

Biochemistry Career Chat



Office of Career Development

Vassar College

Phone: 845-437-5285

Fax: 845-437-7257

Email: cdo@vassar.edu

<http://careers.vassar.edu>

Office Hours: Weekdays, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm and Wednesdays 7 – 9 pm

Steps In Choosing A Career

First Step: Self Assessment: “Know Thyself”

1. Understand and relate your personality traits to career choices
2. Define your personal values
3. Determine your economic needs
4. Explore longer-term goals
5. Understand your skill base
6. Identify your preferred skill base
7. Express a willingness to improve

Strategies for self-assessment may include meeting with a Career Counselor, taking interest inventories such as the Strong Interest Inventory or the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, or working through the exercises in any one of a number of books in the CDO library, including *What Color Is Your Parachute*.

Second Step: Research Career Options

Once you have established a base of self-knowledge, the next step is to create a knowledge base of opportunities available and begin the your interests to a career.

Strategies for researching career options include:

- Informational interviewing and networking with professionals in areas that may be of interest to you
- Talking with Vassar alumnae/i and utilizing V-NET
- Utilizing job listings through eRecruiting and in the CDO
- Surfing the Internet for career options and information—including Spotlight on Careers, CareerSearch, and Vault.com
- Participating in internships or job-shadowing experiences
- Scanning job listings for positions that sound interesting
- Joining and attending professional organizations or association meetings, conferences, and networking opportunities
- Reading trade journals

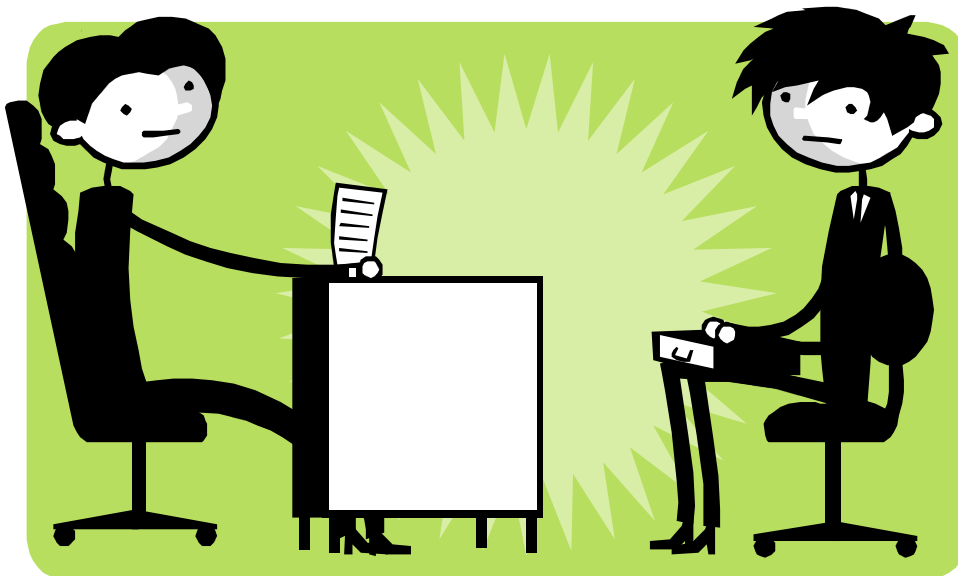
Next Step: Job Search

A job search involves:

- Creating a strong resume and cover letter
- Developing lists of contacts and target organizations
- Applying for positions
- Interviewing
- Doing follow-up

Career Counselors here at the CDO are ready and available to assist you through the entire process. The Career Development Office library and website also contain various handouts, books, articles, journals, etc. that could aid you in this process.

Job-hunting takes time and energy! This varies, of course, depending on the field, preparation, and dedication of the job seeker. Geographic flexibility also significantly impacts one's job search. Many occupations today require a college-educated individual who can write and speak well, solve problems, learn new information quickly and work well with others on a team. This means that college graduates use their education in a wide variety of fields, and your future career may relate more to your personal career interests, work values, and transferable skills than any specific academic major.



What About Graduate School?

