



Engineering Co-op & Career Services
www.coop.eng.umd.edu
301.405.3863



::: Job Search Strategies

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

(CO-OP, INTERNSHIP, FULL-TIME PERMANENT)

Finding a job requires time and effort, but if you're willing to persevere, you can significantly increase your chances of getting a great job offer. It's easy to find job opportunities on your own once you learn about all the job-hunting resources available.

Engineering Co-op & Career Services Office

The Engineering Co-op & Career Services Office can help in several ways:

Workshops: The Engineering Co-op Office offers frequent workshops to assist you in your job search. Logon to <http://www.coop.eng.umd.edu/students/workshops.html> to see our schedule and register to attend one that is convenient for you.

Job Listings & On-Campus Interviews: If you are looking for co-op or internship employment, you should use our version of eLink at www.coop.eng.umd.edu. If you are not yet registered with us, you must attend an eLink workshop first.

Job Search Advice: Bring your job search questions into the Engineering Co-op Office or set up an appointment and we can assist you with the process.

University Career Center

The University Career Center (www.careercenter.umd.edu, 301-314-7225), located in 3100 Hornbake Library, may help you identify prospective employers. If you are graduating soon and looking for full-time, permanent employment, you should use the Career Center's Careers4Terps database at www.careercenter.umd.edu. The Career Center also has company literature, employer directories, and job lead notebooks.

Academic Departments

Many academic departments get calls about co-op, summer, and part-time engineering jobs. Some departments have bulletin boards or notebooks for job postings. Ask all of your professors for job leads, too.

Other University Offices

The Center for Minorities in Science & Engineering or the Women in Engineering Program, both located in 1124 Glenn L. Martin Hall, may receive announcements about all types of positions. Check their bulletin boards and newsletters for potential leads.

Networking

Tell everyone you know: family, friends, friends-of-family, neighbors, faculty, and former employers, etc., that you are looking for an engineering job. You'll be surprised how word-of-mouth can help. Take the opportunity to network with professionals in your field at University sponsored events, professional associations or meetings, or on listservs or newsgroups. Keep in mind that most jobs are not advertised, so networking will enable you to tap into the hidden job market! Review the Networking section in our handbook for more details.

Associations & Societies

Student Societies: Many of the engineering student professional societies have employer/job contacts. Keep your eyes open and check their bulletin boards regularly. Many of these societies also sponsor field trips, invite employers to speak at their meetings, or publish resume books to be distributed to employers.

National Associations & Societies: These societies offer job listings and resume postings, educational programs/scholarships, professional conferences/events, and career planning information.

Examples of engineering societies:

Aerospace Engineering

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)
American Helicopter Society (AHS)

Bioengineering

American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE)
Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES)

Chemical Engineering

American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE)

Civil Engineering

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)
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)
Association of Iron and Steel Engineers (AIST)
American Society for Metals (ASM International)
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)

General Engineering/Multidisciplinary

American Society of Engineers of Indian Origin (ASEI)
American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)
American Society of Naval Engineers (ASNE)
Association of Chinese Scientists and Engineers (ACSE)
National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE)
Society of American Military Engineers (SAME)
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME)
Society for Modeling and Simulation International
Society of Women Engineers (SWE)

UMD Libraries and the Company Profiles Database

The best resource through the library is the Virtual Business Information Center, run by the business and library schools and the libraries. You can find it at <http://vbic.umd.edu>, and if you click on "company" you'll see a lot of information and resources for obtaining company profiles and other data (much of this information is in subscription databases, so students will need to be on campus or go through Research Port to use it).

Classified Ads

Look through the classified section in *The Diamondback* and other local newspapers. Any organization advertising for a full-time engineer may also have a Co-op, Summer Employment, or Internship Program so you should contact them to find out.

Directories

Directories provide useful information about engineering employers that you can target to inquire about job opportunities. Directories such as Job Opportunities in Engineering and Technology, Maryland Manufacturers Directory, and Washington Job Bank can be checked-out from the Engineering Co-op Office. The Career Center (3100 Hornbake Library) also has a large resource library.

The Internet

Be creative and surf the web! Check our home page for **more** links to many career-related web sites. Let us know if you find any others!

Aero Industry Jobs	www.aeroindustryjobs.com
Career Builder	www.careerbuilder.com
Career Journal	www.careerjournal.com
CareerNet	www.careernet.state.md.us
College Grad	www.collegegrad.com
College Recruiter	www.collegerecruiter.com
Defense Jobs	www.defensejobs.com
Dice	www.dice.com
Engineer 500	www.engineer500.com
Engineering Jobs	www.engineeringjobs.com
Graduating Engineer	www.graduatingengineer.com
IEEE Jobs	http://careers.ieee.org/
Job Hunt	www.job-hunt.org
Job Resource	www.thejobresource.com
Riley Guide	www.rileyguide.com
StudentJobs.Gov	www.studentjobs.gov
Tech-Interns	www.tech-interns.org

Employment Offices/Agencies

Although this resource is typically used for full-time opportunities, rather than a co-op/internship, you may still find it to be very helpful.

