Internship and Job Search Guide

Conducting an internship or job search takes time, commitment, and organization. The CSE Career Center can help you with the internship/job search process (from finding opportunities, reviewing a cover letter or resume, practicing interviewing, and evaluating a job offer)—contact the CSE Career Center to set up an appointment with a counselor: 612-624-4090. This guide will help you get started on your journey of a successful job search.

BEGINNING THE INTERNSHIP/JOB SEARCH PROCESS:

- Many science and engineering companies begin recruiting for spring graduates and summer interns fall semester, so get started early! Sept.-Oct. and Jan.-Feb. are the busiest times with job openings, on-campus interviews, and recruiting events.
- Before you begin to look for opportunities, it is important to establish what is important to you, such as what industries, companies, and types of positions would be the best fit for your interests, strengths, skills, personality, and values.
- Use a variety of search strategies. Employers that recruit U of M students report that internship programs, networking, their company webpage, career fairs, and GoldPASS are the most effective ways for them to find qualified applicants.
- Create a resume and cover letter that are targeted for each position you apply for (see the Resume Guide and the Cover Letter Guide for help).
- Create a system to keep track of job descriptions, deadlines, networking contacts, and application materials.

IDENTIFYING COMPANIES:

Below are strategies to help you identify companies in your field of interest so that you know what organizations to target for your job search.

GOLDPASS, goldpass.umn.edu**:**
- Utilize the "Employer Directory" on GoldPASS, search by industry type and location.

LIBRARY RESOURCES, busref.lib.umn.edu/**:**
- Select "Company Research" and then "Directories." *The Million Dollar Database* and *Reference USA* are two of the most comprehensive industry directories. You can search by organization size, industry type, location, etc.

USA CAREER GUIDES, goldpass.umn.edu**:**
- Through GoldPASS you can access "USA Career Guides" by clicking on the link on your homepage, then select "Employer Directory" and enter your search criteria, such as location, size, keyword, industry type, etc.

WETFEET LOCAL GUIDES, www.wetfeet.com**:**
- The local guides provide directories for specific industries with company listings.

LOCAL RESOURCES & DIRECTORIES:
- City business publications, including the Mpls/St. Paul Business Journal (twincities.bizjournals.com) have detailed current information about companies.
- The BioBusiness Alliance, http://biobusinessalliance.org/, provides a map of bio industries and companies across Minnesota.
- The American Council of Engineering Companies of Minnesota, http://www.acecmn.org/, provides a directory of engineering organizations.

RESOURCE CENTER IN THE CSE CAREER CENTER:
- The CSE Career Center Resource Center can help you identify companies through the Major Binders that include a sample list of companies that recruit each major.

LINKEDIN, www.linkedin.com:
- Many companies now have profiles on LinkedIn, the world's largest online professional networking site.
- To check out company profiles to learn about the organization and find contacts to connect with, click on "Companies" and then "Search Companies." You can select your search criteria, such as location, size, keyword, industry type, etc.
- Use the "Follow" tool to stay in tune with the latest news and company information.

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SEARCH STRATEGIES:

GOLDPASS: GoldPASS is the U of M's online database of internships, full-time jobs, and volunteer opportunities. Simply log in with your X.500, upload your resume, search and apply for current job opportunities, find potential employers through the employer directory, and view career event, such as company information sessions: goldpass.umn.edu/. See the GoldPASS Users Guide and the online workshop for detailed information on how to best utilize GoldPASS.

CAREER FAIRS: The U of M hosts many career fairs, including the CSE Career Fairs that are held every fall and spring and the U of M Job and Internship fair that is held in Feb. Career fairs give you the opportunity to demonstrate your interest and discuss your qualifications with employers. It is a great way to find out about companies, positions, job openings, and interviewing opportunities. To prepare for career fairs view our Career Fair Preparation handout. Check GoldPASS for updates of when career fairs occur: goldpass.umn.edu/.

