



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

**Human
Resources**

Job Search Guide for Job Seekers

A Successful Job Search

A successful job search incorporates many different stages. You may be starting your search and need some guidance on how to create a cover letter and resume that will get the hiring manager's attention or maybe you have landed that interview you have been waiting for and would like some helpful tips on how to make a stellar impression.

For many job seekers, looking for a job can be a stressful process. There are applications to fill out, resumes and cover letters to update and interviews that may take place over the phone or via Skype. It can be challenging when your job search is taking longer than expected. These resources will help you create a plan of action and assist you while you look for different opportunities.

HR-Talent Acquisition has created resources that will help you in various stages of your job search. These resources include a guide on how to apply for opportunities on the UChicago Jobs website, best practices for writing a cover letter, resume and how to prepare for an interview. Also included are helpful tips on how to follow up after an interview and how to start networking.

- **Job Search Strategies**
- **Best Practices for Networking** – How to get started and build your Network.
- **Best Practices for Writing a Resume** – You only have about 30 seconds to impress a recruiter or prospective employer – these tips will help you to create a stand out resume.
- **Best Practices for Creating a Cover Letter** - A cover letter is your first opportunity to engage a prospective employer.
- **Best Practices for Interviewing** – From a phone interview to in-person, these best practices will help you to make a great impression.
- **Applying to UChicago Jobs** - A step by step guide on how to apply and navigate the UChicago Jobs Employment Site.



Job Search Strategies

Seeking new employment requires focus, dedicated attention, assertiveness and persistence. Use the strategies below to increase your success in finding your next position.

- **Identify your strengths.** Reflect on your career and document your most significant accomplishments, successes and experiences. Be ready to clearly articulate why you are the best candidate for the job, and the unique attributes you could bring to the company. Practice your elevator speech: if you had 30 seconds in an elevator with the head of the company, how would you convince them to hire you? It is important to be able to quickly highlight your strengths and make them interested in hearing more about you.
- **Choose your next job carefully.** Think about your best and worst jobs. Ask yourself what you want in your next opportunity. Conduct your job search with your skills, interests, and values in mind. Research companies to determine what opportunities best match your target position.
- **Do research.** Try to determine who you can talk to at your target company so you can learn of opportunities and become a candidate prior to a job posting.
- **Take action – be heard.** Use your voice. Cold calling prospective employers can be scary, but it can also be an important job search strategy. Once you have identified a position in which you are interested, ask to speak to the hiring manager who will be making a decision on filling the position. Ask for a few minutes on their calendar to discuss why you are a good candidate.
- **Network Continuously.** Tell everyone (family members, friends, former colleagues, etc.) that you are looking for employment. Ask them to think of you when they hear of any opportunities. Join professional organizations to meet others who might be able to help you. Try to meet face-to-face with at least three or four people per day. Offer to buy them a cup of coffee. Tell them you are seeking advice and counsel for your job search. The purpose of your conversation is to build a relationship, rather than to ask for a job. At the end of the conversation, ask them who else would be good for you to talk to and ask if you can use their name as a reference.
- **Seek outside advice.** Consider using an employment agency to help you. Spend time understanding the services they will provide and the costs of such services.
- **Take advantage of temporary jobs.** Be flexible. Consider taking a contract, temporary or consulting position. Oftentimes, these types of opportunities can lead to full-time employment.
- **Write succinctly about the position.** When sending out résumés, make certain your cover letter mirrors the position description and specific job requirements. Catch the recruiter's/ hiring manager's attention by highlighting how your skills and experience match their needs.
- **Document your search.** Write down all the jobs you applied to: include the title, company name, contact person & phone number, interview date(s), who referred you and follow-up dates/ actions.



Best Practices for Networking

What is Networking?

Networking is the process of talking to peers, employers, alumni and other professionals to learn more about possible career paths and build connections. The most common question is “How do I start?” Below are some easy tips to get you started!

