



Summer Jobs and Internships

The summer job search requires a strategic approach: The earlier you begin, the better your chances for obtaining an ideal position. Organizations with prestigious internship programs often begin looking for summer employees as early as November, and even camps and resort hotels begin hiring in January and February, so many of the more interesting and better-paying jobs are filled during the spring. The key to getting a fulfilling summer job is two words: plan ahead!

Your summer job can be a time to explore a career path, develop skills, make contacts within a specific field, decide upon a major, make money and/or just have fun. Be sure your goals are realistic.

Preparing for Summer Employment

- If possible, learn new skills that enhance your potential for employment. For example, knowledge of spreadsheet software packages (i.e., Excel) is valued by many organizations.
- Define your geographic area. Consider the costs of housing and food as factors in your decision if you plan to live away from home.
- Evaluate your financial objectives and establish a projected but realistic budget. Remember that cities such as Boston and New York, and countries such as Japan have a very high cost of living.

Figuring Out What Type of Jobs to Seek

Summers are a good time not only to make money, but also to test out potential career fields. To determine what jobs and career areas suit you, you first must examine your interests, skills, and values. Consider meeting with a career counselor in the CDO to discuss career

exploration options including the FOCUS2 online assessment. Additionally, the CDO library has many books with chapters on how to identify personal traits and connect them with jobs.

Locating Jobs and Internships

- Check Handshake for internships posted directly to Vassar (<https://vassar.joinhandshake.com/>)
- Network by asking friends, family, former employers, and professors for suggestions; search the Alumnae/i Directory for people who can provide leads. Make sure to thank everyone who helps you!
- Check departmental bulletin boards.
- Explore additional online resources at: <http://careers.vassar.edu>
- Use local resources such as Chambers of Commerce directories to find employers.
- Explore the possibility of volunteering, either full-time or during your off-hours. You can learn new skills and make contacts whether or not your work is paid.
- Search bulletin boards at local college placement and financial aid offices, supermarkets, and libraries.
- Check out temporary employment services such as Kelly, Manpower, and Help Unlimited. Often a temporary job can lead to a permanent summer job.
- Read the CDO's weekly emails.
- Attend workshops and information sessions of interest through the CDO and other campus offices. Use print resources from the CDO Library.

More on Application and Hiring Processes

A resume and cover letter are often your first introduction to an employer. These documents speak for you and can mean the difference between being asked or not asked for an interview. Writing a good resume demands considerable time and effort. It is a marketing tool promoting you. A cover letter reflects your interest in a specific job, demonstrates your writing ability, and should make an employer want to read your resume. Mass produced cover letters are not recommended. Make every effort to identify and write to a specific individual within each organization. Unless indicated in a job posting, do not send your materials to the human resources department.

Pick up the CDO's *"Resume Writing and Job Search Correspondence"* publication, or attend one of our workshops. After you've written rough drafts, bring them to the CDO for feedback.

If you have time, informational interviews are an excellent way to understand the scope of an occupational field. Use Vassar's Alumnae/i Directory to identify alumnae/i to reach out to in your field of interest. Also see our *"Informational Interviewing"* Career Brief.

Few students receive job offers without a face-to-face meeting or phone interview. Whenever possible, arrange to meet employers in person instead of over the phone. You'll have their full attention and be harder to ignore. Be careful of your appearance – first impressions are vital. Bring copies of your resume and information you'll need for filling out applications (proof of birth, social security number, reference names and numbers, etc.) If you sense a potential opening, be persistent.

For interviewing help, pick up the *"All About Interviewing"* Career Brief, schedule a mock interview, or attend one of our workshops.

Helpful Resources

Handshake (<https://vassar.joinhandshake.com/>) is a great place to find up-to-date internship and job postings. The Career Development Office also has Alumnae/i contacts in the Alumnae/i Directory and job/internship directories available for your use. Most directories are updated annually; some are organized geographically and others focus on a specific field, such as theatre or banking.

For a list of some of our online resources arranged by interest area, review the *"Internship Resource Directory"* Career Brief.