EMPLOYER EVENTS: Often employers host events such as company information sessions to share details about their organization and positions, as well as to find talent. To see event listings, login to goldpass.umn.edu/ and click on "events." To make a positive impression at these events, dress professionally, ask questions, and be engaged in the conversation. Be sure to talk to the employer one-on-one after the event (see "Elevator Pitch" on Pg. 4 for an example of how to introduce yourself).

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS: The CSE Career Center has many employers who come to campus to interview students for internships and full-time jobs. Visit GoldPASS to see what companies are coming to campus, and apply to be considered for an interview: goldpass.umn.edu/.

COMPANY WEBPAGES: Create a list of companies you are interested in and then check their websites regularly for open Positions. Some organizations only post jobs on their website (see Pg.1 for information on identifying companies).

WEBSITES: Check out the What Can I Do With a Major In handouts on our website and in our Resource Center to find a list of professional organizations and job search sites specific to your major and the science and engineering fields. Below are some general job search sites that may be helpful to find positions. For an extended list visit our website: http://cse.umn.edu/r/career-center/.

indeed.com	SimplyHired.com	MinnesotaJobs.com	USAJobs.com	CollegeGrad.com
Internships.com	LinkedIn.com	Aftercollege.com	CollegeRecruiter.com	

TEMP/STAFFING AGENCIES: Some employers use temping agencies to fill a position, and then if the temp performs well they are often offered a permanent position. Be aware of agencies that charge candidates; employers should cover the hiring cost. Go to our website for a list of agencies: http://cse.umn.edu/r/career-center/.

USA CAREER GUIDES, goldpass.umn.edu: Through GoldPASS you can access "USA Career Guides." From your homepage, click on "USA City Guides" and select the city you are interested in to find information about cost of living, local industries, top area companies, and top job search resources for that region.

AFTER YOU APPLY FOR POSITIONS:
- Prepare for upcoming interviews (see the Interviewing Guide for help).
- Follow up with the employer by phone or email to see where they are in their hiring process. This demonstrates that you are very interested in the position.

Example of Follow-Up Email:

Dear Ms. Swanson,

I applied for the Civil Engineering Job at XYZ Corporation through GoldPASS on September 21. I believe that I am a great fit for this position because of my environmental engineering internship, my civil engineering education, and my strong teamwork skills which are demonstrated on my resume. I noticed that the application date for the position was on Monday, and I wanted to check in to see where you are in your hiring process. I hope to have the opportunity to speak with you further about the position and my qualifications.

Sincerely,
Sam Student

NETWORKING:

Most job seekers are familiar with the word "networking," but many don't fully understand what it means. Networking is building relationships with professionals, especially in your career field of interest. It is about connecting with people to make yourself known in the industry you want to work in, to help you gather career information, and to learn about job opportunities and exchange ideas. Networking is a continuous process, and you will gradually connect and maintain relationships with many professionals throughout your career. College is a great place to get started because most professionals enjoy meeting students, and building a network early can help you learn about internship and job opportunities. It is common for people to feel intimidated when they start networking, but the more you do it the easier it becomes.

NETWORKING:

WHY NETWORK?
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that about 70% of jobs are found through networking. So it is important to connect with people to learn about opportunities through what is called "the hidden job market." Also, there is a common understanding that good people know other good people. If you build positive relationships through networking, you are putting yourself at a competitive advantage. Networking is also a good way to show employers that you have strong professional skills such as initiative, persistency, and passion for the industry. It is by far the most effective job search strategy.

AM I JUST "USING" EMPLOYERS?
Networking is a very common practice among professionals and most are happy to talk with students and young professionals about their career and industry. Remember that they were in your shoes once! It's also important to view networking as a reciprocal relationship. If a person refers a strong candidate, then it helps enhance their professional reputation. If you maintain your relationships, you never know when you will be able to help others now or in the future.

INDENTIFY YOUR NETWORK:
A network is simply a group of professional and personal contacts. Start with your family, friends, professors, former colleagues, and any of their referrals. Even if you don't know someone who is in a career you are interested in, you may be surprised who your family and friends know. Below and on Pg. 4 are some strategies for expanding your network and getting connected to industry professionals. See page 4 and 5 for advice on setting up informational interviews with people in your network.

