

# Elements of a Successful Job Search

*Presentation for SPIE*



NORTHWESTERN  
UNIVERSITY

**Larry Jackson**, *Assistant Director for Engineering & Science*

**Kamilah McCoy**, *Associate Director for Graduate Student Services*



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# What do employers value in potential candidates?



# Skills Employers Value in Grad Students

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- Valued prior work experience
  - More Mature
  - More knowledge
  - Better developed skill set
  - Reduced training time
  - Creative thinking
  - Self-motivation
  - Ability to analyze and solve problems
  - Comfort with writing and presenting
  - Ability to gather and synthesize information/data
  - Flexibility and comfort with ambiguity
  - Quantitative and data analysis skills

# Misconceptions About Graduate Student Job Seekers

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- Overqualified
- Only interested in academia
- Failed initial academic job search
- Overly theoretical
- College student mentality
- Unaware of deadlines
- Too Casual
- Antisocial





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# SELF- ASSESSMENT

# Self-Assessment

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- Self-assessment is gathering information about oneself and experiences to make an informed decision about vocational path
  - Values (what needs are important to you?)\*
  - Interests
  - Skills
    - Content area (skills specific to work area/area of study)
    - Personal (more inherent, develops with practice)
    - Transferable

# Transferable Skills

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- Definition
  - Skills developed in one situation can be transferred to another situation
- Common Terms
  - Key skills, Core Skills, Soft Skills, Generic Competencies
- Why are these skills important
  - Increase functioning in daily activities
  - Influence in realm of work: **PRODUCTIVITY**, and **ADVANCEMENT**



# Common Transferable Skills

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- Advertised in job description
    - Analytical
    - Communication
    - Critical Thinking
    - Initiative/Self-starter
    - Leadership
    - Project Management
    - Technical & Design
    - Research & Development
    - Teamwork
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# FILL IN THE SKILL

- Analytical
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Initiative/Self-starter
- Leadership
- Project Management
- Technical & Design
- Research & Developer
- Teamwork





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# GETTING CONNECTED




# Researching Industries and Employers

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## *Research the Industry*

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- Study industry trends
  - Learn the major players
  - Identify typical roles for someone with your background
  - Identify particular employers of interest



## *Research Specific Employers*

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- Visit employer websites
  - Review their mission, values, culture, size, location and job postings
  - Identify contacts with current or previous work experience with the employer

# Where Do Graduate Students Find Jobs?

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- Non-profits
- Publishing & Media
- Teaching
  - Secondary Education
  - Corporate Training
  - Community Groups
- University Administration
- Government
- Research and Development
- Hospitals/Community Health Agencies

***...Everywhere!***

# Employer Research Resources



Vault is a comprehensive resource for job search and career management information, including insider information on salaries, hiring, and company culture.



Wet Feet offers profiles on over 1000 companies , 30 major industries and "day in the life" profiles of dozens of career professionals



A database of company information that can be used to find and discover companies by location, name, size, industry and keyword .



A business research company that maintains a database of over 65 million companies worldwide.

# Networking

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# Networking

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- Informational interviewing
  - An interview with an individual to learn more about a career/organization of interest to you
  - Educationally-rooted, less focused on self-promotion
  - Resources: LinkedIn and CareerNet



# Accessing CareerNet

## Search the Network

To maximize your search, we highly recommend reading the [Search Tips](#) first. These tips will help you target the alumni network volunteers who can best answer your career questions and help you move toward your career goals and aspirations. You may conduct your search using any or all of the criteria below. The database will generate a list of alumni volunteers who match your search criteria. Keep in mind that the more criteria you specify, the narrower your search results.

- Search by keyword (i.e. IBM, C.E.O., Sigma Chi, Broadcast Journalism)
- Search by a particular geographic location (i.e., New York, Midwest, Japan)
- Search for a particular alumnus/a's name
- Search for volunteers with a particular NU affiliation (school, degree, or class year)
- Search for volunteers in a particular field and/or company (i.e., engineering, education, IBM, Northwestern)

## Keyword Search

Keyword(s) Search

Instructions: Enter any words or phrase that define your search. Examples include an employer, major, student organizations, charities, clubs, etc. The database will generate a list of alumni volunteers whose profile contains these keywords. To search by Field of Work, scroll down the page.

*(Best results: use this function as a stand-alone search, selecting criteria from below will limit your results)*

If you make a selection from the below boxes in error, press CTRL and click on the selection with your mouse to unselect it.