<http://careers.vassar.edu/advice-graduate-school/>

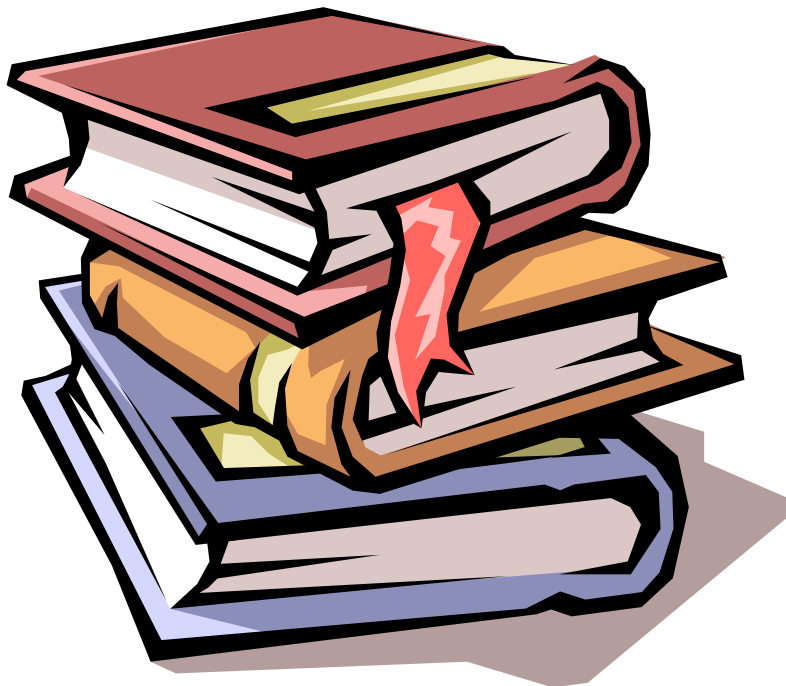
The reasons for continuing one's education in graduate school can be as varied and unique as the individual. Many continue their studies at an advanced level because they simply find it difficult to end the educational process. They love what they are learning; they want to learn more and continue their academic preparation. Others go on to graduate school for purely a practical reason: their area of interest requires an advanced degree.

It is important to carefully consider your reasons for going to graduate school. Graduate school involves additional time away from the employment market, a high degree of critical evaluation, significant autonomy as you pursue your studies, and a considerable financial expenditure. For some students in doctoral programs, there may be additional life choice issues, such as relationships, marriage, and parenthood that may present real challenges while in a program of study.

Think about the following questions when making this decision:

- Are you postponing tough decisions by going to school?
- Have you done some "hands-on" reality testing?
- Do you need an advanced degree to work in your field?
- Have you compared your expectations of what graduate school will do for you with what it has done for alumni of the program you are considering?
- Have you talked with people in your field to explore what you might be doing after graduate school?
- Are you excited by the idea of studying in the field you have in mind?

Graduate school is NOT a career choice—it is a tool to reach or advance your career goals. Be sure to ask yourself why you are going to graduate school and what you want to do with the degree.



Biochemistry Alumni Career Choices

Here is a sampling of the many career paths Vassar alumnae/i have pursued with their undergraduate degree in Biochemistry (may have pursued further education). Some of these career choices are closely related to their major, while others are not. If you would like to talk to alumnae/i and ask them questions about their careers, feel free to use the V-NET database through the AAVC website at <http://www.aavc.vassar.edu>.

Sports Industry, Ski Instructor/Guide and Climbing Guide, self-employed, Class of 1986

Health Care Industry, Chief Medical Resident, Class of 1996

Health Care Industry, Radiologist, Class of 1984

Health Care Industry, Chief Thoracic Surgery, Class of 1971

Health Care Industry, Attending Physician and owner of AmazingCharts.com, Class of 1986

Health Care Industry, Anesthesiologist, Class of 1981

Health Care Industry, Clinical Assistant Instructor/Medical Resident, Class of 2002

Health Care Industry, Chief of Psychiatry, Class of 1975

Health Care Products/Services, Vice President, Global Commercial Strategy, at GlaxoSmithKline, Class of 1980

Education – College/University, Assistant Professor of Radiology at NYU, Class of 1996

Education – College/University, Associate Professor of Life Sciences, Class of 1985

Investment/Finance Services, Marketing Director for American Express Company, Class of 1997

CDO Library Resources for Biochemistry Majors

The following books and many more can be found in the CDO Library:

Alternative Careers in Science – Leaving the Ivory Tower by Cynthia Robbins-Roth, 1998.

Careers in Science by Thomas A. Easton, 1990.

Medical School Admissions Advisor by Maria Lofftus, 2001.

