

Enhancing Professional and Personal Development

JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES



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Job Searching, Simplified

Looking for a job can feel like a job - but it doesn't have to feel overwhelming or outdated. Today's job search is about clarity, strategy, and telling your story in a way that connects who you are with what employers actually want.

This guide breaks the process into clear, manageable steps to help you move forward with confidence.

Step 1: Know Yourself (This Is Where Strong Job Searches Start)

Before applying to anything, get clear on what you bring to the table and what you want from a role.

Ask yourself:

- What skills do I enjoy using?
- What am I good at (inside and outside the classroom)?
- What matters to me in a job (values, work environment, flexibility, pay, purpose)?

To better understand your interests, strengths, and values:

- Meet with a career advisor at the Weigand Career Center for Professional Excellence
- Use career assessment tools like PathwayU

Knowing yourself helps you avoid random applications and focus on roles that actually fit.



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Step 2: Clarify Your Career Direction

Once you understand your strengths and interests, start identifying roles and industries that align with them.

You don't need to have everything figured out – but you do need a direction.

Consider:

- Do I want to stay in my current field or explore a new one?
- Am I looking for a similar role in a different organization?
- Do I want to pivot into something completely new?

Helpful ways to explore options:

- Use the Occupational Outlook Handbook and “What Can I Do With This Major?” – both free, online career resources – to explore career paths, job descriptions, salary ranges, and employment trends. These tools help you connect your major or interests to real-world jobs.
- Research companies and industries online (LinkedIn, company websites, Glassdoor)
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals to learn about real-world roles and industry trends.
- Gain experience through internships, part-time jobs, volunteer roles, or summer positions – these are some of the best ways to test-drive a career.

Step 3: Build Strong Application Materials

Once you know what you're targeting, your resume and cover letter should be tailored to match.

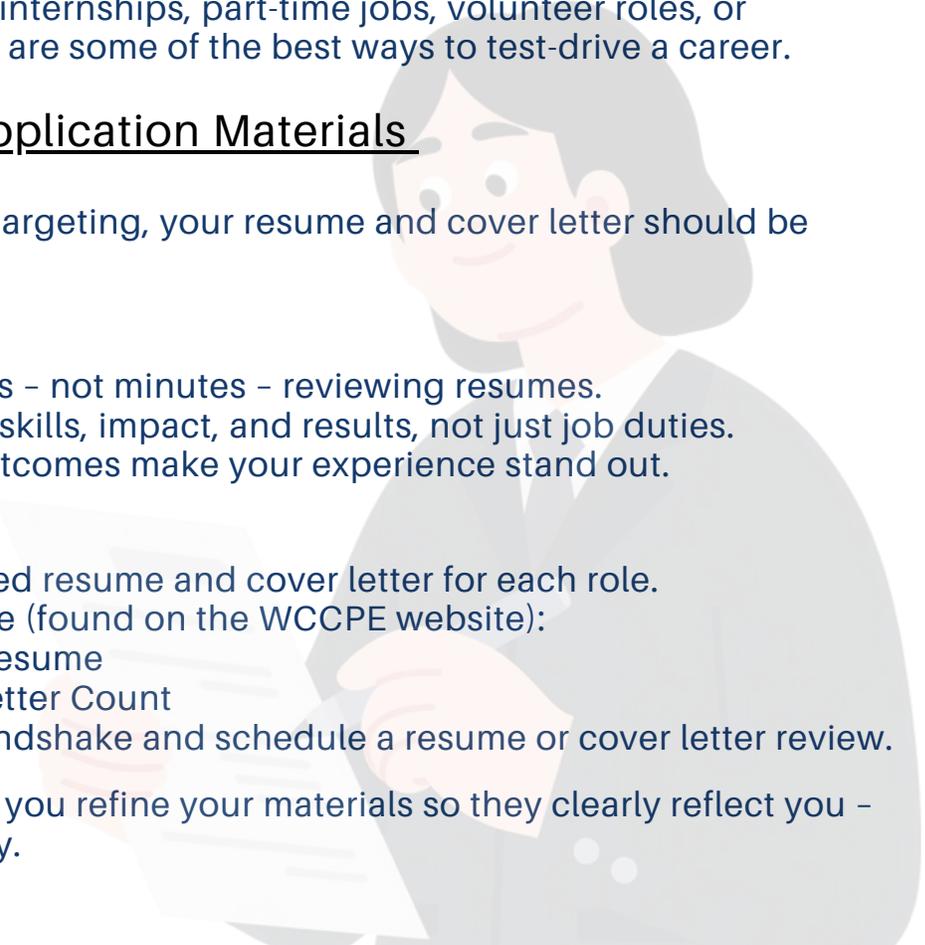
Keep in mind:

- Employers spend seconds – not minutes – reviewing resumes.
- Strong resumes focus on skills, impact, and results, not just job duties.
- Action verbs and clear outcomes make your experience stand out.

