunities.

Strategic Volunteering in the Community

Volunteering in the community or with an organization or group is an excellent way to build your network. If you are not already volunteering with an organization, usually with a not-for-profit organization, you might consider doing so. Volunteering works well as a career research tool and it is also an effective networking technique.

As a way of developing skills, you may be interested in contacting private (for-profit) or government businesses and offering to volunteer your services. For-profit businesses may not be as receptive to hiring volunteers. Although you can try this approach, do not be discouraged or take their rejection personally if your request is unsuccessful.

You should strongly consider selecting a volunteer opportunity where you can develop skills relevant to your career choice. Try to select a volunteer opportunity which enables you to work in a professional capacity. When selecting volunteer opportunities, keep in mind that you are trying to gain skills and make contacts. This may involve volunteering in a capacity which enables you to make decisions, manage, plan or organize events.

Visit students.wlu.ca/work-leadership-and-volunteering/volunteering/index.html for a complete list of resources to help you learn about opportunities.

Newspaper and Magazine Research

An excellent source of job search leads in your community can be found by reviewing a variety of sections in the newspaper. For example, an article in the local news section may discuss the opening of a new food bank or community centre, or perhaps a small local company recently won an award or launched a new service. There may be no mention of job openings in these articles, but you now have a name of an organization, some information or news about the organization and perhaps a contact name. You can use this information to access the hidden job market in your community.

Be creative in your search. You may read an article about a city council meeting where a developer requested a zone change to develop a business at a certain site. While reading, ask yourself what opportunities this may provide. Perhaps the developer is building a retirement complex. In addition to building the facility, there may be opportunities for individuals with business backgrounds (managing the development, budget, marketing the facility, finding investors), as well as social services and humanities opportunities (planning and organizing activities, working with community members, recruiting volunteers and fundraising). There may be many more opportunities if you try to think about how your skills and career options may be applied to the information you have gathered.

Another excellent source of professional or contact information is professional magazines. There may be local, regional or national magazines relevant to your career field. For example, each year the advertising industry publishes a magazine of the previous year's advertising award winners. If you were interested in an advertising career, you could use the information from this magazine to identify and develop job leads. When you contact an organization, you can 'break the ice' by mentioning their award. When you demonstrate this type of initiative, you may find that you make a very positive impression on potential employers.

Organizing Your Job Search

Take a systematic approach to your job search. Plan your activities in a logical sequence and record your progress. You do not need to spend every day of every week on all tasks. Develop a monthly or weekly schedule of activities and incorporate goals or targets. For example:

Monthly

First Month: Planning

- Identify the specific types of jobs you are seeking based on your skills, interests preferences and future relevance - job targeting is very important
- Identify what you have to offer an employer by having a clear understanding of your transferable skills - you have to know yourself to sell yourself
- Develop an organized action plan with weekly timelines and goals - think of your job search like a project with research, assignments and deadlines
- Seek out assistance in your job search - do not be a passive job searcher
- Update or prepare a quality, targeted resumé(s) and professional online profile - these are key marketing tools
- Ask past employers, faculty, people with whom you volunteer and others to act as references or for letters of recommendation - remind them of your top skills and qualities

Second Month: Targeting

- Develop a list of potential employers - identify specific industries/fields/sectors of interest and specific geographic locations; then you can identify specific employers
- Search out job leads and research organizations by networking with contacts in business and industry, other students, friends, family, faculty, people with whom you volunteer and others

Third Month: Networking

- Identify and contact people in the position to make a hiring decision or who can refer you to other people who can make hiring decisions - do not ask for a job; ask for information and indicate that you want to learn about the organization or a career
- Keep in touch with your contacts and keep a file for relevant research materials – do not miss out on future opportunities by losing touch with past contacts
- Follow up on all contacts or leads - do not wait for people to contact you; conduct an active search and be in charge of your success

- Always remember to thank anyone who has been of assistance or interviewed you with a thank-you note or email – it may lead to a future opportunity

Weekly

Monday – Conduct in-depth research of 10 organizations you have selected, i.e., review their websites, profiles or groups on social networking sites

Tuesday – Connect with the 10 organizations you have researched. Remember the goal is the informational interview but you might connect through social media to begin

Wednesday – Update job search material, i.e., target your resumé and cover letter

Thursday – Schedule meetings with contacts, follow up with people you have tried to connect with previously. Do not forget to keep in touch with your warm contacts to generate any leads.

