

Senior Job Search RESOURCE GUIDE

► Prepare Application Materials

Before applying to jobs, spend time making sure that your application materials are ready. Craft your resume and get feedback from an Academic and Career Advisor. Contact potential references and create a list with all of their contact information.

RESUME

Make sure your resume is up-to-date and free from spelling and grammatical errors.

FORMAT

- One page
- One consistent font style throughout (Arial, Helvetica or Tahoma).
- Font size of 10 to 12.
- Left justification only. Margins should be between 0.5-1" on all sides.
- Experiences
 - Describe actions taken and concrete results
 - Identify interpersonal or technical skills used
 - Provide examples of tasks or projects
 - Include any significant accomplishments, achievements, or awards.

For more specific information on resumes, check out the CSA [Resume Resource Guide](#). When you have a draft completed, reach out to us to get feedback on your resume.

REFERENCES

Prepare a list of 3-5 people who can be references for you. They should be work, internship or volunteering supervisors or your professors, academic advisors or coaches. Reach out to potential references before you begin your job search to check if they are willing to serve as references. Then, create a document listing them with all of their contact information.

Before an interview, reach out again to let them know and to check their availability for the coming weeks. Send a copy of your resume and the job title, company and description.

► Explore Careers, Job Titles

If you are unsure of the type of job you want or the types of positions available in your field, the best place to start is by researching the industries that interest you and job titles related to your major and industry of interest.



- [My Next Move](#)
- [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)
- [What Can I Do with this Major?](#)
(On the CSA Student Resources page, under Academic Advising and Major Exploration, expand Major Exploration)

We also suggest that you make an appointment with an Academic and Career Advisor at Career Services and Advising to narrow down your options and identify positions of interest.

► Searching for Jobs

First, know the recruiting cycle for jobs in your field. For example, recruiting for finance positions takes place in early fall for summer hiring, and recruiting for K-12 teaching positions takes place in spring and early summer for fall hiring.

Once you are ready to begin searching for positions, treat this process as a job or homework assignment. Set aside time each day to search for positions, tailor your resume, draft cover letters and submit applications. Keep track of jobs you've applied to and make note of any progress (interviews, people you've met with, search timeline, etc.).

JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

Handshake: Fitchburg State's career platform

Industry-specific Job Sites: many industries have job listing sites specific to the field. Please contact Career Services and Advising for a more extensive list.

A few examples:

- Information Technology.....[dice.com](#)
- Communications and Media.....[mediabistro.com](#)
- Finance.....[efinancialcareers.com](#)
- Healthcare[healthcarejobsite.com](#)
- Nonprofit sector[idealist.org](#)



► Cover Letters

“What’s the point of a cover letter?” It’s true that your resume includes an overview of your qualifications and skills, but a cover letter allows you to make your case for why you’re a good fit for the job. This is especially important if your work experience is not directly related to the positions you’re applying for, or if most of your experience has been gained through coursework.

Carefully read the position description and identify the key traits and skills required. Next, brainstorm your own skills and experiences that relate to the key skills for this position, and come up with examples that illustrate your experience. When writing your cover letter, you’ll want to choose the strongest examples and most relevant skills to highlight.

For more specific information on cover letters, check out the CSA [Cover Letter Resource Guide](#). When you have a draft completed, reach out to us to get feedback on your cover letter.

► Interviewing

When you are offered an interview, keep in mind that this is your opportunity to help the organization get to know you as a person, to show your enthusiasm for the position and to help you to decide if the position and the company are right for you.

RESEARCH

- The Organization: employer’s website and social media accounts
- The Position: read the entire job posting
- The Industry: read news related to the industry and follow industry leaders on LinkedIn

REVIEW AND PRACTICE

- Read over your resume and identify specific examples that demonstrate the skills, and experience identified in the position description
- Use the job description to anticipate interview questions and practice your answers.
- Schedule a mock interview with an Academic and Career Advisor.

WHAT TO WEAR

- If you are interviewing in an industry that adheres to formal business attire (i.e., finance, management, law), you should wear a suit in a dark color (navy, charcoal or black) with a pressed shirt or blouse in white or blue and dress shoes.
- If you are interviewing in an industry that follows a business casual dress code, you can wear a suit, dress pants with a collared shirt or blouse and a jacket, or a conservative dress or skirt with a jacket.
- All candidates should be neat and well-groomed.

For more specific information on preparing for interviews, check out the CSA [Interviewing Resource Guide](#). When you begin applying for jobs, reach out to us to schedule a mock interview.

► Networking

An estimated 80% of jobs are filled through personal or professional contacts.

Why?

- It’s less expensive for the organization than paying for ads to advertise jobs.
- Many companies prefer to hire by referral from current employees. They trust their employees to recommend good candidates and prefer this method to sorting through numerous applications.
- Companies may want to keep the fact that they’re hiring quiet. For example, if they are hiring because they are opening a new office, they may not want to share that news publicly yet.

Your network can help you learn about unpublished job opportunities and connect you to resources for your job search. Networking is an essential tool in your job search that you can combine with searching and applying for jobs online and attending career fairs and events.