Next steps:

- Update or create a targeted resume and cover letter for each role.
- Use WCCPE resources like (found on the WCCPE website):
 - Writing an Effective Resume
 - Making Your Cover Letter Count
- Upload documents to Handshake and schedule a resume or cover letter review.

WCCPE staff are here to help you refine your materials so they clearly reflect you – confident, capable, and ready.



Step 4: Apply Strategically (Not Randomly)

Applying online is part of the process - but it shouldn't be the only strategy.

Common places to find job and internship postings:

- Handshake
- LinkedIn
- Job boards like Indeed and Glassdoor
- Career fairs and employer info sessions
- Professional or industry association websites
- Staffing and temporary agencies

While responding to job postings is important, many opportunities are filled through connections rather than online applications. A large number of roles are never publicly posted.

That's why networking and proactive outreach matter.

Build Your Network

Networking is simply building professional relationships - it's not awkward or transactional.

Ways to grow your network:

- Connect with professionals on LinkedIn.
- Talk with professors, supervisors, classmates, friends, and family.
- Join professional or student organizations.
- Attend career fairs, panels, and campus events.
- Reach out to alumni with help from a career advisor.

Once you identify someone you'd like to learn from, reach out to request a 15-20 minute informational conversation. Ask about their career path, industry trends, and advice—not a job. Often, these conversations lead to referrals or opportunities.

 Key takeaway: Many students land roles through relationships, not applications alone.

Contact Employers Directly

If there's a company or organization you're interested in:

- Research the organization and relevant roles.
- Send a tailored resume and cover letter to the hiring manager or HR contact.
- When appropriate, follow up professionally.

This approach works best when paired with networking and research.

Step 5: Prepare for Interviews

Strong interview performance comes from preparation—not luck.

To Prepare:

- Review common interview questions and practice your responses.
- Research the organization, role, and industry.
- Be ready to explain your skills, experiences, and interests clearly.

Helpful Resources:

- Review Keys to Interviewing Success.
- Schedule a mock interview with the WCCPE.
- Practice using STANDOUT, an online interview platform where you can record yourself answering interview questions and receive feedback on your answers, body language, and delivery.

After every interview, send a thank-you email within 24 hours. It reinforces your interest and professionalism - and it still matters.

Final Reminder: Job searching is a process. Use multiple strategies, ask for support, and stay consistent.



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Principles for Job Search Success

Job searching takes time, effort, and resilience. These principles can help you stay focused, confident, and motivated throughout the process.

1. Be patient and persistent

Finding the right opportunity doesn't happen overnight. It often takes a few months of consistent effort – and that's normal.

2. Be honest and self-aware

Be truthful about your experiences and skills, but focus on your strengths and growth rather than your weaknesses.

3. Expect setbacks – and keep going

Rejections are part of the process. Each “no” brings you closer to the right “yes.” Don't let setbacks derail your momentum.

4. Maintain confidence

Employers are drawn to candidates who believe in themselves. Focus on what you bring to the table and how you add value.

5. Surround yourself with positive influences

Seek out people who are encouraging, supportive, and motivated. Energy matters during a job search.

6. Set clear goals

Know what you're aiming for. Clear goals help you communicate your interests and stay focused during your search.

7. Make a plan

Turn your goals into action steps – daily, weekly, and monthly – to keep your search organized and manageable.

8. Show energy and enthusiasm

Your attitude shows up in applications, interviews, and conversations. Enthusiasm signals motivation and interest.

9. Ask thoughtful questions

Good questions help you learn, build connections, and show genuine interest – without dominating the conversation.

10. Be an active listener

Listening builds rapport and helps you learn from others' experiences. People appreciate being heard.