Friday – Continue your research and identify 10 new organizations to begin the networking process with the next week.

Every day – spend 15 minutes checking emails, messages on LinkedIn, updated job postings, Google alerts, etc.

You should design a plan which works best with your schedule. You do not need to spend seven hours a day, five days a week job searching, but you should spend some time several days a week if you want to enhance your chances of finding employment. A goal of 10 new contacts and 10 follow-up contacts in a week is a realistic goal in many industries (though this depends on the job seeker). The key is to devise a plan with which you are comfortable and goals which are realistic and challenging.

Effective Telephone Contacts

As effective as meeting with people virtually or at events can be, you will not always have such opportunities. A very important and effective component of your job search must also include contacting people by using the phone.

Once you have identified a potential employer and conducted some initial research, your next step should be to contact an individual within the organization by phone. Do not simply send a resumé and cover letter. This is not an effective job search technique. You can send out hundreds of unsolicited resúmes and receive very little response. It is easier for a potential employer to discard a piece of paper than to ignore an individual.

5 Steps for Effective Telephone Calls

Step 1 **Set up an effective and organized system**

- ✓ make a list of the organizations you want to contact
 - ✓ track your phone calls; keep a record of who you called and when you called
 - ✓ conduct initial research on the organization
- Step 2 Select specific times to call**
- ✓ the best times to call are usually between 9 and 11:30 a.m., and 1:30 and 4 p.m.
 - ✓ the best days to call are Monday to Thursday
 - ✓ you do not have to call every day of the week; you may want to make initial cold calls every Tuesday and Thursday morning so you do not have to face the prospect of calling every day
- Step 3 Set a goal for the number of calls you want to make each week**
- ✓ set a goal for the initial number of new contacts
 - ✓ set a goal for the number of follow-up phone calls
- Step 4 Prepare a Benefit Statement**
- ✓ your benefit statement may vary, depending on the type of call you are making
 - ✓ sample benefit statements are provided in the next few pages
- Step 5 Ask for a meeting or a visit, not for a job**
- ✓ when you are speaking on the phone, your first goal is to set up a meeting or a visit (similar to the informational interview)
 - ✓ your second goal is to ask for permission to send a resumé
 - ✓ your third goal is to ask for additional contact names

If you have been fortunate enough to locate the name of an individual at an organization as a result of networking or other research, call and connect with this person. If you do not have a specific name, you should ask for this information during your initial contact with an organization.

The immediate goal of the phone call is to demonstrate your professionalism and briefly communicate your skills. The overall goal of the call is to arrange a personal meeting.

If you do not have a specific contact name, select a department in which you are interested. Call the department directly, or if you do not have a direct number, call the main line. The following is a sample of what you might say in the initial phone call:

“Good morning. My name is _____. I am interested in gathering some information on your _____ department and I was wondering who would be the appropriate person with whom to speak.”

If you are asked, “Is this regarding employment?” respond as follows:

“Although I am not inquiring about employment at this time, I am conducting research on various organizations, including yours, for future reference. However, I may be interested in future employment. At that time, whom would you suggest I contact?”

You do not want to say that you are looking for employment if you can avoid it. However, you may be inquiring about employment in the future, and as a result, you do not want to mislead the person on the phone.

Making the First Contact

1. To begin, make a list of organizations and people of interest.
2. Prepare yourself to make the phone call. Have your list of contacts nearby, and be ready to record information. You should have gathered some information on the industry and organization prior to your phone call. Have this information nearby as you make the call.
3. Prepare a phone script. See script suggestion below.
4. Make the call. You may be transferred from person to person. Be pleasant and patient with everyone, regardless of their attitude. If you call and a receptionist answers the phone, begin by identifying who you are and to whom you wish to speak (either the contact person's name or the name of the department). If you are asked about the nature of your call, state that you are hoping your target person will assist you with your research.

Sample Telephone Script

NOTE: Prepare a script so that you have a clear idea of what you want to say when you make the phone call. DO NOT memorize or read your script.

“Good morning/afternoon, Mr. or Ms. (person's name). My name is _____. I am a student at Wilfrid Laurier University and am currently conducting research on a variety of careers (or organizations) within the _____ field. One of the occupations (organizations) which is of interest to me is _____. I am interested in talking to people like you who are knowledgeable in this field (or about your organization) in order to learn more about my options. Would it be possible to set up an appointment to meet with you for 15 minutes so I could ask you a few questions about the _____ field (or your organization)?”