- **Dust off your resume.** This is a great time to review and revamp your resume. Dedicate the time to crafting an updated resume and highlighting key contributions.
- **Get online.** Joining online Networking sites, such as LinkedIn, is a great way to get started. LinkedIn is a professional network, and can act as your online resume. Search for contacts with whom you have a solid work relationship. When appropriate, you can ask for an endorsement or recommendation. Spend time creating your profile. Ensure that all your information is up to date, and that your most recent resume is available to view.
- **Volunteer.** Being unemployed can feel isolating. Volunteering is a way to meet others and stay socially engaged. It can also offer much needed emotional support and encouragement. No matter what your situation, volunteering can be a great networking tool – it is another way to make new contacts and expand your network.
- **Join Professional groups and reach out to your contacts.** There are many professional groups that welcome new members. Be sure to research if you could volunteer for a committee chair or member position in your professional organization. You can also seek out community groups as well as join LinkedIn groups. Reach out to former supervisors or managers. Contact your references, family, friends and former co-workers. You most likely know more people than you think!
- **Make your own business cards.** Keep them with you at all times! You can use them when attending networking events or when you are speaking with someone who is a potential contact. You can include your LinkedIn or Twitter ID – just ensure that they look professional.
- **Focus on building relationships.** Be authentic and considerate. When you are networking, you need to keep in mind that you should be asking for advice and cultivating a relationship – not asking for a job. Let someone know that you admire the company they work for or the position they hold and ask if they would be open to scheduling an informal meeting or getting together for coffee.
- **Be dedicated and be patient.** Building a network does not happen overnight. If you are struggling to get motivated, feeling frustrated, or if you are having difficulty getting motivated, speak to close friends, relatives or trained job-search professionals who can help you. Be patient and persevere. This can be a difficult time, and it is important to remember to take care of yourself.

Best Practices for Writing a Resume

What is a Resume?

A resume provides a brief snapshot of the skills and experiences that you possess relevant to the job for which you are applying. The point of a resume is to demonstrate that you are likely to be a high performer at the new job and entice the employer to invite you for an interview.

Tailoring Your Resume

It is crucial to tailor your resume to the job for which you are applying. This can be time consuming and labor intensive. You might want to create a separate resume “type” for each industry or type of position that you are seeking.

Time is of the Essence

Generally speaking, you only have about 30 seconds to impress a recruiter or prospective employer with your resume, so it must be concise. One page is ideal, no more than two pages. Your resume should also be well-formatted and must convince the reader that you are worth interviewing.

Steps of Resume Development

- Analyze the Job Description
 - a. Thoroughly review the job description for the position you are seeking. Highlight key words which indicate required skills and qualifications. Use similar words on your resume.
- Generate a List of Experience and Accomplishments
 - a. Make a list of your experience and accomplishments. Include things that you enjoy doing, have done well, and are proud of. You can include anything from educational accomplishments, jobs or volunteer experience. Focus on the results of your efforts.
- Identify Relevant Skill Areas
 - a. Describe and order your experiences so that they focus on skills and achievements that are relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- Format your Resume
 - a. Include your contact information at the top of your resume. Be sure to include your name, current address, phone number and email address. You might want to make your name stand out by making the text larger, or bolding the font.
 - b. List your experience in reverse chronological order – from most recent to least recent.
 - i. Start with your work history and end by listing your educational background.
 - c. References: Include 3-5 professional references on a separate page. The most effective references are those of current and former employers and your supervisors. List names, titles and contact information.

Best Practices for Writing a Resume (continued)

Resume Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Tailor your resume to the specific position for which you are applying.
- Use readable fonts.
- Be specific and quantify whenever possible.
- Proofread multiple times for proper grammar, spelling, etc.
- Be consistent with formatting.
- Pay close attention to verb tenses in your bullet points.
- Keep your resume to one page, two at the most.
- Focus on specific results of your work, achievements and recognition received.
- Use action verbs to describe your experience

Don't

- Use resume templates from word processing programs.
- Use complete sentences.
- Use phrases such as "Responsibilities included."
- Include personal information such as a photo, social security number, age or nation of origin.
- List unrelated, minor duties (such as opened mail, made copies, etc.)
- Lie or exaggerate on your resume.
- Use paragraphs.