11. Be professional and respectful

Treat everyone you interact with – especially during the interview process – with kindness and professionalism. First impressions matter.

12. Present yourself professionally

Dress appropriately, communicate clearly, and carry yourself with confidence in both in-person and virtual settings.

13. Avoid burnout

It's okay to step back occasionally. Rest helps you stay motivated and perform better over time.

14. Stay open-minded

Opportunities may look different than expected. Be flexible and willing to adjust your goals as you learn more.

15. Reflect and adjust

Check in on your progress every couple of weeks. Refine your approach and keep moving forward.

Take the First Step

Now that you understand the steps and principles of a successful job search, it's time to take action.

The process may feel overwhelming at times – but it is doable. Break your search into small, achievable goals, take things one step at a time, and keep going. With consistency and effort, your path will become clearer.

Navigating Personal Identity & Privacy in the Job Search

Every student's job search looks different. Some students may need to think carefully about how and when to share personal information during the application and hiring process. This section offers general guidance for navigating privacy, identity, and professionalism while seeking employment or internships.

Students who have questions about their rights or unique circumstances are encouraged to connect with a career advisor or trusted resources.

Before Applying.

Decide what personal information you are comfortable sharing with employers. This is a personal choice and may be influenced by workplace culture, organizational values, and your own comfort level.

When selecting references:

- Choose individuals who can speak positively about your skills and experiences.
- Consider what personal information your references know and what you want them to share.
- Communicate clearly with references about what details should remain private.

Resumes are not legal documents. Students may choose to:

- Use a preferred name on resumes and applications.
- Use initials or variations of a name if helpful.
- Include past experiences completed under a different name.

Understanding your rights related to workplace discrimination and privacy can help you make informed decisions.

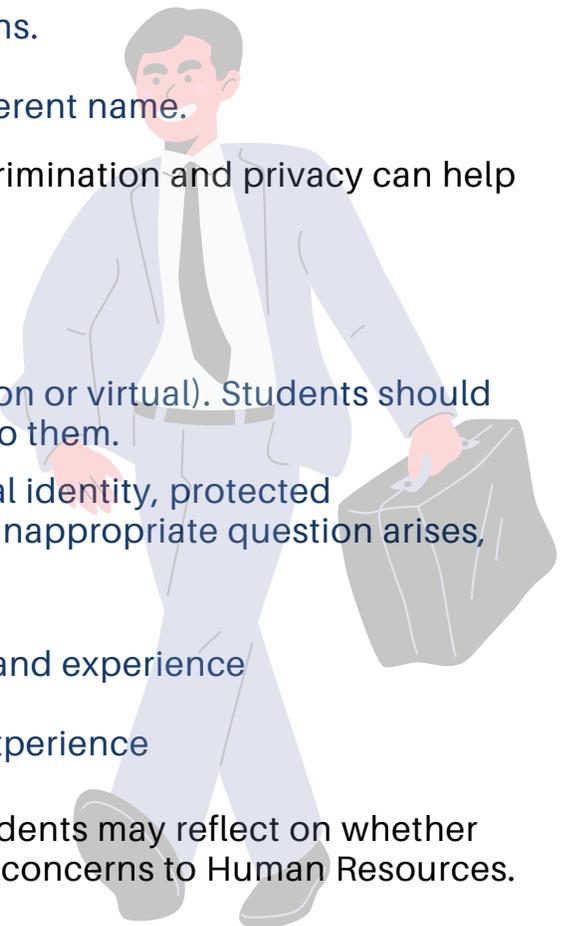
During an Interview

Professional attire is expected for interviews (in person or virtual). Students should dress in a way that feels professional and authentic to them.

Interviewers should not ask questions about personal identity, protected characteristics, or other non-job-related topics. If an inappropriate question arises, students may choose to:

- Answer briefly if they feel comfortable
- Redirect the conversation back to qualifications and experience
- Ask a clarifying question about job expectations
- Decline to answer and refocus on professional experience

If an interview feels inappropriate or concerning, students may reflect on whether the organization is a good fit and consider reporting concerns to Human Resources.



Support & Resources

WCCPE staff are available to support students and alumni with:

- Resume and application questions.
- Interview preparation and mock interviews.
- Conversations around identity, privacy, and professionalism in the workplace.

Students are encouraged to seek guidance tailored to their individual needs.



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