IF NO: Could you possibly give me the name of someone who might be able to help me with this research?

If you get the name of another contact, use the provider's name:

“Good morning, (person's name). My name is _____. I was recently speaking with (contact's name) of ABC company and they suggested that you might be able to help me with some research I am conducting (information I am seeking). I am a student at Laurier....”

Email Contact: You should include similar information if communication by email is required. The email should always be formal and professional. Introduce yourself, indicate your interest in the organization, refer to your attempt to contact the person by phone and indicate that they are welcome to follow up by email or phone, whichever is more convenient for them.

Tip: Make a few practice calls before calling your first-choice organization. Place your first few phone calls to organizations which are not as high on your list.

Navigating Voicemail/Leaving a Message

1. If the target person to whom you wish to speak is not available, or if you are connected to voicemail, leave your name and number and the purpose of your call. Indicate that you will phone back (do not give up control of the contact). Plan on phoning back within two to five days. If possible, find out from reception when would be a good time to call the person.
2. If, when you call back, you are still unable to speak to the target person, leave a slightly more detailed (but brief) message (include a summary of your benefit statement). Indicate you are sorry you have not been able to connect with the person. Tell the person you will either call again or indicate a specific time when you will call back, or that you will follow up with email (if your research suggests this is appropriate for the industry). For example, indicate that you will call back Monday morning (within five working days) making note of the time and date on your contact sheet. Ask the person to let you know if this is acceptable or if they could suggest an alternate time.

Tip: Try scheduling follow-up calls for the same day(s) each week. For example, you could schedule first phone calls on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and place follow-up calls on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. This pattern will assist you in being better organized.

3. If the person does not call you to suggest an alternate time, you should now place the call as indicated.
4. When you place this call and the person is again unavailable, leave a message indicating that you realize the person is very busy. Tell the person that you will send some email correspondence for their consideration. Invite the person to call you after they have reviewed your material.
5. Send an email and mention the attempted phone calls in the email. Request a response verifying that your email was received.

You may find that you have to contact individuals several times and/or contact several people before you are granted a meeting. Although you do not want to become an annoyance, you do want to demonstrate your interest. Three or four phone calls over a one to three week period is acceptable.

Difficult Phone Calls

Most of the time you will have no trouble with the phone call. However, sometimes things do go wrong. You may get transferred from one person to another and never reach the person with the information. The person you reach may be unable to meet with you or may not have the answers you need. Always ask for a referral to someone else, e.g., “Do you know of anyone I could contact who might be able to help me with this research/my inquiries?” If you continue to get no co-operation or information, your best course is to remain polite but do not pursue that person/organization for now. Since you have prepared a list of several people/organizations to contact, go on to the next one on your list.

Don’t give up! This is a critical tool for making career decisions and conducting a successful job search. You **will** find people who are willing to help you.

Speaking to a Contact

1. Once connected to your target person, politely identify yourself and explain the purpose of your call. Offer your benefit statement. Ask if the person might have 15 minutes to meet with you (in person) to answer some of your questions (see the sample telephone script). Have a copy of your resumé in front of you in the event that the contact person asks specific questions.
2. Always try to set up a face-to-face appointment. You want to see the environment and be identified by your face and your personality. If an on-site appointment is absolutely impossible, you may request a phone or video meeting though this is not nearly as effective as person-to-person contact.
3. If asked, do provide a suggestion for a date and time for the meeting (so think of this ahead of time). Be flexible; remember the contact is doing you a favour. Make yourself available and set up an appointment time convenient to you both.

Meeting with a Contact Person

1. Before the meeting, prepare a list of questions to take along so that you do not forget any important points. Without stopping the flow of the conversation, take notes to better remember what is being said. Practice good listening habits.

2. Be prepared to answer questions about yourself and provide reasons for your interest in this field/career/organization which demonstrate your relevant knowledge.
3. If you agreed to meet for 15 minutes, track the time, indicate when 15 minutes have passed and be prepared to end the meeting.
4. Thank the person for their time and ask if they can suggest anyone else in the field (preferably another organization) that you could interview to gather additional information.
5. Building a network is important, but maintaining it is crucial. Always ask the person if you may contact them again once you have made your career decision and begin an active job search. If the response is positive, be sure to connect and let the person know your current status.

