Searching for Jobs

Getting Started

1. **Identify** what kinds of positions fit your needs, skills, and expectations.
2. **Focus** as you prioritize and develop your professional network.
3. **Organize** your contacts, activities, and application materials.
4. **Develop** a basic résumé and cover letter (and tailored versions), references, and interview skills.
5. **Visit** the CLS during résumé and cover letter review hours for suggestions and advice.

Tips for Finding Meaningful Jobs

- Assess your skills and specific interests by taking a self-assessment at the CLS.
- Tailor each résumé and cover letter to specific employers and organizations. If you don't know how, visit the CLS during résumé and cover letter review hours—or attend a workshop on Writing Résumés and Cover Letters.
- Know your target industry inside out. A good way to learn about an industry is to talk with professionals who work or have worked in it. (See "Tips for Effective Networking.")
- Know the recruiting and hiring cycles of your fields and industries of interest. (See "Recruiting Timelines.")
- Make an appointment at the CLS to talk with a adviser about your ideas, interests, and questions.
- Set up a PioneerLink account: https://grinnell-csm.symplicity.com/students/.
- Network, network, and network some more.

Tips for Effective Networking

- Use family, friends, family of friends, previous supervisors, faculty members, Grinnell alumni, et al. Tell them what you're looking for—and ask them to ask around on your behalf.
- Access the online alumni directory via the Forum: http://forum.grinnell.edu/community/.
- Use LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com): create a profile and join the "Grinnell College Alumni" group.
- Take advantage of additional social media, including Facebook and Twitter—but keep everything you post appropriate for the eyes of potential recruiters.

Conduct informational interviews with alumni in your area of interest:

- Get in touch with your contacts via e-mail or LinkedIn.
- Request 20–30 minutes to interview them about their positions, their fields, any advice or suggestions they would have for a young professional wanting to break into those fields.
- Learn as much about the alumni as you can before you talk with them—including information about their employers.
- Know your purpose for the interviews (you are *not* asking for a job), and prepare a list of questions in advance.
- Conduct the interviews, sticking to the time you promised.
- Be professional and polite.
- Be prepared to be given names of additional contacts—and then remember to reach out to them (or perhaps the initial contacts will do so on your behalf).
- Send thank-you notes within 24 hours of each interview.

Recruiting Timelines

Different industries work on different recruiting schedules. For securing jobs (or internships), you need to know when opportunities are posted and when applications are expected. Below are eight broad industries and their general recruiting timelines. As a general rule, the more "competitive" a particular company or firm is, the earlier its application cycle will begin.

- **Finance:** Almost all (90 percent) of the hiring for full-time jobs in investment banking, asset management, and sales and trading occurs in the fall—approximately nine months before you would begin work. Plan accordingly!
- **Consulting:** Whether you are interested in business, economic, or management consulting, recruiting for the vast majority (75 percent) of jobs in this field occurs in the fall. Plan ahead!
- **Communications:** Most (90 percent) hiring for full-time entry-level work in communications—including industries such as public relations, marketing, advertising, and publishing—occurs in the spring; but full-time openings often occur with little notice.
- **Science:** Employers in the sciences generally do most (90 percent) of their recruiting and hiring in the spring, but earlier opportunities exist.
- **Law:** Many full-time jobs are available in the field of law—even for individuals without law degrees. Many law firms are now hiring legal assistants straight of out of college. Most (90 percent) of the recruiting and hiring is done in the spring.
- **Education:** Most (90 percent) hiring in education is done in the spring and early summer, when colleges, universities, and schools realize their hiring needs and begin filling them.
- **Government:** The US Government employs more than 1.8 million people in nearly every imaginable career field. Applications are accepted for jobs throughout the year, but many government agencies have much earlier recruiting timelines.

Resources

CLS Resource Card: Pick up your copy at the CLS

PioneerLink job database (and numerous job-related websites accessible therein): https://grinnell-csm.symplicity.com/students/

CLS job resources: http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/cdo/students/employment/

Forum (online alumni directory): http://forum.grinnell.edu/community/

Simply Hired (includes filters for recent graduates, years of experience, LGTB-friendly organizations, and more): http://www.simplyhired.com

Idealist (a great non-profit job-search site): http://www.idealist.org

Glassdoor (an inside look at company salaries, reviews, and interview questions): http://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm

USA Jobs (jobs in the federal government): www.usajobs.gov

One Day, One Job (daily detailed updates for entry-level jobs): http://www.onedayonejob.com

Indeed (another job database with several filters): http://www.indeed.com

Urban Employ (database of jobs and internships in metropolitan areas): http://www.urbanemploy.com/network/

Remember

- The job search takes time; so invest your time wisely.
- Start early and note deadlines in an obvious and hard-to-miss location.
- Find a support system throughout the process.
- Prioritize your tasks—including balancing your academics and extracurriculars with your job search.
- Search diligently, but also give yourself some time off.
- Pay attention to CLS opportunities detailed and offered in the weekly newsletter, through e-mail blasts, on the PioneerLink homepage, and through workshops and other presentations (including Career Connections and the fall and spring GRINNELLINK Receptions).

