

# Biology Career Chat

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## Office of Career Development

Vassar College

Phone: 845-437-5285

Fax: 845-437-7257

Email: [cdo@vassar.edu](mailto: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

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### 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

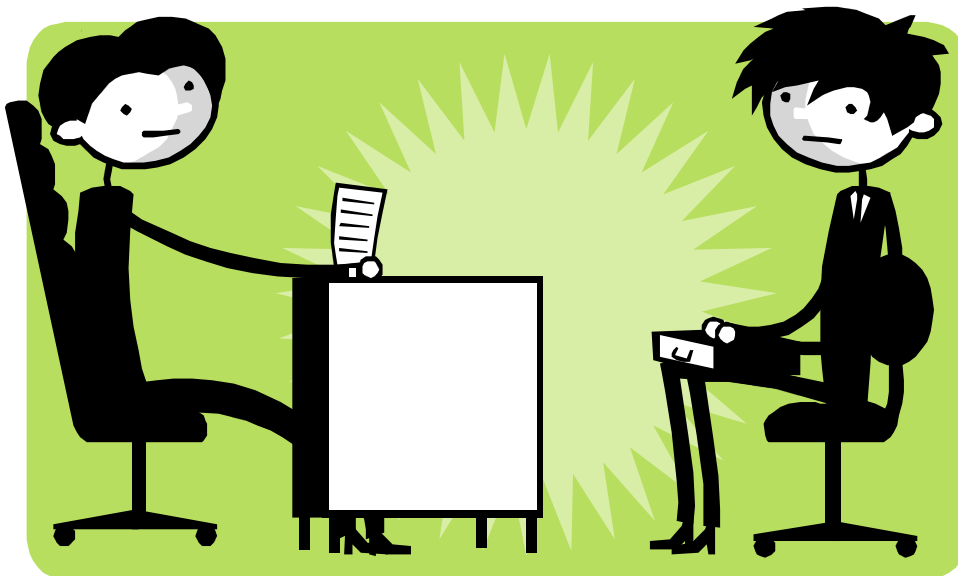
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A job search involves:

- 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/>

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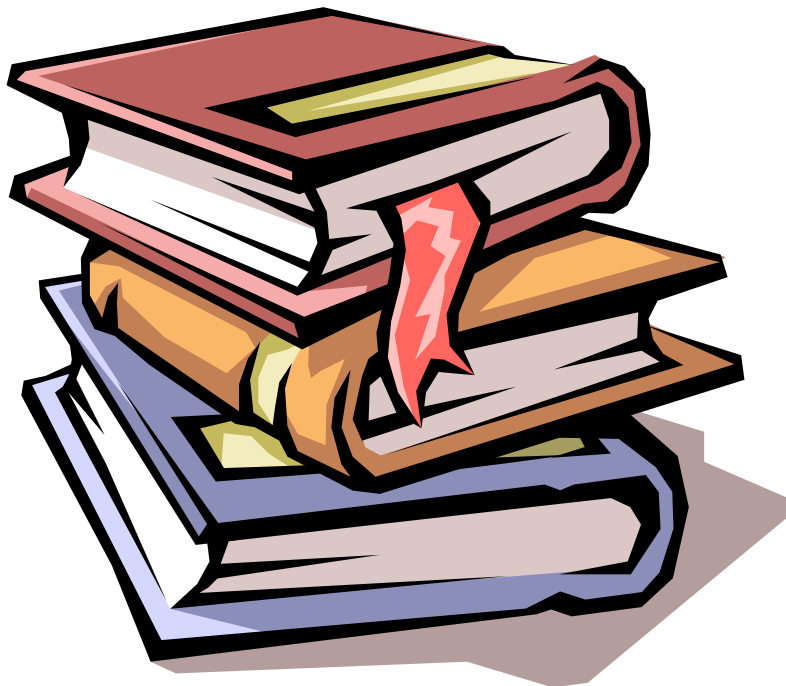
The reasons for continuing one's education in graduate school can be as varied and unique as the individual. Many continue their studies at an advanced level because they simply find it difficult to end the educational process. They love what they are learning; they want to learn more and continue their 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.



## Biology Alumni Career Choices

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Here is a sampling of the many career paths Vassar alumnae/i have pursued with their undergraduate degree in Biology (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>.

**Manufacturing/Distribution**, Consultant on Ergonomics/Human Factors, Class of 1961

**Restaurant/Catering Industry**, Executive Chef, Class of 1984

**Legal Practice**, Attorney, Class of 1982

**Environmental Industry**, Conservation Curator at Adkins Arboretum, Class of 1992

**Environmental Industry**, Program Coordinator for Hanauma Bay Natural Preserve, Hawaii, Class of 1960

**Environmental Industry**, Research Biologist for the US Environmental Protection Agency, Class of 1976

**Health Care Industry**, Oral Surgeon, self-employed, Class of 1981

**Health Care Industry**, Physician, self-employed, Class of 1968

**Health Care Industry**, Veterinarian, Class of 1990

**Public Service Industry**, Education Coordinator for the Consortium of Oceanographic Research and Education, Class of 2000

**Entertainment Industry**, Director of Photography for Majestic Light Productions, Class of 1983

**Education Industry**, Mentor/Researcher, Class of 1971

## CDO Library Resources for Biology Majors

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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.

