

KEYS TO SUCCESS

CONDUCTING A JOB SEARCH



Lebanon Valley College

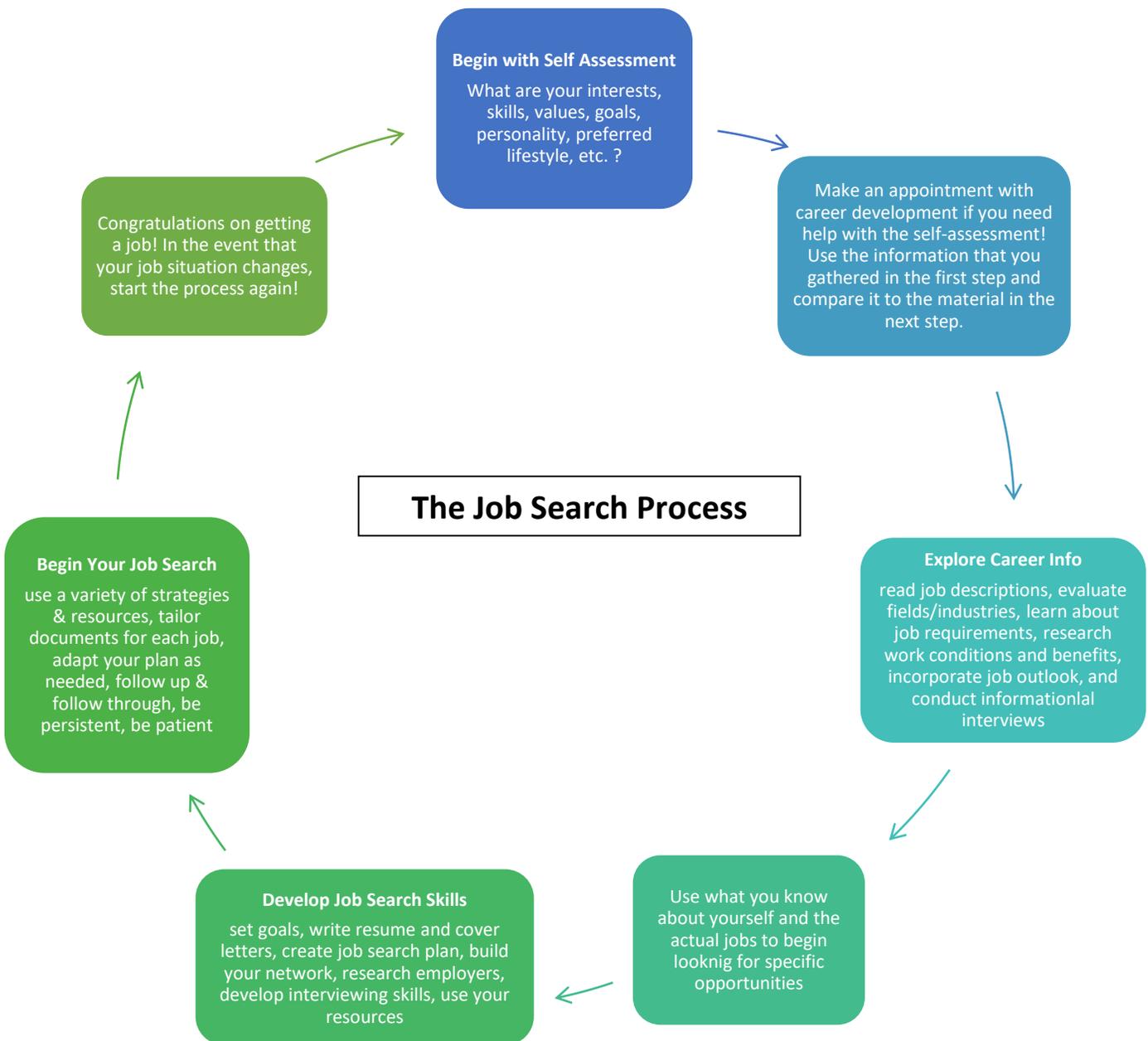
EDWARD AND LYNN BREEN
CENTER FOR GRADUATE SUCCESS

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Beginning Your Job Search

It is the case now more than ever before - candidates looking for jobs and employers seeking candidates find each other in a variety of ways. Starting a job search can be overwhelming, and a comprehensive job search should utilize as many strategies as possible and include resources that are unique to one's career field of interest. No matter what your plans or ideas are, it is very important to get organized. If you aren't sure what kind of jobs you may be interested in, you may need to start with the basics: What are your interests and skills? What geographic areas are of interest to you? Too broad of a search can often make the process seem daunting, and you will find it helpful to develop a job search process which is as broad as possible, while eliminating positions, job tasks, and locations that are not of interest. One key element of a successful job search? Time. You must make time to research and develop plans.