The Mentor Program offered through the College of Science and Engineering is a great way to get connected to new people. After you apply to the mentor program you will be paired with a professional in your area of interest to meet with 2-4 hours per month for your professional development. For more information about this program and/or to apply, visit the website:
CSE Mentor Program: http://cse.umn.edu/r/mentor-programs/

Professional Organizations are very useful for networking. Almost every industry has at least one professional organization. To find out what professional organizations exist in your interest area, ask a professor, take a look at the What Can I Do With a Major In sheets located in the CSE Career Center Resource Center and on our website, or go to www.weddles.com for a directory. Professional organizations are an excellent way to get connected with people in industry, and many of their websites have useful job search resources as well as conferences open to students to attend. An example of a professional organization includes the American Mathematical Society.

Student Organizations also have connections to industry professionals and often bring in guest speakers to meetings and events. Find student organizations related to your interests and get involved:
CSE student organizations: http://cse.umn.edu/r/student-groups/
U of M student organizations: http://www.sua.umn.edu/groups/

The GoldPASS Employer Directory and Professional Networking Database (goldpass.umn.edu/**)** are helpful to identify professionals that are connected to the U of M. They make their contact information available for a reason—they want to connect with you!

Social Networking Websites offer you the opportunity to find and communicate with professionals in your industry. Contacts found through professional networking sites such as www.linkedin.com allow you to connect with people you know and to see who they are connected to. Join groups on LinkedIn such as the "U of M Alumni Association" or groups related to your career interests to search for contacts. Keep in mind that people on LinkedIn have chosen to be on a networking website, so it is appropriate to contact people you don't know—just be sure to communicate with them why you want to connect and keep all communication professional. See an example of LinkedIn correspondence on Pg. 4 and watch the online workshop about LinkedIn on our website: http://cse.umn.edu/r/career-center/ to learn more about this tool.

Career Fairs and Employer Events such as career panels, company information sessions, and Practice Interview Days offer a great opportunity to meet employers and start building a relationship. Log into goldpass.umn.edu to find out about these opportunities.

CONNECTING TO EMPLOYERS:
When you are connecting with a professional in person, such as at a career fair, a company information session, or a conference, it is important to prepare a 30-second "elevator pitch" (see Pg. 4) that introduces yourself and outlines you career goals, skills and interests. Without asking for a job, you will want them to know that you are currently looking at opportunities. Be sure to research the industry and organization that the professional represent so that you come prepared to engage the employer in a meaningful conversation about his or her company and opportunities. Find out what the company's mission/purpose is, the size and structure of the company, what services/products it provides, any awards/recognition it has received, if the company has been in the news, and what types of positions the company hires (for research strategies, see the Researching Employers and Industries handout).

30-Second 'Elevator Pitch':

An "elevator pitch" is a way to quickly introduce yourself and begin a conversation in a networking situation. Use the points below to help you think about what you might share.

- Approach the employer, introduce yourself (name, major, year in school) and shake his or her hand.
- Share why you are interested in the company and/or position (demonstrating that you did company research).
- Ask questions that show you are interested in the employer and his or her company and/or position
- Offer your resume
- Ask for a business card and if you can contact the employer. Be specific as to why you would contact him or her, such as to ask further questions, submit your application materials, or to setup an informational interview (see below).

Elevator Pitch Example:

Hi, my name is Steve Science. It's nice to meet you. I am a sophomore civil engineering student and am interested in pursuing a career in urban planning. My experience shadowing an associate with the City of Burnsville has reinforced my interest in the field, and I think that my coursework has helped me develop strong analytical skills. I understand that your firm is starting a new project in the West Metro. That's really interesting to me. What are your initiatives for that region, and do you know if there are any plans to hire summer staff for the project?

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING:

Once you have identified people in your network (see Pg. 3), one of the most effective ways to build a relationship with these contacts and learn about internship and job opportunities is to set up an informational interview with these professionals. Informational interviews are a great way to gain first-hand information from someone who is in a career, industry, and/or company that interests you. You can even ask the professional for advice on ways to help you learn more about how to best prepare for that career, as well as job search advice.

