

Considering your options for after graduation can be both exciting and nerve-racking. Hopefully, you see this time as an opportunity to indulge in your curiosity, ask questions, and make new discoveries about yourself and your career options. We are committed to supporting you throughout your search process – from your initial brainstorming to your internship experiences and finally your post-graduation plans.

GETTING STARTED

Your major may or may not relate to your career interests. Maybe you're unsure what's out there. You might be considering graduate or professional school. Perhaps you are struggling to identify your own goals separate from the advice of parents, friends or mentors. No matter your situation, we are here to help. Your advisor can't make decisions for you or place you in a job, but we can coach you along each step of your search, application and interview process.

Regular advising appointments are a great way to keep in touch about your progress. To schedule an appointment, call our front desk at (314) 935-5930 or come by 110 Danforth University Center. You are welcome to use our services after you graduate, but it will be more effective for you to come in while you're on campus.

ASSESSING YOURSELF

Phase one in choosing a career path is to step back from all of your knowledge, potential and accomplishments to identify the factors that make your life most satisfying and rewarding. What motivates you? How do you picture your ideal workday or lifestyle? Spending time to identify your critical values, interests and skills will impact the careers you decide to research and the positions that you decide to target.

In addition to advising, we offer several assessment tools, including the Strong Interest Inventory, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Elevations and StrengthsQuest. To take any of these assessments or learn about their value, call our front desk at (314) 935-5930 or stop by 110 Danforth University Center.

You are also welcome to take advantage of our library of job search and industry related books available in our front office at 110 Danforth University Center.

SETTING A REALISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR YOUR INTERNSHIP & POST-GRAD PLANNING

Make it your goal this year to determine a good next step – not to map out your career path for the rest of your life. It's smart to think long-term, but try not to let the pressure of needing to know what you'll be doing in 10 years paralyze your progress. Instead, focus on learning about opportunities that seem like a good fit for your current goals.

Your internships and first post-college jobs experiences are going to help you learn more about yourself, your skills, your lifestyle values and what you truly enjoy. So, start early and spend time researching opportunities, but also know that you'll probably make better decisions about your second and third jobs once you have some full-time work experience under your belt.

GAINING EXPERIENCE THROUGH INTERNSHIPS OR RESEARCH POSITIONS

Earning Credit: WUSTL offers academic credit for some internships. Check our Web site to learn the steps for receiving credit in your school or department.

Career Center Stipends: We offer a limited number of stipends to help finance your internship. See our Web site for more information.

Internship Class: We offer a non-credit weekly course to help you learn how to land an opportunity. Enrollment is seen as a favorable attribute for students seeking stipends.

Research Opportunities: The Washington University Office of Undergraduate Research is an excellent resource (<http://ur.wustl.edu>). We also suggest you talk to instructors in your department to learn about opportunities at WUSTL and other schools.

MANAGING YOUR SEARCH WHILE BALANCING ACADEMICS

An early start and small steps will make this process feel much more manageable. A job search takes time; the average search takes at least six months. Unfortunately, it's not something you can pull off with an all-nighter at the end of the semester. Finding a balance between planning for the future and seizing the day will relieve a ton of stress.

Here are some tips for staying proactive:

- Meet with your career advisor regularly and set realistic weekly or monthly goals
- Carve out a standing time each week to work on your search and treat it like a class
- Check in with your advisor or another mentor by phone or e-mail between appointments to report on progress
- Set up a follow-up appointment before you leave from each advising appointment
- Check our calendar periodically and RSVP for events and workshops
- Join a Search Team to keep yourself accountable for progress

FOCUSING YOUR INTERESTS & VARYING YOUR APPROACH

It is best to narrow your focus to a few industries and/or geographical areas. Remaining completely open-minded to all possibilities can be extremely overwhelming and counter-productive. Targeting your search also makes it easier for others to help you. Don't worry about going too far down the wrong path; you can always shift your focus.

In terms of actually pursuing opportunities, you'll want to take a varied approach. Be careful not to over-rely on any one tactic. Below you'll find a number of ways to look for and learn about internship and job opportunities.

RESEARCHING YOUR OPTIONS

Industry and organizational research are key components of a successful internship or job search. Before you can apply, you need to know the basics. Be honest with yourself. Do you really know what consultants do on a daily basis? Have you ever looked into the challenges and rewards of becoming a lawyer? Can you explain why you want to teach in an inner city school for two years?

Here are some ways you can begin to learn more about what's out there:

- Consider signing up to take the Strong Interest Inventory at the Career Center
- Read about occupations on the Occupational Outlook Handbook or O*Net Web sites
- Look for information on professional association Web sites related to fields that interest you
- Talk to professors, alumni, friends, family or others who may have experience or insight
- Look for industry-related books in the Career Center library and at other libraries or bookstores
- Browse the Internship Book to learn about opportunities
- Attend information sessions at the Career Center
- RSVP for round tables, panels, workshops or other industry-related events hosted by the Career Center
- Utilize research-related links from our Web site
- Attend Road Shows in order to visit organizations in cities around the United States
- Talk to your academic and career advisors about resources, ideas and strategies

INFORMATIONAL

INTERVIEWING & NETWORKING

Talking to people is the most effective way to learn about career options and find out about internships and jobs. Networking is nothing more than talking to people to gain information and ideas. It can help you to get a true read on the industry, job or company culture you are considering and could provide the insight that helps to set you apart in the application or interview process.