Learn Through Resources

Learn about careers through an informational interview. This is one of the best ways to learn about a specific job or organization. Talk with an LVC alumni or local employer working in a career field that interests you. You can also connect with alumni employers on LinkedIn. Prior to the interview, learn about the organization by visiting their website. The appointment should last no longer than 30-45 minutes, and make the time and location convenient to the professional. You can also suggest phone, email, or skype interviews.

Learn how to research an employer. A key element to a successful interview is communicating how your qualifications meet the employer's needs. Familiarize yourself with the field, the employer, and the position. Online resources are available:

- Handshake: vc.joinhandshake.com
- Links on the Edward and Lynn Breen Center for Graduate Success website
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <https://www.bls.gov/home.htm>
- O*Net: <http://online.onetcenter.org>
- Company/Organization specific websites
- Social Media- begin following companies and organizations through Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn
 - *Note: Be sure your own social media profiles are professional before you connect with employers!*

How Should I Search for Opportunities

- Lebanon Valley College's professional network on LinkedIn
- Job Search Websites
- Location-specific resources

Gain Experience. Seek an internship or job shadowing opportunity. Participate in volunteer, community service, undergraduate research, study abroad, and leadership positions within campus organizations to help you gain an understanding about a career field.

- Find opportunities for jobs and internships on Handshake. Access Handshake through MyLVC or the Breen Center's website. Upon initial login, be sure to update your personal profile, update your GPA and major information, and upload your resume. You can also use the employer information to identify and follow specific employers.

Strategies for Success

- **Stay organized.** There are a lot of jobs out there. You must be willing to take chances and look at all options. Don't just look for a job, look at supply and demand stats, salary information, etc.
- **Be competitive.** There are many college graduates looking for positions just like you are. Keep your resume and cover letter up to date and perfect. Be sure to tailor your documents for each position. What sets you apart from the rest of the applicants?
- **Use multiple job search strategies.** There is no one way to approach a job search that is better than another. Stay open to opportunities and industries. The best tactics are the ones that work best for you. Attend career and job fairs, employer information sessions, on-campus interviews, etc.
- **Network.** Connect with personal contacts, family, friends, colleagues, classmates, alumni, and former employers, anyone you know!

- **Maintain a positive attitude.** Don't become discouraged if you are not being contacted for interviews or if you have been rejected for a position. Be positive, persistent, and confident! The job search requires a lot of patience and hard work- if you believe you are going to find a job, you are more likely to find one!
- **There is more to the job search than just sending out resumes.** Responding to job postings will be just one portion of your search. It includes self-assessment, learning about careers and employers, and talking with professionals. Research salary information and supply and demand statistics. Don't just look for a job. Visit industry specific websites and publications and take some time to consider the vast opportunities for your career.
- **Utilize the Breen Center for Graduate Success.** Attend our presentations and workshops. Ask us to critique your resume and cover letter, schedule a mock interview, arrange a meeting to discuss networking and building a LinkedIn profile, etc. See the additional Keys to Success Guidebooks for resources on these topics.

