



# JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Searching for a job requires time and effort, but if you persevere, you can significantly increase your chances of getting a great offer.

It's easy to apply online through Handshake or other job boards, but that is just one way to identify opportunities.

Take advantage of events on and off campus that place you face-to-face with other professionals in your field. Career fairs, information session and conferences give you a chance to add a voice to your resume.

Conduct informational interviews with alumni and members of your professional organizations to learn about possible career paths and what it takes to succeed in a given industry.

## ENGINEERING CAREER SERVICES RESOURCES

Our office provides online and print materials, events and advising to help you prepare for your career:

### HANDOUTS AND TIP SHEETS

Visit our website for tips on everything from resume and cover letter writing to appropriate interview dress to responding to job offers. You can find paper handouts and print publications in our office.

### WORKSHOPS, CAREER FAIRS & EMPLOYER EVENTS

We offer a series of workshops in Martin Hall that focus on different stages of the job search. See the schedule and RSVP on our website under the Workshops tab.

During the semester, we host events on campus with employers, including information sessions, resume and mock interview clinics (where employers provide feedback directly to students in short meetings).

Career fairs provide an opportunity for you to meet multiple employers in a single day. Prepare to impress by reviewing our website and attending a workshop. It's never too early to start attending career fairs.

### ADVICE FROM OTHER STUDENTS

Read work reports by students who have completed co-op positions in our office. Our website features stories of students internship & co-op experience.

### JOB LISTINGS & ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

Use the Handshake database to search for and apply to positions open to UMD students. Some employers come to campus to conduct in-person interviews.

See the "External Job Boards" section of our website for other web resources.

### JOB SEARCH ADVICE

Bring your career planning and job search questions to Engineering Career Services in 1131 Martin Hall, or set up an appointment to review your job search documents and strategy.

---

# JOB SEARCH RESOURCES, ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND

## Academic Departments & Other University Offices

Academic departments often get calls about co-op, summer, and part-time engineering jobs, which they share through bulletin boards or listservs. Your professors may share job leads, too.

In 1131 Glenn L. Martin Hall, the **Center for Minorities in Science & Engineering** and the **Women in Engineering Program** receive announcements about all types of positions. Check their bulletin boards and newsletters for potential leads. Clark School student societies often host networking events for their members.

The UMD campus office of **Veteran Student Life** provides programming for students who have served in the U.S. military. They also receive job announcements from companies and organizations seeking to hire veterans. Graduate students should be sure to check the events calendar of **The Graduate School** for career workshops and networking opportunities. If you are not sure what you want to do, or if you are struggling in your engineering classes, the **Counseling Center** in the Shoemaker building can help.

## University Career Center

The University Career Center ([careers.umd.edu](http://careers.umd.edu), 301-314-7225), located in 3100 Hornbake Library, South Wing, hosts events with companies who may hire engineering candidates. Don't forget to check your Handshake account to be aware of non-engineering positions. Undergraduate students can connect with alumni, parents, employers, and community partners through **Career Shuttle** and **Intern for a Day** shadowing experiences. The advisor dedicated to working with doctoral students plans a workshop series each fall and spring.

## Employment Offices/Agencies

Although these resources are typically used for finding full-time opportunities, rather than a co-op/internship, you may still find them to be helpful.

- States and counties offer workforce development initiatives to help job seekers. Search for "Job Readiness/Employment" in your area. Here are a few local centers:
- Maryland's American Job Centers: [www.dllr.state.md.us/county](http://www.dllr.state.md.us/county)
- 211 Maryland Services Locator: <https://211md.org/211provider-md-employment-help>
- Baltimore County Job-Seeker Services: <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/economicdev/job-seekers/>

## PRIVATE AND TEMP AGENCIES

These agencies can help you locate temporary or short-term placement, a great way to earn money and make contacts while doing a job search. There may be a fee involved for you or the employer.

## PAPER PUBLICATIONS

Directories like **Job Opportunities in Engineering and Technology** and **Maryland Manufacturers Directory** provide useful information about engineering employers that you can target to investigate job opportunities.

## Discussion Boards, Blogs, and Listservs

Search the web for "[your major] industry news" to find publications with news about the industries that interest you. You can see links for a number of career-related web sites on our job boards page. Let us know if you find others.