Public Offices: For example: Maryland Job Service One-Stop Career Centers www.dllr.state.md.us/county, Maryland Commission for Women www.marylandwomen.org, and Baltimore County Office of Employment and Training www.bc-works.com

Private Agencies: There may be a fee involved – find out if you or the employer pays this fee. Many times the costs outweigh the benefits.

Temp Agencies: Temporary or Short-term Placement - Great way to earn money and make contacts while doing a job search.

Telephone Book

Yes, even the yellow pages can help you identify prospective employers. Look under “Engineers,” and you may be surprised how many companies are listed. A quick telephone call will then establish whether the company has a vacancy Full-time, for a Co-op or Internship position.

The Best Kept Secret to Finding a Job: Perseverance!

DON'T GIVE UP! Every semester we get dozens of last minute calls from employers frantically looking for students and recent graduates.

If you are a co-op applicant, don't worry, we can get you a full refund on your tuition if you have to drop your classes after the deadline. It is not unusual for job offers to occur even after classes have begun. Keep in touch with the Engineering Co-op Office and make sure you keep your eyes open for last minute job opportunities!

I have found a job listing/employer....now what?

- 1. Attend a Resume Workshop (if you haven't already)**
- 2. Finalize your resume and cover letter**
- 3. Determine the correct method of communication with that employer:**

Answering an advertised position

Read the listing carefully and use the employers preferred method of obtaining resumes.

Keep data on every job you apply for:

- a copy of the job description/advertisement
- when you mailed your resume
- when you said you would call to follow-up

Contacting employers without advertised positions

Review the Networking section in our handbook for more details.

- Describe who you are, who referred you, why you are calling/e-mailing
- Summarize your skills, qualifications, and interests; how would your skills benefit the company?
- Ask for a meeting or other ways to learn more about the field from this person

- 4. Attend an Interview Workshop**

Consider setting up a mock interview so that you're prepared for an interview when you get one.

- 5. Follow up!**

- In a recent survey of the nation's 1,000 largest companies, 82% of executives polled said job seekers should contact hiring managers within two weeks of submitting application materials.
- The best way to follow-up is via email or phone – introduce yourself, reiterate your interest in the position and ask if/when the company plans to conduct interviews for the position

If you do find a job on your own and want to enroll in our co-op program, it's easy! Just stop by the Engineering Co-op Office with your offer letter. (Note: your offer letter may need to include specific details; call us at 301-405-3863 or stop by our office for details).

NETWORKING YOUR WAY TO THE CAREER YOU WANT

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is the process of discovering and utilizing connections between people.

The purposes of networking include:

- To gain *advice* about a career field, an industry, or an organization
- To *connect* with more people who are doing the things you want to do
- To tell people about *you*
- To learn about *possible job opportunities*
- To 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.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

University Sponsored Events

Keep your eyes and ears open for events on campus where you can network with employers and/or alumni who are working in your field. Events such as Career Fairs, Employer Information Sessions, and Resume Clinics (where employers critique students' resumes) will give you wonderful opportunities to expand your network.

Discussion Boards, Blogs, and Listservs

Discussion boards or Forums can be good resources to find out about an industry. Someone posts a message--a letter, an essay, a question--and then others can post replies to the message if they want--or just read it, along with other people's replies. **Blogs** work in a similar fashion, and can be run by individuals or organizations. There are many blogs and forums dedicated to engineering, career searches, or both. **Listserv** communication, on the other hand, goes right into your email inbox where you can easily reply or print out a particular message. These resources can be great ways to network beyond friends, family, faculty, and fellow alumni, but be aware that the individuals posting information may not be completely reliable – always do your research.

A basic internet search will turn up plenty of forums and blogs, but here are a few suggestions:

- www.careerhubblog.com
- blogs.sciencemag.org/sciencecareers
- www.quintcareers.com/career_blog
- www.onedayonejob.com/blog
- www.eng-tips.com
- www.engineeringforum.org
- career-advice.monster.com
- www.vault.com/community/mb

Professional Associations/Meetings

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. See the list of societies in this handbook for a list of web sites.

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 he 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 his experience is like, what tips he has for applying to work with his company, or whatever information/advice you are seeking. If you meet someone by chance and it is difficult or inappropriate to dive into a conversation right then, ask the person if he/she would be willing to talk to you in more detail at a different time.

SO HOW DO I NETWORK?