Pros and Cons of Different Job Search Methods

Method	Pros	Cons
On campus recruiting	Easy & convenient because employers come to campus looking for employees or interns	Not every industry or employer uses on campus interviews to hire. It is associated with specific deadlines.
Handshake	Employers list positions specifically for LVC students. Access to both local and national companies.	Not every industry, job field, or employer is represented.
Job Listings Online (Monster, CareerBuilder, indeed.com, etc.)	Some organizations still use this method to post jobs, particularly small companies.	Not every industry or job type is represented. Legitimacy of position/employer is often a concern. Entry level positions are often not listed. Patience is required to navigate the site.
Job Listings in Print	You'll find some positions that aren't posted online.	Not as convenient as viewing jobs online.
Career Fairs	Speak with many employers at one time and in one place. A variety of career fields/industries represented. Oftentimes, employers consider a variety of majors.	First impressions are important. Must be willing to approach employers. You may be focusing more on the industry rather than specific open positions.
Networking	Number one reason job seekers nationwide find positions. Many job openings are never advertised; networking is how they are found.	Takes time, energy, effort, and motivation. Requires confidence to approach and speak with professionals.
Posting Your Resume Online	It doesn't hurt to get your resume out where it can possibly be seen by employers.	Passive job search method where you wait to be contacted. If your qualifications are in demand, you may be contacted more than you want.
Professional Associations	Networking while keeping aware of the latest in your career field.	Membership dues can get expensive. It is best to join as a student because national conferences can be costly.
LinkedIn	Social networking for professionals. Contacts to obtain job leads. Recruiters use LinkedIn to identify potential candidates. Job search functionality.	Students may have a limited network of professionals. Takes time to build connections with employers/companies.

Keeping Track of Your Applications

In order for you to be successful in the job search, it is important that you keep track of the companies you have contacted, the positions for which you applied, and when you made those connections.

Here is a sample of the information that you will want to track. Whether you use a table, spreadsheet, notebook, or your calendar, you need to track your job search process

Job Title	Company	Contact Name/Title	Email	Phone	Website	Date Submitted	How I found the job	Follow up call/contact	Interview?	Status of application	Comments

Making the Most of Internship & Job Fairs

Why Attend a Fair?

- Increase your chances of securing an interview
- Expand your network of contacts and get your resume out there!
- Investigate potential career fields
- Learn more about employers and what they want in their candidates
- Take advantage of so many employers under one roof!

What to Expect

- Employers expect candidates to be prepared (professionally dressed, ask thoughtful questions, have a polished resume, and know about the organization)
- Most recruiters are not authorized to hire candidates the day of the fair...your goal should be to meet recruiters and get your resume around
- Employers enjoy career fairs because they get to meet many candidates in one day. You have a short time to sell yourself and make a positive impression.

Before a Fair

- Prepare your resume (have it reviewed by Breen Center staff) and make plenty of copies on resume paper. A cover letter is not necessary
- Learn to sell yourself. Create your elevator speech, including a firm handshake and introduction, and a brief summary of your experiences, education, and strengths- be sure to practice!
- Research the organizations' websites
- Prepare questions to ask, and be ready to answer common interview questions

During a Fair

- Target/prioritize those employers with whom you want to meet and plan to approach them after you build some confidence by speaking with one or two employers who are not at the top of your list. Practice on these employers to work out your nerves before approaching your first choices
- Be confident, persistent, and patient. You may experience long lines.

- Introduce yourself and offer a firm handshake. Maintain good eye contact during your elevator speech and listen attentively during the conversation
- Be aware of your non-verbal communication- don't fidget, play with your hair, etc.
- Offer your resume last and collect business cards for follow up

After a Fair

- Follow up is essential-send thank you letters to employers
- Observe the follow up procedures suggested by employers, if applicable
- Write down notes about conversations from the day for future reference

Things to Remember

- A recruiter's address does not tell you the location of the position. If you are looking for a job in another state, the recruiter can put you in touch with a recruiter from that state
- Speak with the recruiter even if they didn't specifically request your major. New positions open frequently and it is possible that they had a position become available after they initially registered

Networking

What is it and why is it important? Networking is the least understood but most effective job strategy. It is a vague term and hard to define because it has so many different forms. Still, professionals will tell you that networking is one of the most effective tools that you can employ in your job search.

What is networking?

Just what does it mean when someone says you need to network? Networking is the process of developing a list/collection of people you can call on for help with various aspects of your job search. Your network should include people who are willing to give you information about their specific career field(s) and people who can give you information about job opportunities within their organization. Your network should also include people who can refer you to others within the profession who can give you additional information.

How difficult is it to network?

Networking is something that you have been doing for a long time, but never thought about it as networking. Have you ever asked a classmate if they knew of any good place to eat in the city? If so, you are networking. When you ask people in the residence halls for the best professor when selecting your course sections, you are networking! Networking is tapping into your connections for helpful information and advice. So you **do** have experience networking, now you need to reframe it and place it in the context of the job search.

How important is networking?