YOUR NETWORK

- Peers (other students and recent graduates)
- Family and friends
- Professors, Advisor, University Staff
- Mentors
- Current and former supervisors
- Coworkers

MAKE NETWORKING A HABIT

- Tell your personal network you are job searching and ask them to let you know if they hear of any job openings that may be appropriate
- Join professional organizations (i.e., industry-specific organizations or local Young Professionals groups)
- Join alumni organizations (for Fitchburg State, community colleges you attended and even high schools)
- Fraternity/sorority and honor society networks
- Attend job fairs, networking events, invited speaker lectures and career community events
- Use LinkedIn to expand your network

NETWORKING WITH LINKEDIN

- Whenever you connect to a new person on LinkedIn, send them a personal note. Remind them how you met, what you talked about, and that you're happy to connect with them.
- Join the LinkedIn Fitchburg State Alumni group. Members of alumni groups often post job opportunities!
- Join groups representing your industry, and organizations you belong to.
- Reach out to your close contacts to ask for endorsements of your skills and for recommendations from professors or supervisors. Return the favor for others by endorsing skills, commenting on their updates or forwarding a job listing.
- Develop a professional online presence by posting articles and sharing your opinions about your industry, and by commenting on others' posts.

For more specific information on LinkedIn, check out the [CSA LinkedIn Resource Guide](#). If you'd like to get feedback on your LinkedIn profile, please reach out to us.



► The Job Offer

After a long job search, you've finally received an offer. Congratulations! While your first impulse may be to immediately accept the job, wait for a second. Is this job really the right fit for you?

Questions to ask:

- What is the salary? (See the section below about salary negotiations)
- What are the benefits (insurance, etc.)? How much do they cost? When do benefits start?
- What are the vacation and sick leave allowances?
- What is the pension or retirement plan? How much do the employer and employee each contribute? When do retirement contributions start?
- What is the start date?
- What is the work schedule? Are there options to work remotely or have a flexible schedule?
- What type of training is provided?
- What are the next steps? What paperwork needs to be completed?
- Can I get the offer, benefits and perks in writing?

► Salary Negotiation

Negotiating your salary isn't just about getting the salary you deserve; it can also determine future pay increases and salary offers for future jobs. People who attempt to negotiate their first salary are able to increase their salary by over 7% (Babcock, 2007).

RESEARCH

In order to control the salary negotiation conversation, you need to have a number in mind for your desired salary. You can find this information on sites such as:

- **Career One-Stop:** Salary & Wage information from the U.S. Department of Labor
- **Monster Salary Tool:** find median salary for specific job titles in your area

STRATEGY

- Come up with a range that represents your market value. Instead of asking for something in the middle of the range, ask for something toward the top. Since employers will negotiate down, you need room to end up with a salary you're pleased with.
- Prepare a counteroffer. About half of all jobseekers accept the first offer that's put on the table, but most employers make offers expecting candidates to counteroffer.
- Decide on your lower limit for salary—a final offer that's so low that you have to turn it down. This could be based on financial need, market value, or simply what you need to feel good about your salary.
- Ask a friend or mentor to practice the conversation so you can feel more sure of yourself during a salary negotiation.

Questions to ask during salary negotiation:

- Thank you so much for the offer. Is the salary open to negotiation?
- How did you calculate this salary?
- Can you break down the benefits and perks that might translate into income/savings?
- Besides the base pay, what other benefits are negotiable? (tuition reimbursement, vacation days, flexible schedule)
- Can I get the salary offer in writing?

Ask for documentation of your salary and any signing bonuses or moving allowances in writing, along with a job description and a list of responsibilities for your new role. Ensure the document is signed by both you and the employer.

GENDER AND SALARY NEGOTIATION

Women are less likely to negotiate their first salary. This contributes not only to the gender pay gap, but to future earnings of women throughout their careers. Preparing for the salary discussion can help you ensure you are compensated fairly.

- Know your worth- take the time to research market rate for positions you're applying for so that you can evaluate a job offer effectively.
- Practice being assertive and asking for what you want in a salary discussion.
- Avoid sharing your salary history- since women tend to earn lower salaries, you want to avoid having an offer be based off of your previous salary

► Relocating

Relocating to a new city or state is an exciting part of the process of graduating and beginning your working life, but it requires a lot of planning and organization. Use these tips to get an overview of the process, but plan to do a lot of research on your own as well.

FINANCES

Save as much money as possible. Even if you're moving because you have a job offer, it may be awhile before you get your first paycheck. You'll need money for temporary housing, securing an apartment, setting up utilities, registering your car, getting a new license or ID and furnishing your apartment. Even if you are staying with a friend or family member, you

still need to budget for food and transportation expenses and the costs of building a professional wardrobe. All of this adds up quickly.

RESEARCH

- Typical living expenses for the city you're moving to: Rent, annual car insurance rates, public transit costs, average utility costs, taxes, typical weekly grocery costs.
- Neighborhoods and transportation: Research neighborhoods to look for housing in. You will want to consider public transportation or commute time to your job as well as other features of the neighborhood- grocery stores, parks, health care, places of worship, schools or health care facilities.
- Housing: Research available housing types and prices within your desired areas. Use your connections to find out about possible housing leads. Ask if your company offers relocation assistance or resources for finding housing.
- Moving options: Compare prices for renting a moving truck, shipping container, hiring movers and car shipping services (if necessary)
- Practicalities: How to change your address, forward mail, get a new license/ID, transfer your car registration, set up utilities and internet. You may need some time off when you arrive to look for housing and get everything done.

BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK

Reach out to people you know who live in the area- friends, family, friends-of-friends, or alumni. Use your social media networks to spread the word that you're moving and looking to connect with locals. You'll want to get advice on neighborhoods and leads on housing, as well as make some friends once you arrive.

STAY ORGANIZED

Planning a move is complicated. To-do lists, timelines and spreadsheets are your friend. Keep track of the tasks you need to accomplish before you move, your moving expenses and box contents!



For more information, contact
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