The **Virtual Business Information Center**, at <http://vbic.umd.edu>, connects you to databases for research on business topics. You do need to enter via the UMD research portal. If you click on "Company Information" or "Industry" you'll access databases with company profiles, industry outlook, and other data to help you direct your search.

With online discussion boards, forums and blogs, always do some fact-checking; individuals posting information may not be completely reliable. A search will turn up plenty of forums and blogs, but here are a few suggestions:

[www.eng-tips.com/](http://www.eng-tips.com/)  
[www.engineersedge.com/engineering-forum/forum.php](http://www.engineersedge.com/engineering-forum/forum.php)  
<http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/>  
<https://www.livecareer.com>

<http://www.onedayonejob.com>  
<http://career-advice.monster.com/>  
<http://www.vault.com/blogs/>  
<https://www.onetonline.org>

---

## I FOUND A JOB LISTING OR EMPLOYER... NOW WHAT?

### ***Finalize your resume.***

Bring it in to our office for a review.

### ***Are you answering an advertised position?***

Determine the correct method of communication with that employer.

Read the listing carefully and follow instructions for the application process.

Do you have to submit a cover letter? If so, it should be unique to the position. See our *Cover Letters* handout or workshop for more help. You can also have your draft critiqued by an advisor in our office.

### ***Are you contacting an employer without advertised positions?***

Review the Networking section of this handout for more details on how to approach a new contact.

See our Cover Letter Writing handout and workshop for tips on writing professional emails to inquire about an opportunity.

### ***Prepare for the next steps in the hiring process.***

Attend an Interview Tips workshop to learn how to prepare, what to expect, what to do (and not to do) if you are invited to interview for a position.

After you attend the workshop, consider setting up a mock interview for practice, or use Interview Stream to practice on your own.

Attend our Job Offers and Salary Negotiation workshop so you know what to expect and how to react when you get your first (or third) job offer.

---

## AFTER YOU APPLY

### ***Don't sit back and wait by the phone.***

Keep applying to multiple positions until you have an offer. Keep a **spreadsheet** with data on every job you apply for, including:

- Date you mailed your resume, application deadline, etc.
- Name, email, phone number of employer contact
- Job description/advertisement

### ***The best kept secret to finding a job is... perseverance!***

DON'T GIVE UP! Every semester we get dozens of last-minute calls from employers frantically looking for students and recent graduates. Make sure you keep your eyes open for last-minute opportunities!

### ***And if you get the job or internship?***

Let us know! See the Job Update Form on our website. International students on F-1 visas who need CPT work authorization should see our website and handouts for international students.

---

## BEYOND ONLINE JOB LISTINGS

As many as 60% of jobs are never posted on a jobs site, so how can you find them?

As a student, take advantage of the numerous opportunities to engage in competitions, projects and conferences to gain experience and learn firsthand from professionals in the field. Grades are important but they are not everything. Companies pay attention to your activities beyond your classes because they are a demonstration of your passions, interests and skills.

As an alum, you can join professional organizations, stay engaged with your university, professional and local community.

The more people that know **what you can do**, not just who you are, the more chances that your name might come up when an employer is seeking a referral from one of their current employees. Read on for tips on networking.



# NETWORK YOUR WAY TO THE CAREER YOU WANT

To paraphrase Merriam-Webster, networking is the development and fostering of personal relationships for employment or business.

Building a professional network permits you to:

- Gain advice about a career field, an industry, or an organization
- Connect with more people who are doing the things you want to do
- Learn about possible job opportunities (not necessarily immediately)
- Develop mutually beneficial relationships with other professionals

Skillful networking is a planned, structured, and time-consuming campaign that usually starts with family, friends, and acquaintances, but rapidly moves onto conversations or meetings with people you don't know, who refer you to still more people you don't know.

***Think of networking as a long-term investment in your career.***

## EXPANDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

### WHOM DO YOU ALREADY KNOW?

Do you have family, friends, friends-of-family, neighbors, classmates or colleagues that work in companies or industries that interest you? You'll be surprised how word-of-mouth can help.

### STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Engineering student professional societies often have employer/job contacts. Many also sponsor field trips, invite employers to speak at their meetings, or publish resume books to be distributed to employers. If you are a member of a campus organization, seek opportunities to take on leadership roles.

