

A Job Search Checklist for Liberal Arts Students

The job search can feel overwhelming, so it's helpful to break it into manageable steps. The good news is you don't have to do every step in order. For example, you can start working on your resume before you identify what you want to do. Start checking off as many of these activities as you can, and you'll find yourself on the way to a great opportunity.

You can receive assistance for every one of these steps through the Career Center. And you don't have to do it all during business hours – start by checking our website: www.central.edu/career for lots of links and helpful information.

Step 1: Know yourself.

- I have identified my personal strengths, skills, interests, and values.
- I have made a list of possible job titles/fields of interest.
- I can name two or three careers/jobs I plan to pursue.

Step 2: Know where you want to 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 location for jobs, etc.
- I have conferred with professionals in career fields of interest to gain an “insider’s” perspective on the field and the nature of the work.
- I have identified the top three geographic areas where I'd like to live and work.
- I have identified 10 potential employers for the type of work I'm seeking.

Step 3: Get ready for the search.

- I have had my resume and cover letter(s) reviewed by a professional in the field or a staff member at the Career Center.
- I have prepared a portfolio or work samples to highlight my experience, skills, and talent.
- I have developed my “30-second speech” for short encounters with employers.
- I have analyzed my education and developed my “liberal arts story” for employers.
- I have identified and asked at least three individuals who will serve as references and I have secured their complete contact information.
- I have given my references my resume; I keep them abreast of my job applications.
- I have developed my interview skills.
- I have prepared for interviews by practicing my responses to typical questions and/or doing a mock interview.
- I have an interview suit that is appropriate for the field in which I plan to work.
- I have a professional-sounding voice mail message in case an employer calls.
- I have a neutral/professional e-mail address to give to employers.

Step 4: Start searching.

- I have developed a list of potential networking contacts and keep in touch with them.
- I have a system for keeping track of my contacts, interviews, and other job search activities.
- I regularly check CareerLink@Central for career opportunities, as well as other web sites appropriate to my search.
- I go directly to the web sites of employers of interest and follow links for job postings and online application instructions.
- I have uploaded my resume(s) to the ICRN site for selection for consortium interviews.
- I follow up on every interesting job lead immediately.
- I keep a copy of my resume next to my phone in case I receive a call from an employer.
- I follow-up each application with a phone call or e-mail to the employer to express interest and to ask about the timeline to select candidates to interview.
- I send thank you letters or e-mails to every person who interviews me within 48 hours of an interview.