

# JOB SEARCH STRATEGY CHECKLIST

Office for Career Success

A successful job search requires strategy, organization, and persistence. Use these *7 steps* to stay on track, manage deadlines, and make sure you are presenting yourself as a strong candidate at every stage.

## STEP 1: CLARIFY WHAT YOU WANT

- Identify your skills, values, interests, and strengths
- Research career fields and roles that align with what you want
- Consider geographic preferences, salary expectations, and work-life balance priorities
- Identify potential barriers (education requirements, certifications, experience gaps) and plan how to address them

## STEP 2: BUILD YOUR TARGET LIST

- Research potential employers in your field using Handshake, LinkedIn, Indeed, and industry-specific sites
- Identify 15-25 organizations that interest you in your preferred locations
- Follow target companies on LinkedIn and social media to stay updated on openings
- Reach out to Spalding alumni, faculty, and professional contacts for insider information and referrals

## STEP 3: TAILOR YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

- Update your resume and customize it for each position using keywords from the job description
- Write a targeted cover letter that connects your experience to the specific role and organization
- Proofread everything—spelling and grammar errors hurt your credibility (Reach out to Spalding's Office for Career Success for help!)
- Prepare a professional reference list with 3-5 contacts
- Optimize your LinkedIn profile to match your resume and showcase your work

## STEP 4: NETWORK STRATEGICALLY

- Reach out to 10-15 people in your network (alumni, faculty, mentors, former supervisors) to ask about opportunities
- Attend career fairs, employer info sessions, and industry networking events
- Request informational interviews with professionals in roles you are targeting
- Join relevant LinkedIn groups and engage with industry conversations
  
- Let your network know you are job searching—many positions are filled through referrals

### **STEP 5: APPLY & TRACK**

- Submit all required materials on time—do not wait until the last minute
- Keep a spreadsheet or document to track where you applied, deadlines, and follow-up dates
- Follow application instructions exactly (some require specific file formats, reference formats, etc.)
- Save copies of everything you submit in case you need to reference it later

### **STEP 6: PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS**

- Research the organization thoroughly before every interview
- Practice answering common interview questions using the STAR method
- Prepare 3-5 thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer
- Schedule a mock interview with Office for Career Success to practice
- Plan your outfit and test your technology (for virtual interviews) ahead of time

### **STEP 7: FOLLOW UP & EVALUATE OFFERS**

- Send a thank you email within 24 hours of every interview
- Follow up on application status if you have not heard back within the stated timeline
- Evaluate job offers carefully—consider salary, benefits, growth opportunities, and cultural fit
- Negotiate salary and benefits professionally if appropriate. Receive coaching on how to do so with the Office for Career Success.
- Notify other employers promptly once you accept an offer

### **STAYING MOTIVATED**

Job searching can be exhausting. Set weekly goals, celebrate small wins, and reach out for support when you need it. Spalding University's Office for Career Success is here to help you stay on track.

Need help with your job search? Contact [careers@spalding.edu](mailto:careers@spalding.edu) or book directly through mySpalding Student Success scheduling portal