

Your Graduate Degree and Beyond

Academic

You may find that as a master's or doctoral graduate student, starting to look for work after graduation can be a major transition after years of focus on study and research. Is looking for academic work different from any other work search? Yes and no. Some parts of the search and hiring process are unique to academia. But you will still want to assess your needs and interests before starting the process.

Industry/Community

Leaving the academic world can be a major transition after committing years to your studies and developing a community of colleagues. However, you may be looking forward to pursuing opportunities outside of the university. As a new graduate you may not be sure how your degree relates to a non-academic job, but you will find that a graduate degree can be marketable in many sectors

Step 1: Get Ready

Know your skills -

Before you begin a work search, spend some time reflecting on your interests, strengths and skills. Through your studies, you have acquired transferable skills that can now be applied to your work search. This is an important first step in being able to market your experiences to academic and industry employers.

Identify your targets -

Targeting your search is the next step to a successful search. You will likely have multiple targets. Clarity in what you are interested in will assist you in identifying opportunities and networking contacts.

Ask yourself -

What are my unique skills and strengths? What accomplishments am I most proud of? What have I been recognized for by supervisors, students and colleagues? What do I see myself doing as a career, now and in the future?

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Questions to consider:

- Where do I want to work? Canada, U.S., abroad?
- What kind of institution do I want to work in? Large or small? Research or teaching focus? Rural or urban?
- For Ph.D.'s, do I want to do post-doctoral work?

Industry/Community

Questions to consider:

- How can I demonstrate transferable skills from my program? For example, critical thinking, communication, presenting, writing, research, project management, and proficiency with computers and technology.
- What environment do I want? Government, not-for-profit, health, education, business?

Step 2: Networking

Networking is the bridge between research and your work search. It allows you to learn more about a particular industry or organization, while at the same time developing your community of colleagues. Stay connected with professors, fellow students, your department, and others in your discipline. Build relationships with your community of interest through discussion groups, volunteering, writing, publishing, joining associations and attending conferences.

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- Let people in your department know that you are looking for work.
- Stay current in the field by attending conferences and other events
- If possible, continue researching, publishing and presenting, either independently or in collaboration.

Industry/Community

- Learn from the experiences of other graduates.
- Develop new contacts with individuals who work in a field you are interested in and who can help you with career-specific lingo, trends, and leads on jobs.

Step 3: The Work Search

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- Prepare a CV, a teaching dossier, and any materials required by the institutions you are applying to.
- Research the academic hiring process to prepare for “job talks” and campus visits, meetings with department members, and other possible steps in the process.
- Use print and web resources to help prepare you for the steps in the process.

Industry/Community

- Search for advertised jobs on general online job websites, sector or industry specific online job boards, and employer web sites
- Search for unadvertised jobs through networking, informational interviewing, and existing contacts
- Consider taking contract and short-term positions for the experience, contacts, and the possibility they may lead to longer-term positions.

Resources

Careerspace Resources:

Tip Sheet: CV vs. Resume

Web Resources:

For academic postings in Canada: University Affairs – universityaffairs.ca/search-job;
C.A.U.T. Bulletin - caut.ca

For postings in the U.S.: The Chronicle of Higher Education: chronicle.com

For more information visit: trentu.ca/careerspace
Or drop by the Student Centre, room 3.10.