In the current economic environment, employers will tell you that they receive hundreds of unsolicited resumes each month. How can your resume stand out from the crowd? Networking can help in that you can refer to an individual in your cover letter- thus giving your resume some added advantage. In other instances, your contacts may give you information about positions that have not even been posted. This give you a head start on your application process. There may be an occasion when one of your contacts will even call on your behalf and encourage an employer to give you some additional consideration.

Another important aspect of networking is that you can gain valuable insight into a profession. Learn the pros/cons of a specific career field, job function, or employer. Learn from your network how they started their career and the steps is to get to their current position. Networking can be a valuable asset to you as you decide what it is that you want to do.

Utilize the Breen Center- attend presentations, workshops, fairs, Pizza with Professionals, etc. Schedule an appointment to discuss networking tips and to conduct a mock interview to practice your elevator speech. Make time to attend employer info tables and sessions.

Want more information? Review the
Networking: Key to Success Guidebook
for more tips and strategies on Networking!

Utilizing Social Media

When utilized correctly, social media can be an integral part of networking and the job search. The following platforms each offer a unique way to connect professionally with others while developing your brand.

LinkedIn. The most popular international networking resource! Utilize LinkedIn to connect professionally with others in your field of interest, join professional groups (including the *Lebanon Valley College Professional Network*), follow companies, and search for jobs. You can also search by college and student/alumni groups. Find more tips on the Breen Center’s website under *resources for students*.

Twitter. In addition to connecting you with others in your field, this platform can provide you with access to a wealth of information from industry experts. Twitter also has a fantastic way to view job postings, as over a million job openings are tweeted each month. When using Twitter, it is recommended that your “160me” be professional in nature. Your Twitter profile should include a link to your LinkedIn profile. All of your tweets should primarily be about items that relate to your field of interest, and should make optimal use of hashtags and retweets. A final recommendation is to follow people on Twitter who you would like to know you, such as industry leaders or human resources representatives.

Facebook. Before you begin to utilize the Facebook network professionally, be sure ALL of your postings, pictures, and updates are appropriate. Some effective ways to use Facebook when networking include: linking your blog or website to your Facebook page, reminding others of your job search status through your status updates, and/or posting a professionally-written note about your current career situation onto your profile.

Job Vacancies Outside of the Area

How do you find employment information when you don’t live near the place you want to work? There are several ways for you to find out about vacancies in other states or countries

- Handshake. Employers on a national and global level are able to post jobs to students and alumni of LVC
- Job fairs in that area
- Professional associations
- Online newspapers
- LVC Alumni in that area
- A simple google search of employers/job opportunities in that area

Email Correspondence

Email can be a powerful tool and is often the preferred method of communication between candidate and employer. When you are communicating with prospective employers, there is no such thing as inconsequential communication. If you are sloppy and careless, a seemingly trivial communication will stick out like a sore thumb.

Follow these general guidelines when emailing cover letters, resumes, thank-you notes, and replies to various requests for information:

- Use a meaningful subject header-one that is appropriate to the topic and includes your name
- Address recipient as Mr., Ms., or Dr., and always verify the correct spelling!
- Be brief in your communications. Do not overload them with too many questions
- Do not use emoticons, strange fonts, wallpapers, or multicolored backgrounds
- Stick to a standard font like Arial or Calibri, 12-point font
- Sign your email with your full name and contact information
- Avoid using slang, be sure to proofread spelling and grammar, and use a professional tone

Sample Letters

Sample Letter of Acceptance

December 20, 20XX
Ms. Jane Smith
President
XYZ Company
123 Main Street
Annville, PA 17003

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am happy to accept your offer to join the XYZ Company in the Actuarial Department as an intern. I appreciate your assistance with my relocation questions. Your help will make my move and transition to the Washington D.C. area a smooth one.

As we discussed, I will report to the office on Monday, August 1. I look forward to making a positive contribution to the audit department at XYZ Company.

Sincerely,

LVC Student

LVC Student
555 Main Street
Annville, PA 17003
717.555.XXXX
student@lvc.edu

Sample Letter of Decline

December 20, 20XX
Ms. Jane Smith
President
XYZ Company
123 Main Street
Annville, PA 17003

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for your offer for the position of staff accountant with XYZ Company in the Actuarial Department.