Job-Search Checklist (Continued on next page)

The job-search process can feel overwhelming, so it's helpful to break it into manageable steps. These items do not have to be followed in order. Just start checking off as many of these activities as you can, and you'll find yourself on the way to securing a great job!

Be sure to start your exploring and preparing months in advance of when you want to start your job to give yourself enough time. You can receive assistance for every one of these steps through the Center for Careers, Life, and Service (CLS). Visit the CLS web site http://www.grinnell.edu/cls for helpful information and links, or call 641-269-4940 to set up an appointment.

Self-Exploration Phase

- ❑ I have identified and reflected on my personal strengths, skills, interests, and values individually, through self-assessments available at the CLS, and/or with a CLS career adviser.
- ❑ I have made a list of possible job titles/fields of interest that I would like to pursue.
- ❑ I can name two or three careers/jobs I plan to pursue.

Preparation Phase

- ❑ I have met with a career adviser in the CLS to discuss my career interests and to strategize various ways of searching for jobs.
- ❑ I have learned how to develop and tailor my resume for each job I apply for and how to write a quality cover letter.
- ❑ I have identified the geographic areas where I'd like to live and work.
- ❑ I have researched organizations or companies that might hire someone with my skills, interests, and background.
- ❑ I have researched potential career fields: typical entry-level jobs, typical salaries, best geographic locations for jobs, etc.
- ❑ I have identified ten potential employers for the type of work I am seeking.
- ❑ I have contacted the Office of International Student Affairs (OISA) to discuss my options regarding work authorization in the U.S. if I am an international student.
- ❑ I have identified 8-10 keywords that correspond with the type of jobs I am seeking that I can utilize in my online database searching (e.g. policy, finance, psychology, youth, art, literature, consulting).
- ❑ I have had my resume and cover letter(s) reviewed by a professional in the field or a career adviser in the CLS.
- ❑ I have prepared a portfolio of work samples to highlight my experience, skills, and talent.
- ❑ I have developed a list of potential networking contacts including Grinnell College alumni, previous supervisors, faculty members, family members, and friends.
- ❑ I have developed my "30-second speech" for short encounters with potential employers and alumni to pitch my experience and desire for a job.
- ❑ I have identified three individuals who will serve as professional references if needed for my application materials.
- ❑ I have a professional-sounding voice mail message on my cell phone for when an employer calls.
- ❑ I have a neutral/professional e-mail address to use on my application materials (e.g. firstname.lastname@gmail.com).
- ❑ I have developed my interview skills for phone, Skype, and in-person job interviews by practicing my responses to typical questions and/or doing a mock interview at the CLS.
- ❑ I have interview attire that is appropriate for the field in which I plan to work.

Search Phase

- ❑ I regularly check PioneerLink, Selective Liberal Arts Consortium (SLAC) and the Iowa College Recruiting Network (ICoRN) for job opportunities.
- ❑ I have reviewed the various job-search resources on the CLS's Resources webpage and begun searching for job postings on relevant websites.
- ❑ I follow up on every interesting job lead immediately.
- ❑ I have contacted my list of potential networking contacts to inquire about potential job leads and to share my career interests and keep in touch with them regarding my progress.
- ❑ I have visited the CLS's Quickstops or career advisers to get any questions answered that I have regarding applying for jobs throughout the search phase.
- ❑ I read appropriate job-search resources for my field(s) of interest.
- ❑ I have a system for keeping track of my applications, contacts, interviews, and other job-search activities.
- ❑ I have sent thank you cards or e-mails to every person who interviewed me.

Securing Job Phase

- ❑ I know how to evaluate job offers and compare cost of living data.
- ❑ I know how to negotiate a salary offer.
- ❑ I know how to accept a job offer.
- ❑ I have a confirmation in writing from the organization that I have officially accepted the job that was offered to me, which also includes the start date as well as an agreement regarding the compensation amount.
- ❑ I have withdrawn my applications to all other organizations where I have applied for a job or other post-graduate opportunity.
- ❑ I have sent thank you cards or e-mails to each of my professional references for serving as a reference for me as well as updating them on the actual job I secured.

Last updated 1/15

Center for Careers, Life, and Service
To make an appointment, call **641-269-4940**
career@grinnell.edu • **www.grinnell.edu/cls**