When speaking with potential contacts on the phone who are not willing to meet with you, ask for suggestions of others in the organization or industry in general. If they do not want to pass along names, then ask for suggested professional associations, magazines, discussion groups, websites and so forth that are relevant for the industry.

Professional Follow-up

1. Always send a brief note (preferable) or email thanking the people with whom you have met for the time they spent and the information they were able to provide. Mention something you learned or found interesting about the meeting.
2. If the contact provided you with leads (names of other contacts, associations, ideas for research and further training or ideas about resources), once you have had an opportunity to act on these leads you should also re-connect with the contact and let them know you followed up and provide feedback on how useful you found the resource (positive feedback only).

Cold Calling Goals

Remember the '5 Steps for Effective Networking'? The goal of a network contact is to meet in person. The goal of a cold contact is to get a YES.

- ✓ Yes to a meeting
- ✓ Yes to providing you with additional referrals or information
- ✓ Yes to future contact

This is how you build your network.

Getting Past Reception

If you are having difficulty getting past the receptionist in an organization, here are a few tips:

- Know the name of the person you are calling.

- Ask for the proper spelling of the name of the person in charge of the department. Indicate that you are sending some correspondence to this person.
- Try calling at lunch or before or after regular business hours (when the receptionist may not be around).
- Try to find the direct number to a specific department and call the department directly.
- When you call, ask to speak to someone in the _____ department (do not ask for the manager). Indicate you have some questions about the department (or a product or a service, which is true). When you are connected with the department, ask the person who answers for the name of the manager.

Alternative Approaches

If you know your industry, you may be able to generate additional, creative approaches to making contact. If you are struggling to make contact, here are a few other approaches you could try:

- Try dropping by without an appointment (you must look professional). Ask to speak to the manager for a few moments. In this situation, you are trying to set up a meeting, but you are not expecting a meeting on the spot. However, be prepared to meet with the person in the event that he or she is willing to do so.
- If you cannot get any names or make any phone contact, send a letter or an email requesting a meeting.
- Create an interesting proposal or innovative material to send to the organization in order to try to draw attention. Whatever you do should make sense for the industry. For example, if you were interested in a marketing position, you could design a resumé in the style of a brochure.

Target People in Decision-Making Roles

When you select people to approach, you want to contact people in the position to make decisions. Do not be hesitant to contact very senior people in organizations. You can contact Directors, CEOs, Department Heads and even Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

When you contact a senior person, however, you are not requesting an opportunity to meet with that person. You want to ask for a suggestion from that person as to whom you could speak in their department or organization. In many cases they will provide you with a lead or pass your name along to another person for a response. In some cases they will be impressed enough by your initiative to offer to speak with you themselves.

Successful Interviewing

After all of the work you have put into your job search, you must be able to interview well to be successful. To assist you in succeeding in the interview, the Career Centre offers a variety of

resources and information. Material including books, a free Interview Guidebook developed by the Career Centre, and workshops on this topic are available. You are also welcome to make an appointment with a career consultant to discuss how to prepare for an interview (interview coaching) and/or request a mock interview practice session.

Step 5 → Follow-Up

Any time you speak or meet with an individual during your job search, you should be prepared to follow up and keep in touch with your contacts to let them know how you are progressing. If you add something to your repertoire (for example, if you complete a certification course or begin volunteering with an organization), you may use this as an opportunity to reconnect with a previous contact person. Perhaps you will add this information to your resumé. You can then re-connect by sending your contacts an updated resumé.

Ongoing Follow-Up and Staying Connected

Thank-you notes or emails are essential in networking and in developing professional relationships.

Thank-you Notes

When an individual provides you with time or information, it is appropriate to demonstrate your professionalism by following up with a thank-you note, card or email. A thank-you should not contain a lot of information; it is not a cover letter. The purpose of the thank-you is to demonstrate your professionalism and to let the contact person know you appreciated their efforts. Below you will find an example of a thank-you note.

Subsequent Thank-You Notes

Once you have an established connection with a contact, you do not need to be as formal with every subsequent thank you. You may send an email or phone them and thank them for ongoing assistance and information. If your contact initiates a contact by sending you information or names, then it is very important that you immediately respond to their contact and that you do follow up on their suggestions in a reasonable time frame (within 7 - 14 days). Once you have followed up, reconnect with them briefly and let them know you have followed through and the results (if any) of your actions.