After much consideration, however, I have decided to accept a similar position with another firm. I believe this position will better fit my long term goals and interest in pursuing an advanced degree.

I want to thank you again for the time you spent with me during my office visit last month. I appreciate your interest in me and I enjoyed learning more about XYZ Company.

Sincerely,

LVC Student

LVC Student
555 Main Street
Annville, PA 17003
717.555.XXXX
student@lvc.edu

Job Search Strategies Worksheet

As you begin the job search, take time at the beginning to consider the requirements for the position, such as location, industry, and timeline. We recommend that you plan your job search timeline with the help of a staff member in the Breen Center, so we have included a worksheet below to help you get started.

Major: _____

Desired Location(s): _____

Job Focus: (Be specific- marketing intern, math teacher, accounting industry, etc.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Desired Employment Date: _____

Number of hours per week dedicated to job search: _____

Search Strategy # 1: (ex: **run and save** a search in Handshake for the type of job and location you are seeking)

Search Strategy #2: (ex: make **networking connections** on LinkedIn, join LVC's alumni group, and register for a networking event)

Search Strategy #3: (ex: use **industry specific search sites** to locate positions)

Job Search Online Presence Self-Audit

Use the questionnaire below to “check” your online presence to ensure that you are presenting yourself in the best way possible to impress an employer.

What is the email address you use on your resume? _____

This email is:

- Permanent
- Expires at some point in the future

In your opinion, this address is:

- Professional
- Funny

Google Yourself

How often have you used a search engine to see what information about you is available on the internet?

- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Once
- Never

After you googled yourself, were you comfortable with what you found?

- Yes
- No

Do you belong to a social networking site (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, etc.)

- Yes
- No

For each site that you belong to, would you be comfortable if an employer were to see your...

Circle your answer

Profile?	Definitely	Give me an hour	Employers check Social Media?!
Pictures/Videos?	Definitely	Give me an hour	Employers check Social Media?!
Groups?	Definitely	Give me an hour	Employers check Social Media?!
Friends' Comments?	Definitely	Give me an hour	Employers check Social Media?!
Tagged Items?	Definitely	Give me an hour	Employers check Social Media?!

Do you have a resume posted on any of these career websites?

- Handshake
- Indeed.com
- CareerBuilder
- Other: _____

For each place that you have it posted, are you familiar with the site's privacy policy?

- Yes

- No
- I don't know (if you answered "no", circle the sites for which you are unfamiliar with the privacy policy)

Do you belong to any student organizations or professional associations/groups?

- Yes
- No

Have any of these groups posted your resume on their sites?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

If you have your own website or blog, would you be comfortable if a potential employer read its content?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever discussed a company, interview, job, etc. on your blog, website, or social media profile?

- Yes
- No

Do you follow the "If you wouldn't want to read about it in the front pages of the newspaper, don't put it in an email" rule?

- Yes
- No

Based on your answers above, are you comfortable with the image of yourself that you are projecting through the internet?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "No", think about the steps that you plan to take to increase your level of comfort with your personal internet presence? First, consider the areas (Google, posted resumes, social networking sites, etc.) where you have identified potential problems.

- What could you fix immediately?
- What is going to take some research?
- What might take ongoing maintenance?
- Is there anything that you would like to discuss with a staff in the Breen Center?

Goals and Steps

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Sample Job Search Plan

What have you completed/prepared? (Check all that apply)

- Resume/Cover Letter
- 30-second Elevator Speech
- LinkedIn Profile
- Audit of Social Media Accounts
- Mock Interview
- List of Target Companies

What do you want to do? What is important to you?

Industries of Interest (*what type of company*)

Job Function (*what type of work within the industry*)

Targeted Geographic Location(s)

Most Important Workplace Values

What do you need to get there?

What specific skills do you possess that this type of employer is seeking? What skills are you lacking?

What specific experiences do you have? Which experiences are you lacking?

Who do you know that work in or has connections to the fields you are interested in?

Have you practiced articulating your interest, experiences, and skills in an interview setting?

Obstacle Assessment: Assess yourself in each of these areas-what is going well? What is challenging?