Resume Checklist

- Is your name and contact information at the top of the page?
- Is your resume pleasing to the eye? Is the font readable? Can an employer learn about you with a 30-second glance?
- Did you tailor your resume to the position for which you are applying?
- Is your experience listed in reverse chronological order?
- Do most phrases begin with action verbs?
- Is your resume accurate and truthful?
- Have you proof-read multiple times?
- If you were the employer, would you call you for an interview?

Best Practices for Writing a Cover Letter

What is a cover letter?

The cover letter is a supplement to the resume and affords you the opportunity to: expand on some items in your resume, discuss your motivation for seeking employment in that industry, field, organization or company and explain why you would be a great fit for that position. The cover letter also serves as a de facto sample of your written communication skills. As with any piece of writing, think carefully about your audience and what kind of evidence or argument might persuade them to contact you. Every piece of information on your cover letter should speak directly to the position announcement.

- Write a different cover letter for each position for which you are applying.
- Include specific information about why you want to work for the employer. Show that your goals are aligned with the position.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the position.
- Proofread for typos.

Cover Letter Structure

First Paragraph: Briefly introduce yourself. This paragraph should not be more than 4 sentences. Give the reader a quick review of your most relevant skills and abilities and why you want to work for them.

Key questions the reader will be asking here:

- Why are you writing?
- Who are you and what are you doing now?
- Why are you specifically interested in this position and company/organization?

Second & third paragraphs: Think about your audience. How can you convince them that you would be an asset to their team? Illustrate as much as possible by providing specific examples and relevant details.

Key questions you should address here:

- How did you develop the relevant skills that this position requires?
- How have you been successful in achieving your goals?
- Why should I hire you?
- What makes you more valuable than other applicants?

Closing paragraph: Reiterate your interest in discussing the position. Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration. Make sure to include your contact information.



Best Practices for Interviewing

Job interviews are a chance for the employer to learn more about you and for you to learn more about the job, company, and organization. Employers use the interview to determine whether you are qualified for their open position, and whether you would be a good fit for their organization or unit. In interviews, it is your responsibility to show that you have the skills, knowledge, and experience for the job. Preparation and a great interview go hand in hand!

Preparing for an Interview

- **Research the organization and position.** This will help you to answer questions and stand out from candidates who are less prepared.
- **Compare your skills and qualifications to the job requirements and competencies.** Outline the skills, knowledge and abilities required.
- **Prepare responses.** Most interviews consist of resume-based and behavioral-based questions. Practice ‘telling your story’ in the best way possible. Be prepared to discuss your work experience.
- **Practice!** What are the crucial facts about yourself that you want to be sure the interviewer knows? How do you think your prior experiences and skills relate to this job? Don’t memorize your answers so they come out rehearsed, but have a clear idea of what you are going to say.
- **Follow up.** Write down any questions you may have so you can ask them at the end of the interview. Make sure that the questions are relevant – do not ask for information that can easily be found on the organization’s website.
- **Plan what to wear.** What you choose to wear to an interview is crucial. Dress to impress! Whether it is business casual or conservative, use good judgment. Make sure that your clothes are neat and wrinkle free.
- **What to bring.** Plan on bringing extra copies of your resume. You may be meeting with more than one interviewer.

Types of Interviews

Telephone Interviews

Employers frequently use telephone interviews to determine whether or not you should be interviewed in person. Always be professional when you answer the phone because you never know when an employer may call. Your voice mail should play a professional-sounding message.

- **Treat phone interviews as in-person interviews.** Be articulate, polished and poised. If you treat the situation casually just because the interviewer cannot see you, that will come across in the conversation, even if you do not realize it.
- **Take the time to prepare as if you were interviewing in person.** Have cue cards with your accomplishments ready, as well as your resume. Make sure that you are in a quiet place, and that there are no distractions. Interviewers are able to hear background noise and no employer wants to hear shuffling papers.
- **If possible, do not use a cell phone.** This will ensure the quality of the conversation and that there are no dropped calls.