Sample Thank-You Note

Date

Dear Mr. Smith:

I wanted to express my appreciation for the time you spent meeting with me last Monday. I know that you have a very busy schedule and I am grateful that you were able to take the time to talk to me about _____ (your organization or a career in advertising...).

I enjoyed learning about _____ and _____. I think it is interesting that (mention something the person told you). Thank you for suggesting that I speak with Jordan Jones at _____. I have connected with Jordan and am hopeful that I will have an opportunity to meet with them in the near future.

I am confident that the information you provided will assist me with my future plans. Again, thank you for your time. I look forward to speaking with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

Your name

Unique Job Searching Situations

Job Search Tips for Working Abroad

Whether you want paid jobs or volunteer experience, short-term jobs or long-term career moves, international experience is a great addition to your repertoire. Before you begin, it is important to know that other countries have different expectations and requirements with regards to how you apply, what information you need to provide and what will happen to you on the job. In Canada, for example, potential employers are not allowed to ask questions about your age, marital status, religious affiliations, sexual preferences, health issues and so on. In other countries this is not always the case. You will need to be aware of cultural expectations, your rights and how to protect yourself before seeking to work abroad. For specific information on this topic, it is important that you do your homework. The Career Centre can provide you with some of this information and it is a good idea to make an appointment to discuss these issues.

If you are seeking work abroad, there are a few questions you should consider before you begin and before you make an appointment to see a career consultant.

- What type of work/internship/volunteer opportunity do you wish to pursue?
- How long do you plan to be away and where do you wish to work?
- Do you require language skills? TESL certification?
- Do you want a job or placement which relates to your career goals?
- Do you need to be paid and if so, how much?

Key Steps for Working Abroad

Step 1. Research and Decision Making

You should begin by thinking and making decisions about yourself and your options. Answer the questions above and use them to conduct research on your options. When making decisions, you should know about travel advisories, costs, security, health warnings and economic and political reports.

Information on travelling and living in other countries can be found on a variety of websites including travel.gc.ca. The Career Centre has posted a list of some resources you may find useful on their website. As part of your research, take the time to talk to other students or professionals who have worked or volunteered abroad. Many organizations can provide you with a list of alumni who can inform you with first-hand information.

Check out MyWorldAbroad, myworldabroad.com/wlu. This guide is the most comprehensive online guide for international information. It includes directories for international organizations, NGOs and internships, and resources to help build international experience.

Volunteering vs Working Abroad

As part of this step, you should research whichever option you are considering and learn about the pros and cons of each option. For example, some volunteer positions or internships not only do not pay you any money, but may also require that you pay money for the opportunity. Research these carefully.

Some volunteering/interning abroad options to consider include:

- Global Affairs Canada at international.gc.ca
- Idealist at idealist.org
- Transitions Abroad at transitionsabroad.com
- SWAP - Student Work Abroad Program at swap.ca

Teaching English Abroad

For the most part, you do not teach English abroad to make money, you do it to gain skills and experience travelling and living in a different culture. There are many quality opportunities and experiences available to those interested in teaching abroad. However, like everything else, you need to do your homework and be cautious. Contracts usually range in length from one to two years. Some positions may require specific certification and training such as TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language); visit teslontario.org, but some do not. For some positions, you must simply have an undergraduate degree in any subject.

Most opportunities for teaching English abroad are in Asia. There may be opportunities in other countries including Africa and South America and even some parts of Europe, but these are not the norm and are limited and more difficult to locate. If you are considering teaching abroad,

there are organizations that you can work through which offer specific placements. For any organization you select, ask to speak to alumni of their program. Also, check with the Canadian consulate in the country to learn of any reports of problems with the organization and to ensure the information you have been given is accurate.

Working Abroad

Every country varies in the types of job they will allow non-residents to obtain. In some countries you may be allowed to work in service industry jobs (such as wait staff and domestic work) without a work visa for a limited amount of time. In other countries you will be required to obtain work permits and even then, may be limited to certain jobs. Some countries will require that you have an offer of employment (and even a written contract or letter) before issuing a permit or visa.

