

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS / CONCERNS ABOUT JOB SEARCHING

I don't know what I want to do!

This isn't a character flaw—it means you need to start doing some work to explore and clarify your goals. “Knowing what you want to do” isn't something that happens magically or only to people who are very decisive. And “knowing what you want to do” doesn't necessarily have to be a specific and defined job title—approaching it that way can be paralyzing.

What should I do first?

Devote some time to the following

1. reflecting—taking time to think about what you like, what your interests are, what your strengths are
2. experimenting—in addition to reflecting on these things, you also want to test out your ideas; volunteering, interning, and job shadowing are all part of testing the waters.
3. networking—any job fair or alumni event you attend is an opportunity to chat with practitioners and to expand your network.

When should I start looking for a job?

“Looking for a job” is really something you're doing right now and throughout your time at Penn State—remember that it's a process. Completing an internship, participating in an externship, developing relationships with faculty, talking to alums about their jobs, asking questions—all of these activities are part of the job searching process. So, looking for a job isn't something you suddenly start doing by a specific date.

But when should I start sending out résumés and filling out applications?

Because many agencies have slow hiring processes which sometimes involve testing, you can plan on starting your applications at the beginning of the semester in which you intend to graduate—and you'll probably continue to send out these items throughout the semester and after you graduate.

Where should I look for jobs? How will I find out about them?

You won't want to look in any one place—you'll want to try as many different means of finding out about job opportunities as you can. Use the Web, internship contacts, go to Career Services, attend job fairs, etc.

I've sent out 100 résumés and no one has contacted me!

Try to let go of that passive mentality; you should plan to follow up with any agencies you contact—to make sure that they received your information, to see if there's anything else they need from you, to find out more about their hiring time-table, and to emphasize your continued interest in employment.

