

Recommendations for preparing for a career as a senior

As a senior, your career preparation will change from exploration of potential options to exploration of potential positions. It is still important to explore all of your options fully and be flexible and open about your possibilities. This is also the time to take full advantage of the network and reputation you have worked hard to create.

- Visit the Career Center. They can help you search for jobs, prepare your materials for applications, and prepare you for interviews. There are multiple easy-to-avoid mistakes for job application materials as well as interviews; obtain the knowledge available to you to avoid these mistakes.
- Consider where you would ideally like to live. Some jobs are much more flexible with location than others and some areas are much more competitive to obtain a job in than others. (See the advice for juniors for a longer description of this.)
- Begin to explore job websites in the area(s) you want to live. Some jobs will be looking to hire months in advance whereas others will not be looking to hire until weeks before the job starts. By exploring job websites, you can determine when you will need to start applying to jobs and then create a timeline for searching and applying to jobs with weekly and then daily goals.
- Begin preparing your résumé at least one month prior to applying to jobs. Obtain assistance editing your résumé so that it is as professional and strong as possible.
- If relevant, begin preparing cover letters and other materials at least one month prior to applying to jobs. Obtain assistance editing these so that they are as professional and strong as possible.
- When you receive offers to interview, remember that this interaction is part of the evaluation process, so respond professionally.
- Explore resources designed to help college students apply to and obtain jobs. A Google search on "advice for college students looking for jobs" yielded over 1 million hits; use reputable websites (e.g., ".edu", ".gov", ".org", or reputable news outlets)
- Continue talking to people in your network about your desired career path and anticipated graduation date so that they can inform you if there are any open positions that you might be a good fit for that they know of. Follow up on any lead you are given even if it does not sound like the perfect job for you. You could potentially gain experience applying and interviewing that will benefit you when you apply and interview for the perfect job and you could also gain another valuable person in your network.
- Go to networking and recruitment events and remember to use this as an opportunity to practice being professional.
- Go to job fairs prepared with copies of your final, professional résumé and dressed professionally.

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- When you apply to a job, follow-up to ensure your application was received and they are aware you are really interested in the position. (This can be a brief, polite phone call to make sure they have all of the materials they need to determine if you are the best fit for the job.)
- If you get an interview, prepare for it in advance and then follow-up with thank you notes and a nice touch is to include information in the thank you note reminding them why you are a good fit for the job.
- Do not forget to maintain your network and relationships with potential recommenders. If a professor is asked to provide a recommendation for a student they knew well as a sophomore, they will not be able to provide as strong of a recommendation as they could for the student they knew well as a sophomore and who they still at least occasionally talk to (at least once a semester).
- *Finally, remember, you are searching for a first job, not your ideal job. It is less stressful to view this as a stepping stone than the ultimate and final job search. However, do not act as though you do not want this job; everyone needs to start somewhere and no employer wants to hire someone who does not want to be employed by them.