Best Practices for Interviewing (continued)

In Person Interviews

In person interviews can range from short interviews to elaborate events with multiple interviewers. You need to be prepared for anything and everything. When you interact with the organization's employees, be polite to everyone from the receptionist to upper-level managers. You will be watched and evaluated throughout your visit. Allow enough time to arrive a few minutes early. It is ok to be 10-15 minutes early, but no more than that. Have the interviewer's contact information in case you get lost or are running late.

Interviews via Video

Many employers are now using video technology for interviews. This may happen in lieu of an initial phone interview, or in place of an in-person interview. Download the program (often SKYPE) a few days prior to your interview and create a profession username. Start using it to understand how the program works and what the different features do. Some important tips are:

- Make sure your microphone and webcam are in working order.
- Make sure you have a strong internet connection.
- Look around the room where you will be interviewing. You will want to make sure that there aren't any distracting objects behind you.
- Turn off ringers on cell phones or home phone. You may want to close any open windows so that there is no background noise.
- As is the case with all interviews, make sure that you are dressed professionally. This should be treated the same as an in-person interview.
- Keep good posture and avoid fidgeting or looking around the room – act as you would if you were in the person's office. Make sure to look at the camera during the interview and not at the interviewer's face, which would cause you to look down.

Following Up

You have made it through the interview process, and are now waiting to know the outcome. Shortly after the interview, compose a concise email or note to let the interviewing committee know you value their time and are still interested in the position. Start with a quick thank you, then mention a specific moment from the interview – this is a great way to highlight a high point from the interview. Ensure that you take the time to double check your grammar and spelling. If you have been given a timeline for the second round of interviews, it is acceptable to follow up to politely ask for an update. If you were not given a timeline, you can also send a follow up email after two weeks to reiterate your interest in the position, and to ask if there is any information available in regards to timelines.

Always remember – do not be impatient or demanding if you have not heard anything back after the employer's own timeline has passed. You may be frustrated, but do not let it show in your communication. If you have sent a thank-you email or note and followed up a second time – now is the time to wait. Do not send multiple emails or make phone calls. This method may not be looked upon as favorable by the hiring team.



Best Practices for Applying on UChicago Jobs

The University of Chicago does not accept resumes/cover letters via email or U.S Mail. In order to be considered for a posted position, you will need to visit our job website at <https://jobopportunities.uchicago.edu>. UChicago Jobs is an electronic employment system designed to make the employment application process more efficient and accessible.

The system is very user-friendly and allows you to create/edit your employment profile, apply for specific jobs, attach resumes, and track the status of jobs for which you have applied. Applications can be submitted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from wherever you have Internet access. All data submitted via this site is secure and encrypted using Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology. SSL protects information as it crosses the Internet.

For a tutorial on applying for jobs using the system, you may view a 15-minute online training module at <http://humanresources.uchicago.edu/training/videos/UChicagoJobs/>

How to Apply:

- **Go Online.** View the UChicago Jobs employment site by going to <http://jobs.uchicago.edu> and click on Job Opportunities.
- **Create a Profile.** Create a profile that can be used to apply for both regular employment (benefits eligible and non-benefits eligible) and temporary employment. Enter a unique username and password of your choosing. You will use this same profile to apply for future employment opportunities, so be sure to make note of the username and password.
- **Search for Jobs.** Search all current openings for regular employment. Be sure to thoroughly review the job description, including the education and experience requirements.
- **Apply.** Apply for any job for which you meet the minimum qualifications. You will have the option to add a resume, cover letter and other supporting documents. You may also be asked several questions as part of the application process. **Please ensure that you confirm that you are uploading the correct materials. Once you have submitted your application you cannot make any additional changes.** When you apply, your application and documents will go directly to the Hiring Manager for that position. Once you have completed the application process in full, you will receive a confirmation email.
- **Manage Jobs.** Check the status of all jobs for which you have applied using the 'Manage Jobs' option. Please understand that reviewing applications takes time, anywhere from three weeks to three months. If the status is listed as 'In Process', it means that you are still being considered and no other applicant has been selected. The status will change to 'Not Selected' when the department has decided to pursue other candidates.
- **Log In/Log Out.** Log in using your username and password. Log out every time you leave the site; if there is no activity after sixty minutes, the system will automatically log you out.