



**NORTHERN
ARIZONA**  **UNIVERSITY** | Career
Development

Job Search Strategies

A guide for Northern Arizona University
Students and Graduates

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Most degrees open doors to numerous industries and positions.

For example, with a degree in education, you could work in training and development for a large corporation, for an international non-governmental organization working on literacy initiatives, in private, public, or boarding schools, at a summer camp, as a wilderness instructor for a therapeutic program, as a content creator for an educational media company, as a study abroad program leader, or at an international school, among many other options.

Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. - Seneca

Don't be limited by a lack of awareness.

Research the full breadth of options available to you, so you can make an informed decision about the best fit for your professional interests, strengths, and values. Your next job might be one you've never considered, didn't know existed, or didn't know you qualified for!



Know Your Options

For a “big picture” view of many opportunities available to each major, use [What Can I Do with This Major?](#)

1. Select the box that most closely matches your degree.
2. Review the “Areas” to gather ideas for career paths, and identify keywords from the “Employer” column that stand out to you.

You can use these keywords to refine your results in a job search engine, discussed on page 11 of this guide.



Keep your job search in perspective.

Your first job out of college does *not* define your career.

On average, millennials are spending 2.2 years in a position before moving to a new one...frequently exploring different industries, roles, and responsibilities along the way.

When seeking a new position, look for an opportunity that will challenge you to grow professionally, build your network, and allow you to gain firsthand experience from which to compare your expectations with reality. From the self-awareness and knowledge you gain through each work experience, you'll become increasingly skilled in navigating towards jobs that match your strengths, interest, and needs in each phase of your life.

Enlightened trial and error outperforms the planning of flawless intellects- David Kelley

As frustrating as it can seem, your career path can rarely be planned out on paper, many years in advance. Instead, your career path becomes clear as you walk it, learning more about yourself and your opportunities from experiences and relationships built along the road.



Be realistic: Finding a job takes time, energy, and resilience.

How long it takes to find a job depends on many factors, including your major, industry you want to work in, and location. Often, finding your first full-time position out of college is not an easy or fast process; It's common to spend six months or more applying and interviewing before finding the right job.

Stay optimistic and resilient throughout your job search by continuing to build your skills and experience. During your search, you could:

- **Take a short class** to develop a technical skill that will be useful in your field. [Lynda.com](https://www.lynda.com) offers tutorials on most software programs.
- **Volunteer** for an organization that's related to the type of work you want to do. Your experiences can give you fresh stories to use in your interviews, and you might meet professionals who can encourage or advise you.
- **Take a temporary position** to gain experience and develop transferable skills in a professional setting. See page 13 for details.
- **Follow stories from your industry or field.** Stay current on issues related to your field of choice by reading industry blogs, journals, or newsletters. This information can be used to start conversations while networking or interviewing, to show you're a serious candidate.
- **Network.** Build your relationships with professionals in the fields that interest you by accessing your weak ties (pg. 7), performing informational interviews (pg. 7), and researching on LinkedIn (pg. 10). These conversations can introduce you to strategies for getting your foot in the door, and opportunities that have not been publicized elsewhere.

Use your network.

Throughout college, you've been developing a network that falls into two broad categories: strong ties, and weak ties.

Strong ties are people who know you well. You likely share the same groups of friends, gather information from the same sources, and have many overlapping interests. If you're having a bad day, it's probably a strong tie that you'll lean on for support. Interestingly, although this part of your network is great for encouragement, new opportunities don't generally come through these relationships.

Instead, it's the people whose lives overlap just slightly with yours, who spend time in communities you're not engaged in, with people you don't know, who can open doors to new opportunities. These are your "weak ties." Your parents' friends, your friends' parents, advisors, coworkers, and club members you haven't spent much time with might fall into this category.

Reach out to your network of both strong and weak ties. Keep them updated on your job search, while asking them to send leads your way. Additionally, your network may be able to introduce you to professionals who you can reach out to for informational interviews.





Do your research.

As a job seeker, it's important to be informed about the organizations you are applying to. Learning about the culture, employee satisfaction, history, challenges and current work of the organizations will help you decide if the organization could be a good fit.

Additionally, this research will inform your application materials, allowing you to personalize your resume and cover letter to the specific organization and tailor your interview responses to their current issues and initiatives.

"One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in the tree. 'Which road should I take?' she asked. His response was a question: 'Where do you want to go?' 'I don't know,' Alice answered. 'Then,' said the cat, 'it doesn't matter.'" – Alice in Wonderland

Use these resources to begin your research:

[Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com): Aggregates interview questions, company reviews, and salary ranges submitted by employees who work at, or have interviewed for, the organization.

Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration. —Thomas Edison



[Vault.com](https://www.vault.com): Provides reviews and rankings of industries, companies, and professions, and advice for recent graduates on how to be a competitive applicant in each one.

[LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com): Follow the pages and discussions of organizations you're interested in to learn up-to-date information about issues, culture, and important topics of the industry.

[OnetOnline.org](https://www.onetonline.org): Provides data on the anticipated growth trajectory of jobs and industries.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an online professional community of over 450 million members in over 200 countries, which strengthens and extends your existing network of trusted contacts.

Over 90% of hiring managers use LinkedIn to source job candidates. Your LinkedIn profile is the first result when your name is searched online, and if you apply for jobs through LinkedIn, is likely to be viewed by representatives of the organization.

Your profile is a significant piece of personal branding and should represent your "professional self" accurately. Take some time to make sure your experience, accomplishments, and career interests are clear. These tips will help you get started:

- [Build a Great Student or Recent Graduate Profile](#)
- [LinkedIn Profile Checklist](#)
- Include a professional headshot
- Ensure your profile is up to date with accomplishments, work history, and a summary like [Derrin](#)
- Ensure your work history matches the resume you are submitting for applications
- Link your profile to your online projects, portfolios, blogs, or other samples of high-quality work like [Carissa](#) and [Elle Luna](#)
- Join groups and participate in discussions that relate to your career interests

LinkedIn Resources

There are several ways you can use LinkedIn to search for positions.

Use [“The Student Job Hunting Handbook”](#) as a guide to kick-start your career. It is a series of guides broken up into specific sections for job searching.

Use the [LinkedIn students and recent graduates search engine](#) to find jobs and internships.

Use the [Alumni Finder](#) to locate and network with NAU graduates who work with the organizations you're interested in, or who have jobs that interest you. NAU alumni make great candidates for information interviews.

LinkedIn is a networking site, members expect to hear from students who are researching career paths and opportunities. So, don't be shy! [Learn how to communicate effectively on LinkedIn](#) and reach out!

LinkedIn offers multiple learning modules relative to your skills, industry or career path. Take a [LinkedIn Learning](#) class to build your transferable skills.

For additional resources on using LinkedIn, visit [LinkedIn University](#). You can request to join the [NAU Career LinkedIn](#) group, or learn more about using LinkedIn by reading [SmartAxeGuide to Careers](#) blog posts.



Job Search Engines

Job search engines locate and organize job openings. These search engines can be general or specialized to specific fields and industries. Narrow your search results by using keywords, such as job titles, field or industry, responsibilities, location, and “entry-level.”



- [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) Aggregates jobs found across the web
- [Idealist.org](https://www.idealist.org) Non-profit and non-governmental organization jobs and internships
- [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) Positions within the federal government
- [Handshake](https://www.handshake.com) Job search database accessible to NAU students and alumni
- [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com) Used both by individual’s seeking employment, and organizations seeking candidates
- [TheMuse.com](https://www.themuse.com) Beautifully designed website with positions across industries
- [Internships.com](https://www.internships.com) - Narrow your search to “entry level jobs” to find full-time positions

There are numerous field and population-specific search engines, such as [VetCentral](https://www.vetcentral.com) (jobs for veterans), [HigherEdJobs](https://www.higheredjobs.com) (higher education jobs), [CareerJet](https://www.careerjet.com) (international positions), and [Poached](https://www.poached.com) (restaurant jobs).

- To locate field or population-specific search engines, search online: Job Search Engine + your field or population of interest
- Use [WhatCanIDoWithThisMajor?](https://www.whatcanidowiththismajor.com) to identify other field-specific search engines, located in the bottom right column of every major-specific page.

Recruiting Agencies

Recruiting agencies act as an intermediary between organizations looking to employ someone and individuals looking for a job, sourcing candidates for the full-time or temporary job vacancies they've been asked to fill. Reputable recruiting agencies do not charge fees to the job-seeker, and often have in-depth information about the employers they work with to help you prepare for an interview. Some recruiting agencies require intake interviews and/or a reference check. Examples of recruiting agencies include:

- [Aerotek.com](https://www.aerotek.com) Nationwide jobs in multiple markets
- [StaffingFirst.net](https://www.staffingfirst.net) Healthcare positions in the Phoenix area
- [InFlightCrewConnections.com](https://www.inflightcrewconnections.com) Aviation positions nationwide
- For a list of award-winning staffing agencies, visit [BestofStaffing.com](https://www.bestofstaffing.com)

To locate field or location-specific recruiting agencies, search online: Recruiting Agencies + your field of interest, or location of interest.