Research indicates that approximately 80% of jobs are found via networking. This means that you should plan to spend a significant percentage of your job search time reaching out to people rather than sticking to posted positions. You will be more likely to learn about the "hidden job market" of un-posted positions if you take the time to build connections with people in your target field.

Informational interviewing is an intentional form of networking where you request to set up a time to talk to a person by phone or face-to-face. It is an excellent chance for you to ask questions and learn about the rewards, challenges and typical characteristics of a career.

Here are some tips for becoming more comfortable with networking:

- See our handout about Networking & Informational Interviews for ideas about how to expand your network and tips about requesting an informational interview, preparing for the discussion and following-up with your contacts
- Talk to your career advisor for advice about how to make networking less intimidating
- Start by talking to people in your comfort zone, like family, friends, faculty and staff
- Utilize alumni connections by attending Career Center Summer & Winter Parties, attending Road Shows, and logging on to the Career Connections alumni database

BUILDING A TARGET LIST

Once you have a good sense of what kinds of organizations appeal to you, you'll want to make a list of similar places to target in your city of interest. This valuable tactic can help focus your search. Don't limit your list to organizations with posted openings. You can always request an informational interview to get the scoop on working in that city and ask for advice about conducting your search. You may even get hints about unposted positions.

Career Search is an excellent online resource for building a target list. For help using Career Search, come to Quick Questions walk-in advising hours or ask your career advisor for a demonstration.

SEARCHING FOR POSTINGS ONLINE

It can be tempting to spend time searching for tangible positions posted on well-known job search Web sites. Using major job search sites is not a bad idea; just don't make it your only

approach. While it may feel like the most direct way to find openings, this tactic can actually suck up a ton of time and yield few results. After all, those positions can be seen by anyone with access to the Internet, so you'll have a lot of competition. Also, don't count on posting your resume somewhere and waiting for companies to come to you. You'll have the best results if you remain in the driver's seat and stay proactive in your search. Generally, the best places to look for postings online are Web sites for specific organizations and professional association Web sites.

UTILIZING CAREERlink

CAREERlink is the Career Center's online jobs and internships database. Unlike public job search databases, many positions in CAREERlink are posted as the result of relationships we've cultivated with employers from a variety of industries – from finance to arts and nonprofit – who are interested in WUSTL students. While we can't guarantee you'll find a position through us, you will want to consider jobs we are working hard to bring to you.

Here are some tips for maximizing the potential of CAREERlink:

- Make sure you are comfortable with the site. Pick up the CAREERlink Quick Help Guide, attend a workshop, or come to Quick Questions walk-in advising hours for individualized coaching.
- Search the site often to learn about new postings. We recommend that you log on at least once per week during your senior year, as new positions are added daily.
- Read position descriptions carefully to develop an understanding of the kinds of positions that will truly be a good fit for you.
- Check the calendar to learn about upcoming Information Sessions, events and workshops.

APPLYING FOR POSITIONS THROUGH THE CAREER CENTER

Here are some important phrases to understand related to looking for positions through CAREERlink.

Internship Book: Each year we put out a book highlighting a sampling of internships and co-ops posted on CAREERlink. It is a great resource for browsing opportunities.

Internship Resume Review (IRR): All freshmen, sophomores and juniors are encouraged to have their resume reviewed at the Career Center, and it is a requirement for those who wish to interview on campus or participate in resume collects for internship opportunities posted on CAREERlink. Stop by 110 Danforth University Center during Quick Questions walk-in hours for resume approval.

Senior Prep Series (SPS): SPS is our way to help you create a plan that will carry you through your search. It is a necessary step if you are a senior or graduate student and wish to be eligible for on-campus interviews and resume collects

posted on CAREERlink. To get started, call us at (314) 935-5930 to schedule your Senior Specialist & Mock Interview appointment. For more information, pick up a Senior Prep Series information sheet.

On-Campus Recruiting: This refers to organizations seeking candidates by posting positions on CAREERlink. Often, these organizations have the resources to also host Information Sessions and On-Campus Interviews (OCI).

Resume Collects: Organizations who post with us, but are unable to visit campus ask us to electronically send them a bundle of application materials from WUSTL students. Applying through CAREERlink for a resume collect is a great way to set yourself apart from candidates in the general population.

Information Sessions: Be sure to attend sessions hosted by companies on campus. You'll learn more about the organization, their culture, positions and characteristics they seek in candidates. Often, you'll meet the recruiters who will be here for interviews, so dress nicely and come prepared to introduce yourself and ask informed questions.