Money for Graduate Students in the Sciences by Gail Ann Schlachter & David R. Weber, 1996.

Opportunities in Chemistry Careers by John H. Woodburn, 2002.

Opportunities in Clinical Laboratory Science Careers by Karen Karni, 2002.

Peterson's Job Opportunities in Health and Science by Peterson's Guides, 1999.

Real People Working in Science by Blythe Camenson, 1998.

Regional Chemistry Employment Directory by Peak Publishing, Inc., 1997.

To Boldly Go: A Practical Career Guide for Scientists by Peter Fiske, 1996.

Vault Career Guide to Biotech by Carole Mousalli, 2004.

Vital Signs: Working Doctors Tell the Real Story Behind Medical School & Practice by Deborah Bernal & Charles Epps, 1994.

Biochemistry Related Websites

Vassar College Department of Biochemistry: <http://biochemistry.vassar.edu/>

American Academy of Forensic Sciences: <http://www.aafs.org/>

American Association for the Advancement of Science: <http://www.aaas.org/>

American Chemical Society: <http://acswebcontent.acs.org/home.html>

Biochemical Society: <http://www.biochemistry.org/>

Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Employment:

<http://www.bioview.com/bv/servlet/BVHome>

Careers in Science and Engineering:

Chem Jobs: <http://www.chemjobs.net/chemjobs.html>

Chemical Week Magazine: <http://www.chemweek.com/>

HireHealth: <http://www.hirehealth.com/Content/CareerResearch.aspx>

HireRx: <http://www.hirerx.com/>

Careers in Science and Engineering:

<http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/careers/contents.html>

Journal of Biochemistry: <http://jb.oxfordjournals.org/>

Journal of Chemical Education: <http://jchemed.chem.wisc.edu/>

Life Sciences World: <http://www.lifesciencesworld.com/>

MBNA Career Services Center: <http://www.udel.edu/CSC/chem.html>

Biochemistry Related Websites cont.

Occupational Outlook Handbook:

Biological Scientists: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos047.htm>

Veterinarians: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos076.htm>

Physicians and Surgeons: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos074.htm>

Physician Assistants: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos081.htm>

Science Technicians: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos115.htm>

Teachers – Postsecondary: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos066.htm>

Science Careers: <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/>

CDO Resources: <http://careers.vassar.edu/resources/>

Graduate School Information

CDO Website for Graduate Schools: <http://careers.vassar.edu/advice-graduate-school/>

CDO Graduate School Career Briefs: <http://careers.vassar.edu/downloadable-handouts/>

Gradschools.com: <http://gradschools.com/>

GradProfiles: <http://www.gradprofiles.com/>

PhD Info.org: <http://www.phdinfofind.org/>

Peterson Guides to Graduate and Professional Schools: <http://www.petersons.com/>

*Foundation Center Grants To Individuals: <http://gtionline.fdncenter.org/>

Internships

eRecruiting: <http://vassar.erecruiting.com/er/security/login.jsp>

You must attend an eRecruiting orientation with the CDO before you can access the site.

National Science Foundation: http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.cfm

*National Internships.com: <http://internships.com/accessPremium.cfm>

*Internships USA: <http://www.internships-usa.com>

Undergraduate Summer Research Institute (URSI): <http://www.vassar.edu/ursi/>

University-Based Research Positions: <http://www.rit.edu/~gtfsbi/Symp/grad.htm>

General Career Websites

*Career Search: <http://www.careersearch.net/vassar/>

eRecruiting: <http://vassar.erecruiting.com/er/security/login.jsp>

You must attend an eRecruiting orientation with the CDO before you can access the site.

*Going Global: <http://online.goinglobal.com>

General Career Websites cont.

*LACN (Liberal Arts Career NetWORK) Job/Internship Database:

<http://www.lacn-group.org/>

*MonsterTrak: <http://www.monstertrak.monster.com/>

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

Princeton Review's Guide To Your Career: <http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/>

Riley Guide: <http://www.rileyguide.com/>

*Spotlight On Careers: <http://www.spotlightoncareers.org/>

Vassar College Career Development Office: <http://careers.vassar.edu/>

*Vault.com: http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp?parrefer=397

Venture: http://www.theventureconsortium.org/public_interest/exploring.php

Wetfeet: <http://www.wetfeet.com/>

*Please refer to the updated CDO password sheet to access the site.