Time Management

Motivation

Other

Confidence

Expectations of Others

Rating of High/Medium/Low

Next Steps

Actions

Resources

Common Obstacles Job Seekers May Face

1. You are sending out a large number of resumes, but have not received one phone call back or an invitation for an interview.
 - a. **What may be the problem?** Your resume or cover letter may need some updating. These documents create the first impression that an employer has of you, so it is crucial that they are perfect and error free. It is important to ensure that your documents are tailored to the position for which you are applying and that your skills and experience are relevant to the job responsibilities.
 - b. **How do I fix it?** Have your resume and cover letter reviewed by staff in the Breen Center.
2. You are getting invited to interviews, but are not receiving any job offers.
 - a. **What may be the problem?** Focus on strengthening your interviewing skills. Practice using Big Interview or by scheduling a mock interview appointment with a staff member in the Breen Center. Be sure that you are doing extensive research on the company, providing detailed examples of your skills and abilities, and demonstrating professionalism throughout the entire interview.
 - b. **How do I fix it?** Schedule a mock interview appointment with a staff member in the Breen Center to practice your skills. You can also practice by using Big Interview, recording your mock interviews, and sending them to career development for a critique.
3. You had a phone interview with a recruiter, but did not receive an invitation for a second interview.
 - a. **What may be the problem?** Phone interviews are challenging. Focus on practicing your telephone conversation skills. Be sure to monitor the pitch and tone of your voice.
 - b. **How do I fix it?** Dress professionally and smile during phone interviews, it will make you sound confident and alert. Be sure to arrange a place where there is no background noise and refrain from using speakerphone to reduce echoing.
4. You are attending many job fairs, but are not hearing back from any recruiters.
 - a. **What may be the problem?** You may need to enhance your elevator speech. Other factors may be your resume, your appearance, or lack of follow up after the fair.
 - b. **How do I fix it?** Talk with a staff member in career development about how to successfully navigate a job fair. Review the “Making the Most of Internship and Job Fairs” section of this guidebook.

When it comes to making the final decision about which job offer to accept, re-visit the **Job Search Process** chart at the beginning of this guidebook to evaluate the following: Does this offer meet many of the things you mentioned as interests and values? Are there adequate professional development and growth opportunities for you with this organization? Make an appointment with a staff member in the Breen Center to help you evaluate your options.

It is important to research salary prior to your job search so that you have realistic expectations of what your salary should be. How can you find the market rate salary range?

- [NACE Salary Calculator](#)
- www.glassdoor.com
- www.payscale.com
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics Wage Data](#)
- www.salary.com
- [Homefair Salary Calculator](#)

- [Salary and Benefits Survey Reports](#)
- Talk with friends, network contacts, professionals in the field, and other job seekers
- Talk with recruiters. They know what professionals with your experience and expertise are worth
- Make an appointment with a staff member in the Center for Career Development

In addition, it is advisable to research salary in relation to your location, as cost of living expenses impact how much an employer is willing to pay.

As you evaluate your offer consider whether or not you should negotiate your salary. To evaluate the salary you've been offered begin by using the [NACE salary calculator](#) to determine what a reasonable salary for your position, location, and experience would be. Next prepare a budget to determine your financial needs for the upcoming year.

Job Offers

Congratulations on being offered a position! Before you accept, there are several factors to consider. Some will weigh more heavily than others, but all should be considered.

Monetary considerations

- Starting salary
- Potential salary
- Benefits package
- Cost of living in that area

Geographic Considerations

- Location and community type and size
- Availability and cost of housing
- Cultural and recreational opportunities
- Proximity to family/friends

Job-Related Considerations

- Job responsibilities and on-the-job training
- Promotion and advancement potential
- Supervisor and co-workers
- Degree of autonomy and teamwork
- Quality of higher management
- Professional development and growth opportunity
- Support for continuing education
- Philosophy and reputation of the organization
- Stability of the organization/industry
- Evaluation of your work

Additional Tips

- If an offer is extended verbally, ask for the details in writing, including job title, start date, salary, location, and any other important information
- The teaching contract is a binding legal document between you and the school district, read it very carefully
- If anything appears vague, ask for clarification before accepting the offer
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is...investigate!
- Make your acceptance in writing, restating the important details
- If you are going to reject the offer, do so in writing as soon as possible, thanking them for the opportunity!

Lifestyle Considerations

- Working conditions
- Work schedule and travel requirements
- Commuting to work
- Social life and work/life balance
- Dress code