Career Calls: Sometimes organizations who are unable to visit campus will host a conference call style information session. Sign up for these sessions on CAREERlink.

Workshops & Events: We often invite employers to guest speak or co-present at Junior Jumpstart, Career Camp, Lunch with a Pro, panels, roundtables and workshops. Take advantage of these opportunities to learn about your options and get in front of important decision-makers in various organizations.

WHEN TO CONDUCT YOUR SEARCH

When you conduct research, begin doing informational interviews, complete IRR or SPS, and actually apply for positions will depend on the hiring timeline for organizations in your industry. Some industries typically make hiring decisions in the fall and some are more likely to hire in the spring. Be careful to use this list as a GENERAL guide. There are plenty of exceptions and many organizations hire throughout the year.

Fall Recruiting: If industries in this list interest you it is critical to make a career advising appointment as soon as you return to campus for senior year. Complete SPS right away and begin searching CAREERlink for postings and events by early September. If you have not already started researching industries or networking, you'll need to get on the ball. Take advantage of Quick Questions walk-in hours, advising appointments and workshops to make sure your cover letter writing and interviewing skills are honed. It is possible to land a position several months before graduation, but it will require you act early and stay proactive. These industries also tend to recruit for internships in the fall.

Industries that typically recruit in the fall may include:

- Finance & Investment
- Banking
- Pricing/Economic Analysts; Actuary
- Management Consulting
- Computer Science/IT
- Engineering: Defense, Manufacturing, Transportation, Research & Biomedical
- Pharmaceutical
- Retail Merchandising
- Consumer Products
- Federal Government
- Fellowships & Transitional Programs

Spring Recruiting: Most organizations tend to hire real-time, meaning they look for candidates who can fill open positions right away. You can begin searching for these postings in late winter or early spring. Use your energy and time in fall semester to take the critical first steps of self-assessment, research and informational interviewing. Your career advisor can help you set goals, refine your resume and plan your strategy for spring. Beginning early will help you approach the application process with confidence.

Industries that typically recruit in the spring may include:

- Marketing, Advertising & Public Relations
- Legal Assistants
- Computer Science/IT
- Engineering: Consulting, Manufacturing, & Biomedical
- Nonprofit & Advocacy
- Capitol Hill
- Elementary & Secondary Schools
- Museums & Cultural Institutions
- Architecture Firms
- Fellowships & Transitional Programs

TAILORING YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

Hiring managers read tons of applications each year, so yours must be tailored and well-written to garner serious consideration. Read the position description carefully and note the key skills or characteristics the employer is seeking. Then think about examples of times you've demonstrated those skills and how your experience will benefit them when you're on the job. You'll also want to articulate why you are a good fit for the culture of the organization.

This means that you will need to do a lot of research and brainstorming to prepare each resume and cover letter. Use your cover letter to convey how you can fill the employer's needs, rather than talking about how the position will benefit you. Resist the urge to write a general cover letter and update a few lines here and there for various positions. This tactic is always obvious to employers and will keep you from getting an interview slot.

For help getting started or for feedback on your materials, stop by Quick Questions walk-in hours or schedule an advising appointment by calling (314) 935-5930. See our Resume & Cover Letter Writing handout for more detailed advice and samples.

INTERACTING WITH EMPLOYERS

Most of the hiring decision is based on the impression you make interacting with employers. Your professionalism in e-mails, casual conversations, interviews, thank you letters and follow-up correspondence makes an impact and can be the factor that sets you apart from other candidates.

Take advantage of opportunities to interact with employers at Career Center events, Career Fairs and Information Sessions. Research the company and position ahead of time and come prepared with informed questions. Practice how you will introduce yourself and think about how you would like to be perceived. Make an appointment with your career advisor to practice using good eye contact, a firm handshake and a confident conversational style. To an extent, you will be designing your professional identity or "brand."

No matter how much research you do, interviewing skills take practice. Mock interviews at the Career Center are highly recommended and many students find it helpful to do several. See our Interviewing Skills handout for practice questions and advice.

SEARCH CHECKLIST

Your internship and job search may not be a linear process. While there are some steps that must take place before others, you will probably repeat steps as you learn more and consider new options.

- Consider your interests, values, goals & lifestyle preferences
- Identify positions, industries & geographic areas that interest you
- Stop by Quick Questions to complete Internship Resume Review or meet with a career advisor to complete Senior Prep Series (SPS)
- Set search goals for fall and spring semesters
- Research industries using the Internet and books & talk to people with experience and insight
- Attend information sessions, workshops, events & career fairs
- Check in with your career advisor regularly
- Conduct informational interviews
- Build a target list
- Check CAREERlink weekly for new positions and events
- Look for posted positions on industry, professional association & company Web sites
- Read position descriptions to determine what will be a good fit
- Tailor your resume & cover letter for each position
- Attend interviewing workshops & schedule mock interviews at the Career Center
- Follow-up on your submitted applications
- Keep in touch with your network & update them on your progress and successes
- Report all internship and job offers to the Career Center