Even though informational interviews can be helpful in identifying job and internship opportunities, it is important to NEVER directly ask for a job. Instead, let them know that you are looking for a job/internship, and use the interview as an opportunity to build positive relationships with professionals.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING ETIQUETTE:

- Contact the person you are interested in meeting with via phone, email, or LinkedIn. Be sure to state how you got his or her information. Ask if the employer would be willing to do an informational interview and include a length of time.
- Dress business casual (dress shirt and dress pants) and arrive 10 minutes early to your appointment.
- Before your meeting, go to the website of the company the employer works for so that you have a basic understanding of the organization such as products, services, mission statement, job positions, etc. (for research strategies, see the Researching Employers and Industries handout).
- Be prepared with questions. See examples of questions on Pg. 5.
- Bring a copy of your resume—your resume will help the employer get to know you a little better, and you may want to ask for feedback about how you could improve upon it for that industry.

EXAMPLE OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW REQUEST, EMAIL:

Dear Ms. Jones,

My name is Sarah Smith and I am a junior at the University of Minnesota studying statistics. My neighbor, Pat Patricks, mentioned that you would be a great person to connect with to learn more about what it is like to be an underwriter for an insurance company. I have done some research on XYZ Company and have been impressed with the organization because of its commitment to community involvement and its leadership in the insurance industry. I'm very interested to learn more about the company and the industry as a whole, and I am wondering if I could meet with you sometime for about 30 minutes to ask you some questions about your career.

Sincerely,
Sarah Smith

EXAMPLE OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW REQUEST, LINKEDIN:

Dear Mr. Johnson,

My name is Joe Student and I am a senior student in the College of Science and Engineering at the University of Minnesota. I found you on LinkedIn in the "College of Science and Engineering" group and was wondering if I could connect with you. I am graduating with a Mechanical Engineering degree this May and would like to learn more about your career path as well as XYZ Engineering Firm. Would you consider doing a hour informational interview with me? I really hope we can
Connect, and I appreciate your time. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Joe Student

EXAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Before your interview, consider what information you currently don't have that would be helpful as you prepare to apply for positions in that industry and begin your career. Below are examples of questions that may be useful to ask.

- What has your career path been? What are the typical career paths in this field?
- What entry level positions exist in this field?
- What type of experience and education/training does your organization and/or the field value?
- What are the best methods for searching for an internship or job in this field?
- Are there internship/full-time job opportunities available at this company?
- How does your organization recruit candidates?
- What is the interviewing process like at your organization?
- What does your organization and/or field look for in job candidates?
- What is the outlook for this field?
- What current trends are you seeing in this field?
- Would you look over my resume and provide some feedback about how I could better market myself?
- What skills or qualities are important for this position and/or industry?
- What are your main responsibilities as part of your current job? Do you work mostly alone or on a team?
- Can you describe one current project you are working on?
- What is the organizational culture of this company?
- If you were a college student again, what would you do differently to prepare you for this job?
- Is there someone you would suggest I speak with to gain more information about this career?

AFTER THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:

- Send a thank you note that states what was helpful from the meeting and the actions you now plan to take.
- Use the advice from the interview to help you as you search for internships and jobs. Follow up on job leads they may have given you and contact the people they refer you to.
- Keep in touch with them; you want to maintain your connection. Find purposeful reasons to contact them, such as you may have an additional question or you may want to let them know if you have applied for a job.

EXAMPLE OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW THANK YOU NOTE:

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Thank you for meeting with me last week, it was really helpful to hear your insights about the pharmaceutical industry and the summer internship program at XYZ company. The advice you gave on my resume was extremely helpful, and I was wondering if you would be willing to also give me feedback on my cover letter as well. I then plan to send it to Ms. Baker like you suggested. Again, thank you so much for your help. I hope to have more conversations with you in the future!

Sincerely,
Joe Student