### USE YOUR ALUMNI NETWORK

The University of Maryland recently launched a portal for current students to connect with alumni, called [Terrapins Connect](#). You can also meet alumni at local events (including social events!), professional meetings, and through LinkedIn.

### LINKEDIN

Over 300 million people in more than 200 countries use [LinkedIn](#) as a professional networking site. It is a more acceptable way to connect with people in the professional setting than using Facebook or other social media platforms.

### SMALL TALK/CHANCE MEETINGS

Never underestimate the power of "chance!" Perhaps one weekend your roommate's cousin comes for a visit and you find out that she is a mechanical engineer working at a company that interests you. Take that "chance" opportunity to talk to this person and learn more about what her experience is like, what tips she has for a new engineer, or other information/advice.

### CONFERENCES & PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

Whether you are presenting or not, don't be afraid to speak up and talk to colleagues from around the world that attend conferences in your industry or academic field.

---

# EXPANDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK, CONT'D.

## National Associations & Societies

There are thousands of professional associations – student chapters, local, national, and many international. The advantage of being part of a professional association is two-fold. You can add it to your resume, which may help people see you as seriously committed to your field. But, it also enables you to attend meetings with other people who share similar professional interests. Often, they may know someone who is desperately in need of someone just like you.

Joining the national organization as well as the local campus chapter can give you access to additional resources for your career preparation. There is often a student discount to join, or to attend conferences or meetings.

**Below are just a few examples of professional engineering organizations, some of which have local chapters at the University of Maryland.**

### ***'Affinity Group' Organizations***

[American Society of Engineers of Indian Origin \(ASEI\)](#)  
[American Society for Engineering Education \(ASEE\)](#)  
[Association of Chinese Scientists and Engineers \(ACSE\)](#)  
[National Society of Black Engineers \(NSBE\)](#)  
[Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers \(SHPE\)](#)  
[Society of Women Engineers \(SWE\)](#)

An **affinity group** is an informal group characterized by a shared goal, interest, or quality. Professional organizations revolved around identity are unmatched resources in finding others to connect with for advice, mentorship, and support.

### **Aerospace Engineering**

[American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics \(AIAA\)](#)  
[American Helicopter Society \(AHS\)](#)  
[Women in Aerospace \(WIA\)](#)

### **Bioengineering**

[American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers \(ASABE\)](#)  
[Biomedical Engineering Society \(BMES\)](#)  
[Society for Biomaterials](#)

### **Chemical Engineering**

[American Institute of Chemical Engineers \(AIChE\)](#)

### **Civil & Environmental Engineering**

[American Ecological Engineering Society \(AEES\)](#)  
[American Public Works Association \(APWA\)](#)  
[American Society of Civil Engineers \(ASCE\)](#)  
[Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute \(CRSI\)](#)  
[Geological Society of America \(GSA\)](#)  
[Institute of Transportation Engineers \(ITE\)](#)

### Electrical and Computer Engineering

[American Association for Artificial Intelligence \(AAAI\)](#)  
[Association for Computing Machinery \(ACM\)](#)  
[Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers \(IEEE\)](#)  
[International Microelectronics and Packaging Society](#)  
[Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics \(SIAM\)](#)

### **Fire Protection Engineering**

[Society of Fire Protection Engineers \(SFPE\)](#)

### **Materials and Nuclear Engineering**

[American Ceramic Society \(ACerS\)](#)  
[American Nuclear Society \(ANS\)](#)  
[ASM International \(formerly American Society for Metals\)](#)  
[Materials Research Society \(MRS\)](#)  
[Minerals, Metals, and Materials Society \(TMS\)](#)  
[Society for the Advancement of Material and Process Engineering \(SAMPE\)](#)

### **Mechanical Engineering**

[American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers \(ASHRAE\)](#)  
[American Society of Mechanical Engineers \(ASME\)](#)  
[Society of Automotive Engineers \(SAE\)](#)

### **Multidisciplinary**

[National Society of Professional Engineers \(NSPE\)](#)  
[American Society of Naval Engineers \(ASNE\)](#)  
[Association of Iron and Steel Engineers \(AIST\)](#)  
[Society of American Military Engineers \(SAME\)](#)  
[Society of Manufacturing Engineers \(SME\)](#)  
[Society for Modeling and Simulation International \(SCS\)](#)

---

# HOW TO GET STARTED WITH NETWORKING

## Before You Reach Out to a New Contact

### **Learn about possible career paths.**

Internet resources, books, and “Careers in...” classes are a great start.