*Career Renewal: Tools for Scientists & Technical Professionals* by Stephen Rosen & Celia Paul, 1998.

*Careers in Science* by Thomas A. Easton, 1990.

*Great Jobs for Biology Majors* by Blythe Camenson, 1999.

*Guide to Careers in the Health Professions (The Princeton Review)* by Lynn Borders Caldwell, 2000.

*Medical School Admissions Advisor* by Maria Lofftus, 2001.

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

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

*Princeton Review: Guide to Careers in the Health Professions* by Lynn Borders Caldwell, 2001.

*Real People Working in Science* by Blythe Camenson, 1998.

## CDO Library Resources cont.

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*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.

*Yale Guide to Careers in Medicine & the Health Professions, The* by Robert M. Donaldson, Kathleen S. Lundgren, & Howard Spiro, 2003.

## Biology Related Websites

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Vassar College Department of Biology: <http://biology.vassar.edu/>

### General

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

American Institute of Biological Sciences: <http://www.aibs.org/careers/index.html>

American Society for Microbiology: <http://www.asm.org/>

American Veterinary Medical Association:

<http://www.avma.org/careforanimals/animatedjourneys/aboutvets/aboutvets.asp>

BioMed Careers: <http://careers.the-scientist.com/>

BioSpace Career Center: <http://www.biospace.com/jobs/>

Biotechnology Industry Organization: <http://www.bio.org/>

BioView Careers for Life in Science:

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

Career Guide for Biology Majors: <http://www.bio.com/jobs/browse.jhtml>

Career in Biotech: <http://www.saludos.com/fields/biotech.html>

Careers in Biology from Emporia State University:

<http://www.aibs.org/careers/index.html>

Careers in Science and Engineering: A Student Guide to Grad School and Beyond: <http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/careers/contents.html>

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology:

[http://careers.faseb.org/home/index.cfm?site\\_id=521](http://careers.faseb.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=521)

Health Care Source, the Internet Health Care Career Site:

<http://www.healthcaresource.com/>

Healthcare Career Resource Center:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/15569/index.html>

hireBio: <http://www.hirebio.com/>

hireHealth: <http://www.hirehealth.com/>

hireMedical: <http://www.hiremedical.com/>

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

Inside Biology VCU:

<http://www.students.vcu.edu/ExploreCareers/CC/CCHSbiol.html>

Internet Resources for Biologists:

<http://facweb.furman.edu/dept/biology/internet/internet.htm>

## Biology Related Websites cont.

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LifeSciencesWorld: <http://forensic.to/forensic.html>  
MedZilla: <http://www.medzilla.com/>  
Next Wave at ScienceCareers.org: <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/>  
Occupational Outlook Handbook:  
    Physicians and Surgeons: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos074.htm>  
    Physician Assistants: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos074.htm>  
    Science Technicians: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos115.htm>  
    Teachers – Postsecondary: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos066.htm>  
    Biological Scientists: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos047.htm>  
    Veterinarians: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos076.htm>  
SciCentral, scientific research news sources: <http://www.scicentral.com/>  
Science, Math, and Engineering Career Resources: <http://www.phds.org/>  
ScienceJobs.com: <http://www.sciencejobs.com/splash.action>  
Science-Jobs.org: <http://www.science-jobs.org/>  
SciWeb Career Center: <http://www.scijobs.com/index.cfm>  
Student Doctor Network: <http://www.studentdoctor.net/>

Environmental/Marine (see Environmental Studies Chat for more resources)

Aquatic Network, marine sciences: <http://www.aquanet.com/>  
Careers in Marine Science: <http://oceanlink.island.net/career/career2.html>  
Environmental Career Opportunities:  
    <http://www.ecojobs.com/colleges/collegecontents.asp>  
International Marine Animal Trainers' Association: <http://www.imata.org/>  
Marine Careers: <http://www.marinecareers.net/fields.htm>  
NatureJobs Magazine for Scientists:  
    <http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/index.html>  
Student Conservation Association: <http://thesca.org/>

Forensics

American Academy of Forensic Sciences: <http://www.aafs.org/>  
Forensic Science Career Advice:  
    [http://muweb.millersville.edu/~forensic/career\\_advice.html](http://muweb.millersville.edu/~forensic/career_advice.html)  
Zeno's Forensic Site: <http://forensic.to/forensic.html>

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

## Graduate School Information

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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://gtonline.fdncenter.org/>

## Internships

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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](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

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\*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>

\*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](http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp?parrefer=397)

Venture: [http://www.theventureconsortium.org/public\\_interest/exploring.php](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.