Reputable agencies *do not* charge the job seeker for their services.





Temporary Staffing

“Temping” allows you to build your resume with professional, short-term jobs as you research and apply for career positions, while exploring industries and job functions. Some positions are “temporary to hire” based on performance, allowing the organization to learn about your work style before formally offering a position, and allowing you to experience the company firsthand before committing to a long-term role. Many temp agencies are local, or regional branches of a national chain. Examples of temping agencies include:

- [Hotfoot Recruiters](#)
- [KellyServices.com](#)
- [Performance Staffing](#)

To locate a temping agencies in your area, search online: Temporary Staffing + your city.

Reputable agencies *do not* charge the job seeker for their services.

Professional Associations

Professional associations are comprised of individuals from industries or very specific fields. For example, the American Society of Hematology includes over 15,000 members whose careers involve the research, care, education, or advocacy of blood diseases, while the International Parking Institute has a much smaller membership focused on transportation flow, land use for parking, and parking law enforcement.

These associations advance the interest of the professions they represent by hosting conferences, publishing journals, establishing and promoting best practices, credentialing members, and advocating for policy at a national level.

Professional organizations often maintain internal job boards, offer continuing education about the field through webinars and trainings, host networking events, and coordinate mentoring programs. Frequently, they waive or reduce membership and conference fees for students and recent grads. Participating in a professional association can expose you to the realities of working in that field, and help you develop a professional presence.

To locate professional associations:

- [WhatCanIDoWithThisMajor?](#) lists professional associations on the bottom of each major-specific page.
- Online Search: Professional Association + your field of interest



Corporate and Organization Websites

Visit the employment webpage of organizations that interest you to learn about job openings. Sometimes, jobs will post to the organization website before being picked up by a job aggregator (like Indeed.com).

Frequently, organizations will also share information about benefits online, allowing you to compare the full package of salary and benefits across employers who interest you.



Career Fairs

To connect with recruiters and learn about organizations, attend both on- and off-campus career fairs. Demonstrate that you're a serious candidate by dressing professionally, bringing copies of your resume, and introducing yourself to recruiters with your [elevator pitch](#) (A 30-second introduction about you, your interests, and what you want to do.) Collect recruiters' business cards from the organizations that interest you, and follow up with an email expressing your desire to learn more about opportunities they offer.

NAU hosts several departmental career fairs every semester as well as a general career fair, and participates in the Arizona Career Mixer in Phoenix in partnership with ASU and UofA. Check the [NAU Career Development Calendar](#) for dates. Additional career fairs include:

- [NationalCareerFairs.com](#): Nationwide career fairs
- [HireLive.com](#): Hosts career fairs across the country specializing in sales, retail, and management positions
- [Goodprospects.goodwill.org](#): Nationwide career fairs hosted by Goodwill
- [Goodwill AZ](#): Hiring events in Arizona hosted by Goodwill

To locate career fairs, search online: Career fair + location or industry



Social Media

With increasing frequency, social media is being used by employers to recruit, verify, and screen candidates. Review your online profiles with an employer's eye, removing photos and posts which might cast suspicion on your ability to act or communicate professionally, or represent an employer in a positive way.

In many jobs requiring interaction with the public, employers know that their clients will be googling the names of their employees, to find out if the company representative is someone they can trust. Therefore, it's in the organizations best interest to make sure your online presence reflects positively on their brand before offering you a position.

When using Facebook and Twitter in your job search:

- Inform and update your network about your search, encouraging them to send you leads
- "Like" or follow organizations that interest you professionally, and comment on their updates
- Share or retweet information that supports your personal brand
- Post about your job search activities
- Ensure that your profiles are up-to-date with your most recent accomplishments
- "Hide" news from friends who post unprofessional content

When not using Facebook in your job search:

- Set your privacy settings to "friends only," and do not allow friends to tag you in photos





Job Search Centers

You can access training, resources and leads through job search centers in your community. Some job search centers include:

CareerOneStop.org: Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, these career centers are located across the United States, offering training and resources for finding a job, skill and interest assessments, 1-on-1 career advising and group classes. Additionally, they host a robust website with tools and resources.

Goodwill Industries.org: This non-profit organization offers advising from career coaches, training in job search skills, resume development, and interviewing. Locate a branch near you through the website.