### **Know yourself. Determine what you would like from your new contact.**

What are your skills, interests, relevant qualifications? Do you want advice on career paths or skills valued by the industry? Information about their organization? Other contacts?

### **Be sincere.**

Networking is not just about getting help. Your interest in the person must be genuine to be effective.

### **Start slow.**

To gain confidence, approach familiar people and less desired organizations first. But, don’t be afraid to initiate contact with people you don’t know.

## Requesting a Networking Meeting

If you have found someone you would like to speak to for career advice (through a personal reference, LinkedIn, a chance meeting, etc.), you will want to be prepared for your next phone conversation.

### **Describe**

- who you are,
- who referred you, and
- why you are contacting this person

“Hello Ms. Taylor, my name is Jennifer Woodford. I was referred to you by my former co-op supervisor, Mark Richards, in the Integrated Circuit Design office at Annapolis Microsystems.

“Mr. Richards recommended that I speak with you about your work at the National Security Agency. I am graduating from University of Maryland next May with a Bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering,

### **Be prepared to summarize your**

- skills,
- qualifications,
- interests, and
- how these relate to the company

“Along with my one-year co-op with Annapolis Microsystems where I worked on a variety of circuit development tasks including design, developing prototypes, and FPGA programming, I have developed an interest in security and cryptology, and notice that it is one of the National Security Agency’s main areas of expertise.”

### **Ask for**

- a meeting,
- an informational interview, or
- other ways to learn more about the field from this person

“I would like to set up a time to speak with you further about your organization and your experience in electrical engineering. Are you available for about 30 minutes sometime next week?”

Be sure to respond promptly to any emails or phone calls from your new contact.

## Before You Meet

### **Learn about your contact and their company and industry.**

Once you have scheduled a meeting or informational interview, take a look at their LinkedIn profile, at the company website, and read some news about the industry.

### **Practice what you want to say.**

You can even record yourself. Have a script ready for voicemail and another for actually speaking to the person. Bring a pen and notepad to your meeting in case you want to remember something you discuss.

---

## HOW TO GET STARTED WITH NETWORKING, CONT'D.

### Suggestions for Handling Tough Networking Situations

**Be patient yet persistent.** Things may take a while to develop, and you will sometimes hear “No.” Be prepared to respond tactfully to a less than warm reception, in case your contact says:

***“Well, we’re not really hiring any computer engineers at this time.”***

“I understand. However, my goal in arranging a meeting with you is not to discuss a specific job, but rather to talk to you about information and/or advice on entering the field of computer engineering. I was hoping to talk to you more about your perspective on what I can do to prepare myself for a

...Or...

***“Unfortunately I really don’t have time to meet with you.”***

“I understand that you are unavailable to speak with me about entering the field of biological resources engineering; can you recommend someone else in your organization that might be willing

...Or...

***“Why don’t you just talk to Human Resources?”***

“I will be contacting them shortly. However, I am looking for an opportunity to speak with someone like you who is currently doing the work in which I am interested. That way, when I enter this field, I

### During Your Conversation

***Listen to what the other person is saying.***

If you don’t understand something, don’t be afraid to ask – don’t guess! Listening may also give you a chance to help out the other person – networking goes both ways.

***How you speak is just as important as what you say.***

Be interested & enthusiastic! Be aware of how quickly or slowly you are speaking. Watch for fillers/slang (um, like, cool, ya know...). Use a professional tone and vocabulary.

### Ending the Conversation

If this is the first time you have met, thank your acquaintance for their time and indicate an interest in communicating again. Inquire about the best way to follow up if you have further questions.

See the tips on following up in the next few pages.

### Once You Become More Comfortable

***Network anywhere/everywhere you go.***

Think of everyone you meet as a networking contact, and practice your skills all the time.

***Keep a well-documented record of contacts.***

If you get a business card, make sure to write where and when you met the person right away. Spreadsheets, contacts lists, LinkedIn or a paper file are just a few ways to keep track of people you meet.

