



The Job Search Process



Stage 1: Establish a Career Objective

What are the three most important things you are looking for out of a job? Salary/benefits, mentorship, culture, future opportunities, telecommuting, travel, and stability are all areas to consider when thinking about what is most important to you. Take your current skills, values, and career interests into account. Also consider your previous experience, academic coursework, and extracurricular activities to help you inform your career objective. Contact us at careerservices@vmi.edu to get started.

Helpful online resources: [Vault](#) guides on different career fields and the assessments in [Focus2](#). Informational interviews with alumni or other contacts may also be helpful in creating a career objective.

Stage 2: Prepare Job Search Materials

Common job search documents include a [resume](#), [cover letter](#), and reference list. You will also want to update any social media (like [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), Facebook, and [Instagram](#)) and make sure that everything is professional.

Helpful online resources: [CareerShift](#) for storing documents and the [Vault](#) guides on resumes and cover letters.

Stage 3: Develop a Job Search Strategy

Identify locations, industries, and businesses that interest you and create a prioritized list of organizations. Pay attention to each company's mission statement, reputation, and work environment. Establishing a set of job search parameters along with your job search strategy will help you to reduce the amount of time you spend searching for jobs.

Helpful online resources: [Handshake](#), [CareerShift](#), and [Vault](#) to find potential employers. Researching online, through contacts, or attending networking events/ career fairs are important

steps to make sure that the organizations are the right fit, and networking now will be beneficial when it is time to secure an interview.

Stage 4: Apply for Positions

Set a goal to apply for a certain number of positions in a given day or week. Track your applications using an excel spreadsheet or Google Sheets. Include the name of the company, the position you applied for, the date, the job description, and a column for the date you will follow-up on the position. Also save a file with the materials used to apply for the position.

Helpful online resources: [Handshake](#), where employers interested in VMI cadets are posting jobs daily.

Stage 5: Secure an Interview

This is a step that may seem out of your control. Every 2 weeks take a look back at your applications and evaluate where you are in the job search process. Be sure to regularly check your email and phone messages. If you don't receive any interest in the first month, seek guidance from career services to evaluate and make changes to your job search strategy.

Stage 6: Interview for Positions

This is where stages 1-5 come together. Preparation is vital before your interview to help show that you are the best candidate for the position. This is also the time to further gauge if the opportunity is right for you.

Helpful online resources: Prepare for your interview using our [Interviewing Guide](#) and [STAR guide](#). [Vault](#) also offers guides on interviews and behavioral interview questions.

Stage 7: Receive and Evaluate an Offer of Employment

You may be in several job search processes at one time. When you receive an offer of employment, you should always take some time to review the offer to see if you should negotiate some of the terms. Be sure to not only consider the salary offered, but also location (cost of living, commute), benefits (insurance, leave time, retirement), and lifestyle (work/life balance, telecommuting).

Stage 8: Accept an Offer of Employment

The final step of the job search process is accepting an offer of employment. You may be asked to accept a verbal or written offer. If you are given a verbal offer, be sure to request a written offer as well. Make sure that it covers important details, including salary, start date, title, and any other negotiated details. Once you agree to accept an offer of employment, you should not continue your job search. Instead, you should actively work to remove yourself from other search processes. With an offer accepted, the employer is now counting on you to fill a role within their company. Remember to [thank](#) your references as well!