## Alumni Name

First Name

Last Name

## Location

City

Home  Business

State/Province

Alabama  
Alaska

Country

Afghanistan  
Albania  
Algeria

## Field of Work

Employer

Occupation

Accounting & Auditing  
Accounting - Controller  
Accounting - Public

Internships

Offers  
 Does not offer

## School / Degree / Class Year

School

Adams State College  
Adelphi University  
Adler School of Professional Psy

Degree

Au.D.- Doctor of Audiology  
12hr Cert Creative Writing  
12hr Cert E-Comm

Major

A/E/C Busines Management  
Academic Rhinology  
Account Information & Mgmt


Class Year:

Preferred Class Year:

Search






Clear





# Networking – What to Say

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- 1) Introduce self (major, degree, school, specialization/work interest)
  - 2) How you found person's information (specify source)
  - 3) Request interview (specify information you want to gather)
    - Company?
    - Career path?
    - Something else?
  - 4) Initiate follow-up and preferred method of contact
  - 5) Express gratitude
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# Networking – Example Introduction

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*My name is Larry Jackson and I am a PhD student in the Electrical Engineering department at Northwestern University that is specializing in nanophotonics. I found your information on Northwestern University's alumni database, CareerNet. I saw that you work as a Technical Staff Member at Intel and was wondering if I could do a 15-20 minute informational interview with you to learn more about your position. If so, can you let me know what day(s) or time(s) work best for you as well as your preferred method of contact (i.e. phone, email, or in-person)? I would greatly appreciate your insight and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you. I hope to hear from you soon.*

**\*Include telephone/email contact information if introducing yourself by phone\***



# Networking – What to Have

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- Positive attitude (politeness rules)
  - Targeted questions
  - Appropriate equipment (wardrobe, business card, resumes)
    - Equipment must reflect the venue
  - Proactiveness (follow-up and follow through)



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# **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

# Recruiting



	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
<b>Investment Banking, Finance, Consulting</b>												
<b>Engineering</b>												
<b>Education, Nonprofit, Government</b>												
<b>Advertising, Marketing, Media, PR</b>												

\*This table reflects typical recruiting timeframes. UCS continues to receive job postings throughout the year for every industry. Please consult with a UCS practitioner for more specific information. This table does not reflect internship postings.

# Fall Quarter Events

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- Chemistry resume book deadline: ***Late June (date TBD)***
- Positions posted in CareerCat: ***August 2012***
- Classes begin: ***September 27, 2012***
- UCS Backpack to Briefcase events: ***first week of Fall quarter***
- Employer info session/recruiting presentations: ***first week of Fall quarter***
- UCS Fall Career Expo: ***October 2, 2012***
- On-Campus Recruiting (OCR) begins: ***October 15, 2012\****






# Job Search for Graduate Students

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Job Search advice is universal! The same approaches for a successful job search for undergraduates or working professionals applies to graduate students.



## Two Key Expectations of Grad Students:

1. You will be expected to display more career focus and content knowledge
  2. Interviews might include a formal presentation or demonstration of your skills
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# Keep in Mind...

- Many positions for PhDs are not published
  - 50-75% of positions are found through networking
- The average job search takes 6-8 months!
  - Begin the job search process at least 1 year before your anticipated graduation date.
  - Graduate students are often recruited for “just in time” hiring
- Many employers do not consider career fairs as an effective recruiting approach for graduate students
- Many employers cultivate relationships with potential candidates through academic departments, alumni connections, and professional organizations when recruiting graduate students



# The Employer's Perspective

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“Ph.D.s often think their credentials will speak for themselves. Your degree doesn't matter as much as your skills. Your Ph.D. isn't all you have to offer.”

“One of your key transferable skills from research is the ability to multitask and juggle projects. Be able to explain those transferable skills. Think about your project management skills and your multiple responsibilities.”

“Hard and soft skills matter. Soft skills often distinguish candidates.”

“Think of your dissertation as a skills-building exercise”

“Have a generalist appetite, rather than just specialized knowledge”

# CV vs. Resume

## Curriculum Vitae

- Typically longer than 2 pages
- Detailed overview
- Used when applying to academic teaching and research positions
- Used when applying to grants, fellowships, and some administrative positions in colleges and universities
- Also used when applying to positions abroad

## Resume







- 1-2 pages in length: Concise
- Summary of relevant skills, education and experience
- Marketing tool to obtain interviews
- Communicate your potential value
- Content is tailored to the audience
- Used when applying for positions in industry, government and non-profit



# Resume and Cover Letter

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## Tailor, Tailor, TAILOR!

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- 1) Review job description and circle/highlight key skills needed for job position
  - 2) Prioritize key skills needed to perform the role effectively\*
  - 3) Identify personal experiences/skills that align with prioritized key skills from job description
  - 4) Cover letter: Discuss experiences/skills broadly and how they will enhance the position you are applying for  
Resume: Specify what you accomplished/learned and how



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# QUESTIONS?

# University Career Services

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## Main Office

620 Lincoln Street

847-491-3700

## Career Lab (Walk-ins Thursdays & Fridays Only)

Core Reserve

Main Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor North