If you are searching for work abroad, you should approach the search similarly to your Canadian search. You should identify target jobs in target industries in specific geographic locations. You could identify specific employers and contact them prior to relocating. There are job posting engines you can also search (visit the Career Centre's website for examples of these sites).

Step 2. Planning and Preparation

The more time you allow yourself to plan and prepare, the more successful and less stressful this process will be. There are a variety of issues you will need to research and consider.

1. Do you have a valid passport? Be aware that some countries want a passport that you have had for at least 6 months and that has over 6 months left before it expires.
2. Do you need a visa to enter the country? Visas vary in length and may not be renewable from within a country. You need to ensure your visa will allow you to stay your desired length of time.
3. Do you need a work permit? You should check with the country and not take the employer's word for this. Even if you are volunteering or working service industry jobs on a type of working holiday, you may need to obtain a work visa or you could find yourself in trouble, deported or even arrested.

It may take some time to obtain a visa or work permit. You need to check with the consulate or embassy of the country to which you are travelling to find out how long you might have to wait to get a permit.

You might also want to consider the following:

- Proof of emergency funds
- International driver's licence

- International student's card
- Additional life and health insurance
- Some countries require proof of immunizations 3 to 6 months prior to your trip

Check with the Public Health Agency of Canada at canada.ca/en/public-health.html and the individual consulates or embassies for more information.

Before you travel it is a good idea to plan for issues of safety and notification. You should leave a detailed itinerary and contact information with several people. Provide friends and family with the travel address of your international location. Take with you a list of key contacts (i.e., the Canadian consulate). Take photocopies of key documents such as your passport, health and insurance policy information (you might also leave this information with family or friends).

When you are planning to travel you should inform and then register with the Government of Canada, Travel outside Canada website at travel.gc.ca especially if you are planning on staying longer than three months or are working in a country that has a travel advisory or security concerns. Also consider registering with the police if there is not a Canadian consulate in the immediate region.

Step 3. Preparing your International Portfolio

Once you have an idea of what types of opportunities you are seeking and in what countries, you are ready to put together your job search portfolio. This portfolio will contain information based on the research you have conducted, including information on requirements and contacts. It should also include traditional job search materials such as resumés, references, work samples and so on. Conduct research to determine the expectations of employers in other countries and prepare materials based on these expectations.

Gaining international experience can have excellent benefits. However, as with any job search, the more prepared and informed you are, and the more targeted you are, the more likely you are to be successful.

The Academic Job Search

There are similarities between a general job search and searching for work as an academic in a university or college setting. Although you already know your job and industry targets, you still need to consider geographic locations, identify specific employer targets, learn about hiring practices in the industry and connect with specific individuals. Effective job searching methods and application procedures vary from faculty to faculty, institution to institution and country to country. Some faculties and institutions have specific hiring timelines. In Canadian universities, jobs are commonly posted in the fall, with deadlines in November and December, interviewing early in the New Year and offers made in April or May with start dates in early July (this is not always the case in the US or abroad). In general, your preparation for obtaining your job should begin about two years before you want employment. Some employers will hire ABD (All-But-

Dissertation) students, but others may not. Seek out opportunities to attend conferences in your field to make initial connections prior to applying. Contact faculty at other institutions to learn about their programs and make connections before applying. Gain teaching experience whenever possible and participate on departmental committees (such as hiring committees and curriculum development committees) while you are a student.

For more information on conducting an academic job search and for information on successful interviews, the Career Centre has developed a series of resources which include information on job searching, how to put together your portfolio including resumé and CV writing, and specific interview tips and questions related to different interview audiences, and lists of academic information and posting sites. There are additional resources in the Career Centre and we strongly suggest you meet with a career consultant for individual assistance.

Barriers to Job Searching

(Including personal, family, health, disability and other potential issues)

Effective job searching takes time and effort. An effective job search can be made more difficult if you face challenges which may limit your opportunities to find and accept work and put barriers in the way of your success. There are a range of issues which can result in barriers to effective job searching. For example, you might have constraints on where you can live, you might have a family member with needs that limit your availability and flexibility, or you may have personal issues, learning difficulties or mental and physical challenges which make the process of searching more difficult. Part of your job search strategy may require altering your approach or your targets to increase your effectiveness. You may need to be aware of your options and your rights and be aware of the services and resources available to you in your job search.

