



Career Services

Johnston Memorial Library, Academic Center for Excellence (ACE), 2nd Floor

Phone: 804-524-5211

www.vsu.edu/career-services/

Internship and Job Search Process Strategies and Tips

In planning for your Internship and Job Search, there are many factors that affect the length of your search, including your focus, decisiveness, self-confidence, listening skills, time-management ability, job search skills, and the job market. To compete within an increasingly competitive global workplace, a vigorous action plan is necessary to obtain satisfying employment. The Internship and Job Search Process steps below are intended to serve as a guide. Remember, it's the Process!

1. **Conduct Self-Assessment and Get to Know Yourself.** –First, identify your interests, talents, abilities, skills, values and limitations. *Next, determine your short-term and long-term career goal.* You need to have an idea of what you would like to do, when you would like to do it, and where you would like to do it. Then...

Develop your Internship and Job Search Process Action Plan by completing the following:

2. **Access Handshake** – VSU's career management platform – All the tools you need for a successful internship and job search can be found on Handshake at <http://www.vsu.edu/career-services/>. Register, create and/or update your profile and upload your resume and cover letter. Search and apply for internships and job opportunities from hundreds of employers.
3. **Draft and Build your Resume** – A resume is your #1 Job Search tool. The resume is usually a one (1) page document that serves as an overview of your background that includes education, experience and skills. The resume must be error free, grammatically correct and visually appealing to the eye. Schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor for assistance.
4. **Draft and Build your Cover Letter** – A cover letter is a document that should be enclosed with your resume. The purpose of a cover letter is to get your enclosed resume read and to generate interviews.
5. **Develop a Portfolio or Online Portfolio** – These are types of learning records that can allow you to view and reflect on your own progress. Contains your signature assignments such as writing samples, design examples, and lesson plans. You may include your resume, letters of reference, and evaluations from internships, co-ops, or student teaching experiences. Remember to include any volunteer or community projects that have helped you share your goals and experiences. Portfolios can give employers and graduate or professional schools a fuller, richer picture of you!
6. **Do your Research** – Researching prospective employers and particular kinds of jobs and internships is VITAL to your job search success. Use your favorite browser and search engine. Your enhanced knowledge will allow you to make better decisions and ask precisely meaningful questions during the interview process. Please ask a Career Advisor for a list of questions to guide your research on employers.
7. **Develop a Target List of Employers** – Make a list of companies, organizations and agencies in which you would like to work. This list will be the start of your internship and job search campaign. Use and maintain an Internship and Job Search Strategy Tracking tool. Utilize the Internet to conduct internship and job searches. Apply to at least two to three employers per week. Conduct follow-up with employers regarding your applications. Almost every employer has a website and most have a "Careers" page. Perfect your ability to apply online. Use search engines like www.indeed.com, www.careerbuilder.com, or www.google.com to find specific internship and job opportunities that interest you.
8. **Network** – Networking is about connecting with people, building and nurturing relationships, sharing information, tapping into the hidden job market, learning about career opportunities, pooling resources and expanding your contacts. Networking is about connecting with people, not collecting people. It is truly a life skill whereby you build, nurture, and maintain quality mutually-beneficial relationships over your career and your lifetime. Practice networking by attending lots of different networking events.

9. **Conduct Informational Interviews** – Meet or interview with someone in your career field of interest. Find out what their job/career is like on a day-to-day basis, how they advanced in their career and if this is something you want to do. To use this tool successfully identify people who can help you, set up appointments, prepare for the meeting, conduct the informational interview and evaluate what you have learned. A great way to get your foot in the door and it sometimes can lead to an internship or employment opportunity. It is **not** a job interview.

10. **Attend VSU Career Expos and Other Job Fairs** – Why attend? Employers visit VSU to attract and hire top notch candidates, advertise opportunities to students and promote awareness about their organization. Participating in these events can have real payoff value in terms of career information, networking opportunities, interview experience, and perhaps even securing a great internship or job!

11. **Participate in On-Campus Recruiting** – Brings employing companies/organizations/agencies to campus to conduct one-on-one interviews with VSU students for employment and internship opportunities.

12. **Use Social Networks** – Employers use sites like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to advertise their hiring needs and to research you! Use your social media page as a marketing tool for what you have to offer an employer. Include industry-specific key words in your profile that make you searchable by an employer. Make sure your profile is professional!

13. **Obtain References and Recommendation Letters** – People who can speak positively and knowledgeably about your work-related qualities and personal characteristics are appropriate references. On a separate sheet of paper, format your reference list to look compatible with your resume. Always secure permission from a reference in advance. Provide a current copy of your resume (or vitae) to each person who agrees to serve as a reference. Remember to have your list ready for the interview.

14. **Interviewing and Mock Interviewing** – Before you interview, know what the position entails, what the company/organization provides in terms of products and/or services, and what benefit you bring to the company/organization. You can greatly increase your chances of interview success by researching the employer and practicing before your actual interview. Send a thank-you letter within 24 hours of the interview. A handwritten note or card is especially effective (sample letters are available, please ask). A letter via email may also be sent to the recruiter. **Sign up for Mock Interviews in Career Services.**

The following are common interview types: Screening Interview; Phone Interview; One-on-One Interview (*Behavioral & Traditional Interview*), Panel Interview; Peer Group Interview; Luncheon Interview; Second Interview and Video Interview.

Prepare, practice and perform!

15. **Wear Business Professional Attire for Interviews, VSU Career Expos and Job Fairs** – Business professional is the norm. Wear a suit. When you wear a suit you communicate that you are serious about the position and that you respect the process, the position, the company/organization and the interviewer.

16. **Conduct Application Follow-Up** – Sending your resume into the job search ether—and hearing nothing—can be disheartening. But, you do not have to sit on pins and needles waiting for a response. If you have applied for an internship or job and have not heard from the hiring manager in a week or two, go ahead and follow-up. Ask for a sample copy of a professional follow-up email to send off to the company/organization.

17. **Conduct Interview Follow-Up** – After your interview, thank the recruiter for inviting you to meet with him/her. Ask for a business card for contact information and follow-up interactions. Inquire about the best method for following up. Email or call within the week to ask if additional information is needed and to re-express your interest.

Don't give up, be persistent and network, network, network!

For additional information and to schedule a personal appointment with a Career Advisor, please call 804-524-5211 or email careerservices@vsu.edu.

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