Coconino County Career Center: Locally-based job centers can offer connections and training in touch with the needs of community employers. Some centers, including this one, can potentially offer funding through the Workforce Investment Act.

Take in the whole picture

Getting a job offer is exciting. There are many factors that go into evaluating a job offer holistically to make sure that it matches with your interests, strengths, and values. Before accepting a position consider these questions.

What benefits are included? Sometimes, people will choose a position with a lower annual salary if the additional benefits of the position align with their needs and values. Be sure to include vacation time, relocation assistance, development programs, loan and/or tuition reimbursement, stock options, health insurance, and retirement plans in your decision-making. Throughout the hiring process, it is important to [Understand Total Compensation](#)

Can you expect to grow in this job? Is the pathway to promotions, or other positions within the organization, clear? What type of training and professional development is offered? Will you receive regular feedback and/or performance reviews, to develop your skills?

How stable is the organization, and industry it represents? Is a change in management likely, or major litigation which might impact your role or position? Does the organization have a reputation for adapting to changes in the market or new technology? Is the industry growing, or declining?

Negotiating an offer may be acceptable, depending on the organization



Negotiating and accepting an offer

If you are offered a position while pursuing multiple opportunities, you can let the other organizations know you have received an alternate offer, yet are still very interested in their organization. You can ask when they expect to make a hiring decision. This gives them the chance to accommodate your deadline if they are seriously considering you as a candidate. You can ask the organization offering you the position for time to consider; generally up to one week is acceptable.

Once you accept an offer, it is not professional to back out if another offer presents itself, so make sure you are fully committed. Contact other organizations you have been communicating with and politely decline their offers or withdraw your application from consideration.

Developing skills for [negotiating and accepting an offer](#) take time to develop, start now!





For a successful job search, remember to:

- Tailor your application materials to the job description, including both the resume and cover letter
- Follow up interviews with thank you emails or letters
- Create a file of jobs you've applied to, keeping electronic or paper copies of the job descriptions, so you can prepare for the interview if selected. (If hired, keeping a copy of the job description will allow you to evaluate that you are meeting the goals and objectives of the position.)
- Polish your interview skills by taking an [Interview Workshop](#) or scheduling a mock interview with NAU Career Development
- Polish your resume by taking a [Resume Workshop](#), participating in drop-in resume review hours, or scheduling a 1-on-1 resume review at NAU Career Development



Organize your job search:

The job search process has the potential to be exhausting. One of the main reasons students experience challenges during this time has to do with the organizational strategies they employ.

Some students neglect to record the name of the company contact, to save the job description they applied for, or to submit their materials on time. These small details can turn into big frustrations.

To avoid these challenges organize your job search. Using the following tips:

- **Increase your productivity:** Keep your application materials organized so you can refer back to them when applying to other jobs of a similar nature.
- **Eliminate stress:** Keep all contact information on hand and organized so you can easily locate names and position titles when communicating with that organization.
- **Maintain your motivation:** Track your progress in order to celebrate milestones and the hard work that you have put in.

How to organize your job search:

Organizing your job or internship search can be made easier by keeping all of your information in one place. Whether this is an excel sheet or a website, staying organized will help you keep track of where you have applied or where you plan on applying.

Here are some resources to help you organize job search:

- [Jibber Jobber.com](#) Import contacts, manage company information, and processes for the job search. The free version has video tutorials to help with organization and will store your information indefinitely.
- [Ever Note.com](#) Create notes in an online notebook and make different stacks like “Career Documents.” Store your resume, cover letter, references, and anything else you want. Tagging each note with keywords will make them easy to find.
- [Dropbox.com](#) Gain access to all of your information on multiple devices. Share documents with others without email and restore previous versions of documents if necessary.
- [Toodledo.com](#) Write long notes, make custom lists and create outlines. This will also sync with your Google accounts.
- [Job Search Excel Worksheet](#) Organize your job or internship search on this premade Excel document. **Download and save to your personal computer.**



Northern Arizona University Career Resources

NAU Career Development

(928) 523-1087

Career@nau.edu

Appointments are free for one year after graduation for all NAU students, then cost \$100/3 sessions.



Career Development Office at the Franke College of Business

Fcb-cdo@nau.edu

(928) 523-1291

Career Development Office at the College of Engineering, Forestry, and Natural Sciences

Cefnsacademic@nau.edu

928-523-3842

Elizabeth Glass, CEFNS Director of Career Development

(928) 523-5704