***Be patient, and don’t give up.***

Things may take a while to develop, and you will sometimes hear “no.”



---

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

If a professional in a field that interests you is open to meeting with you, an informational interview is a great way to learn about the reality of a particular career path. It is not a job interview! Your goal is to learn what skills and experiences are valuable in this career, not to ask for a job or similar favor.

An informational interview is a conversation driven by you, so you should prepare questions, and bring a pen and paper to take notes. Ideally, the meeting is in person, but if that isn't possible, you might have a phone conversation. Here are some questions to use as a model for drafting your own:

### Work Environment

How would you describe your work environment?  
How would you describe a typical day/week/month/cycle – regular duties, projects, etc.?  
What do you like most about your job? What would you change if you could?  
What is the most rewarding part of your job? Least rewarding?  
How much flexibility are you allowed in your job (hours, vacations, dress, etc.)?  
Does the organization have a mission? If so, how does it fulfill that mission?  
How much autonomy do you have on the job?  
How are you made aware of supervisory expectations?  
What portion of your job involves interacting with others, including co-workers & clients?  
What does the organization do to ensure all employees feel included?

### Job Requirements and Experience

What college courses have been most helpful to you in your position?  
Is there special certification, licensing, or an advanced degree required for your job?  
What personal qualities do you see as important for success in this job?  
How much outside or overtime work is required? Nights? Weekends?  
Is much travel involved in your job? If so, how much and what type?  
What are the toughest problems you deal with?  
Are there other industries, sectors, or roles to which you think my skills and abilities would transfer readily?  
Describe a typical day/week that you experience in the role of an \_\_\_\_\_.  
How do most people enter this field?

### Advice/Leads

If you were in charge of hiring someone to assist you in your work, what criteria would you use to make your selection?  
Are there any professional groups or associations in the field that you would recommend I join?  
Do you know of any co-op or summer opportunities that would benefit me?  
Have you heard of any events or developments in \_\_\_\_\_ (an area that matches your interests or qualifications)?  
Are there any particular companies or employers are doing important work in (field/ industry)?  
Can you think of anyone else I might talk to who has \_\_\_\_\_ experience or who has done a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ work?  
Of the people you know who have moved from staff jobs to management, who do you think might be most receptive to a request for a networking meeting/informational interview?

***After your meeting, be sure to send a thank you note!***



---

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE, RESPECTFUL FOLLOW-UP

### **Take notes.**

Take notes during and after each conversation. This will assist you in writing good follow-up letters and for your next contact with that person.

### **Be thankful!**

Sending a thank-you note to a contact is always a good practice.

### **Stay in touch.**

After meeting new people is important to follow up with short communications. See below for more tips.

### **Thank You Notes**

Within a day, you should send a note thanking your new contact for taking the time to speak with you.

When writing the note (email), refer to the date and location of your meeting, and mention any unique or highly specific points discussed so the recruiter or new contact will remember you. Any important information discussed should be restated and emphasized in your letter. Include any information you neglected to mention.

Proofread your note carefully. There should be no errors (misspellings or typos). Have someone else proofread it too.

**Subject: Engineering Career Paths Chat (or similar)**

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank the contact for taking the time to speak with you about their career path and current job.

Mention something specific you discussed (for example, an internship program you discussed or a new company project the recruiter mentioned that interested you). For example, indicate how you plan to act upon advice they may have given you.

Reiterate your thanks.

Sincerely,

### **Maintaining the Contact**

There are many ways you can keep in touch with networking contacts that you make. For instance, you can:

- Request to connect on LinkedIn. Be sure to personalize your note!
- Send a short note about how the discussion helped you in a given situation .
- Invite your contact to speak or participate in a campus event with a local chapter of a student organization.
- Notify a contact of the results of a referral (whether you got the job or not).
- Ask for additional specific advice/coaching
- Say hello to your contacts at your next professional meetings or conferences
- Let a contact know when you get a job

---

## CAREER FAIRS & RECRUITMENT EVENTS

Whether or not you are not actively seeking an internship, co-op, or full time job, you should attend career fairs and information sessions on campus as a student or alum of the Clark School of Engineering.

These are a great way to learn about career paths and skills that employers value. Even first year students can start making contacts in different industries.

See our website, handouts and workshops for tips on preparing for events with employers.