To assist you in identifying the potential impact of these barriers and identifying how to manage these issues, the Career Centre has gathered resources and information for you to access. In addition, you can book an appointment with a career consultant to assist you in developing strategies. A common question asked by job seekers who face extra barriers is around the issue of disclosing information. Career consultants are available for individual appointments to provide you with general tips and strategies for addressing potential barriers with employers and disclosure options.

International Students Searching for Work in Canada

As an international student, you may not be familiar with how to conduct an effective job search in Canada. Whether you are looking for work on a part-time basis to support yourself during your studies or a job upon graduation, there are resources and services available to you in the Career Centre. Some employers may not understand, be aware of or may even be wary of the issues surrounding hiring an international student. It is important for you to be aware of your options and your rights and be informed so you can address these issues when speaking to

employers. Depending on your circumstances and status, there may be many options for you. For information on your rights and options, you can check out the Government of Canada Immigration and Citizenship information for student's website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html>

If you have concerns around cultural questions or issues, you can ask a career consultant for information on how to plan for and manage these issues. Perhaps there are certain days or hours in the week when you cannot work; maybe you have restrictions on the types of situations you can be in or the type of tasks you can undertake. Do not let these issues hinder your ability to find and keep employment. If you are unfamiliar with Canadian etiquette, how to manage interactions with potential employers, how to interact with co-workers and how to fit into a Canadian work environment, the Career Centre offers resources, individual appointments and some workshops to help you prepare for these situations. If you are looking to gain Canadian experience, but cannot find paid employment which suits your needs, you may be able to locate unpaid or volunteer positions where you can gain the skills and experience you need to transition into paid employment. Know your options and begin preparing as soon as you arrive.

Final Tips

- ✓ **Do your homework**
 - Know yourself
 - Know your career
 - Know the labour market
 - Know the organizations you want to target
- ✓ **Organize your job search**
 - Set goals and plan your job search schedule
 - Compile job search material (resumés, letters, references, etc.)
 - Identify potential contacts
 - Track your contacts and the outcome of your contacts
- ✓ **Build your network**
 - Let people know you are searching
 - Develop a Networking Card and a Benefit Statement
 - Identify events and professional activities you plan on attending
- ✓ **Be pro-active**

Job Searching Checklist

Looking for a job is like anything else - there are things you can do to make it easier. The list below is a great way to get started and keep track of your progress. By following these steps you are more likely to increase your chances of finding a suitable job in the shortest time possible.

✓	Checklist For Success	Target Dates
✓	Identify the specific types of jobs you are seeking based on your skills, interests preferences and future relevance - job targeting is very important	
✓	Identify what you have to offer an employer by having a clear understanding of your transferable skills - you have to know yourself to sell yourself	
✓	Develop an organized action plan with weekly timelines and goals - think of your job search like a project with research, assignments and deadlines	
✓	Seek out assistance in your job search - do not be a passive job searcher	
✓	Update or prepare a quality, targeted resumé(s) - <i>it is a key marketing tool</i>	
✓	Ask past employers, faculty, people with whom you volunteer and others to act as references or for letters of recommendation - remind them of your top skills and qualities	
✓	Develop a list of potential employers - identify specific industries/fields/sectors of interest and geographic locations; then you can identify specific employers	
✓	Search out job leads and research organizations by networking with contacts in business and industry, other students, friends, family, faculty, people with whom you volunteer and others - check out Laurier's Ten Thousand Coffees	
✓	Identify and contact people who can make a hiring decision or who can refer you to other people who can make hiring decisions - do not ask for a job; ask for information and indicate that you want to learn about the organization or a career	
✓	Prepare suitable and targeted cover letters for each specific job - you have to connect specifically with an employer in the letter; form letters will not do	
✓	Keep in touch with your contacts and keep a file for relevant research materials - do not miss out on future opportunities by losing touch with past contacts	
✓	Prepare for interviews by researching organizations, identifying your transferable skills and practicing your answers - the more you know yourself and the better you know the job, the better able you are to connect these in the interview	
✓	Follow up on all contacts or leads - do not wait for people to contact you; conduct an active search and be in charge of your success	
✓	Always remember to thank anyone who has been of assistance or interviewed you with a thank-you – it may lead to a future opportunity	

For assistance with your job search, the Career Centre offers a variety of resources including workshops, guidebooks, a comprehensive website and appointments with career consultants.