

Job Search Strategies for Recent Graduates

1. Celebrate your degree and recognize your accomplishments

Congratulations, you've graduated! Take time to rest and celebrate your accomplishments. You've earned it! It is also a great time to prepare yourself to talk about the value of your education with employers. Reflect back on challenging moments, lessons learned, knowledge gained, and skills developed. Practice telling your story - it will come in handy for interviews and networking.

2. Research potential employers and opportunities

Start your search by identifying current vacancies advertised by job search websites (eg. Indeed, WowJobs, Government of Canada Job Bank, Glassdoor, LinkedIn etc.). But don't stop there. Here are tips to take your job research further:

- Instead of only searching for job titles (eg. "Project Manager"), research specific organizations and companies to determine if they are hiring. This may help you find work in a field of interest, even if the job title isn't what you would have initially searched for on a job search website.
- Be open minded when looking for your first job after graduating. Look past the job title and company name to the responsibilities and skills required. It may spark interest in a different industry and lead to more opportunities later on!
- If you are looking for work in a particular industry, research related professional associations. These associations may have (virtual) networking events, webinars, information for prospective professionals, and a job opportunities page.

3. Tell your network you have graduated and are seeking employment

Let your connections know you are looking for work. You may find that someone will hear about an opportunity that you wouldn't have known about otherwise! Reach out to:

- Family and friends. They may know others that are hiring in roles that they themselves would not qualify for or have interest in but would suit you well!
- Those you have connected with in the past but are not in touch with regularly. This could include: those you met volunteering, former employers/co-workers, and other professional or academic connections. Reconnect with acquaintances, while also letting them know that you have graduated and are looking for work.
- Professionals you do not yet know. Networking with professionals in a field/organization of interest is a great way to learn more about opportunities and challenges in the industry. Keep in mind that this may not result in a job immediately. This is a long-term strategy, in which mentorship and professional development opportunities may lead to employment in the future.

4. Tailor your resume and cover letter for every job application

Your resume and cover letter should reflect the skills and qualifications emphasized in the job posting. Be confident in the skills you developed in your degree and co-curricular experiences, and express them clearly in your application documents using action verbs (eg. communicated, collaborated, organized).

- Showcase your skills and experiences in your resume and cover letter. However, the focus should be on demonstrating the value that you can add to the organization. Think about how your experiences and skills demonstrate that you are the best fit for the role.
- Catch any typos, spelling/grammar mistakes, or misunderstandings by asking someone else to read through your application before submitting. Resume and cover letter appointments are available to alumni through CUE Career Services - reach out to have your resume and cover letter reviewed virtually!

5. Apply on the company's website

Using third-party websites to apply to a job might be convenient, but it is not always effective. Apply directly through the company's website and follow their specific application instructions. Every company is looking for different qualifications, characteristics and experiences, and your application should reflect that.

- Don't disqualify yourself from positions. You do not need to match every skill and qualification listed on the job posting. If it is a position that you are interested in working in and that you have the foundational skills to complete, apply.
- Keep a screenshot/copy of all job postings that you applied to. Often job postings are removed prior to the interview, and it is helpful to reference the job description while preparing for the interview.

6. Focus on what you can control

You cannot control the state of the economy or job market when you graduate. Focus instead on what you can do to prepare for your career and employment search. No matter the state of the job market, you have agency in your career.

- For example, you may not control if an employer hires another candidate. But you can reach out to the Human Resources department to request feedback in order to improve your resume, cover letter and interview for your next application.

If you would like assistance in your job search, including resume, cover letter and LinkedIn reviews, interview preparation and practice, and career advising, contact the Concordia University of Edmonton Career Services Advisor at careerservices@concordia.ab.ca.