Follow these steps to successful networking:

1. Know yourself: skills, interests, qualifications
2. Know basic information about a career (through books, Internet, classes)
3. Set SMART goals for yourself and your job search: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed
4. Determine what you want from the people you contact. Advice? Information about their organization? Other contacts?
5. **Practice** your calls, even tape record yourself. Have a script ready for voicemail and another for actually speaking to the person.
6. **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.
7. How you say it is even more important than what you say:
 - Be interesting & enthusiastic!! SMILE!
 - Be aware of how fast or how slow you are speaking
 - Watch for fillers (um, ya know...)
8. 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.
9. Think of everyone you meet as a networking contact, and practice your skills all the time.
10. Keep a well-documented record of contacts
11. Be patient and persistent: things may take a while to develop, and you will hear, ”no”
12. Be thankful! Sending a thank-you note to a contact never hurts.
13. **Always follow up!** After being introduced to new people, follow-up with short communications: email, a phone call, a visit (see “Maintaining the Contact” on the next page for more information). Take notes during and after the conversation. This will assist you in writing good follow up letters and for your next contact with that person.

INITIATING A NETWORKING MEETING

1. Describe who are you, who referred you, why are you calling/e-mailing:

“Hi, 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. I am calling you because I am graduating from University of Maryland next May with a Bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering, and I am interested in continuing my work in circuit development. Mr. Richards recommended that I speak with you about your work at the National Security Agency.

2. Summarize your skills, qualifications, & interests & how they 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 tailored my studies at the University of Maryland by combining electrical engineering courses with computer science courses to better prepare me for a career in engineering. I have really developed an interest in security and cryptology, and notice that it is one of the National Security Agency’s main areas of expertise.”

3. Ask for a meeting or other ways to learn more about the field from this person

“I would really 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 some time next week?”

“Thank you so much for your assistance, Ms. Taylor. I will look forward to our meeting next Tuesday at 10 a.m.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR HANDLING TOUGH NETWORKING SITUATIONS

Avoid freezing up in conversations! Practice your responses to tough situations such as the ones listed below.

If 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 really hoping to talk to you more about your perspective on what I can do to prepare myself for a career in computer engineering.”

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

“I will be contacting them shortly. However, what I am really looking for is the 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 know where my skills and qualifications fit best.”

“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 who might be willing to talk with me about their experiences?”

MAINTAINING THE CONTACT

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

- Advise a contact of the results of a referral
- Send a short note about how the discussion helped you in a given situation
- Ask for additional specific advice/coaching
- Seek out your contacts at professional meetings or conferences
- Invite your contact to speak or participate in a campus event
- Let a contact know when you get a job

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A CAREER FAIR

Think of the 2-3 minute exchange with an employer at a career fair as a mini-interview, and prepare for it as you would any other interview:

Write a resume

- Prepare a well-written, one-page resume and make multiple copies (avoid the heavy weight paper). See our resume handout at <http://www.coop.eng.umd.edu/students/jobsearch.html> for more specific guidelines.
- Get your resume reviewed at the Engineering Co-op Office ahead of time.
- Be prepared to expand on your resume when speaking to recruiters at the fair.

What should you bring?

- Resumes
- Portfolio
- Pen/Paper
- Mints
- A bag to collect company information
- A handkerchief if you suffer from sweaty palms!

How should you dress?

Conservative, professional attire is best. Your goal is to avoid anything that will distract an employer from focusing on your qualifications, such as bright ties, strong cologne/perfume, or excessive jewelry.

- Men should wear a clean pressed suit and tie with comfortable dress shoes. If you don't own a suit, consider wearing dress pants and a long sleeve shirt and tie.
- Women should wear a clean pressed suit (either pants or skirt are fine), and if you don't have a suit, consider wearing a nice blouse and skirt or dress pants. Skirts should be no shorter than 2" above the knee (check it when you're sitting down!).

Who will be at the Fair?

- Go to the Career Center's web page at www.careercenter.umd.edu to view a list of employers who are expected to attend the fair.
- Have a "game plan" - make a list of employers to visit in order of importance to you. Know specific information about those organizations. Check out their web pages and the employer files at the Engineering Co-op Office or Career Center. Research information such as the organization's mission, products/services, and current events.

Your Approach

- Prepare a "30-second commercial" to use when you approach recruiters. This should include:
 - Your name & major
 - Career interests
 - Work experience and/or activities
 - An expression of interest in the organization and their opportunities
- Be prepared to continue your commercial by answering the recruiter's questions. Example: "What type of job are you seeking?" The answer should NOT be "Anything" or "It doesn't matter; I'm flexible." Also, tailor your commercial to each employer you approach. That is, identify, before the fair, how your background and future goals fit each employer that interests you.
- Smile and offer a firm handshake as you introduce yourself.
- Offer your resume to the recruiter rather than waiting to be asked for it.
- Demonstrate confidence and interest.

Answering Questions

- Practice responses to frequently asked questions such as “What kind of position are you seeking?” and “Tell me about yourself.” See sample questions below.
- Listen carefully to their questions before responding.

Asking Questions

- At career fairs, focus more on “big picture” questions. Recruiters that are attending are often representing the company as a whole and may not know specifics. So, avoid questions like, “To whom would I report?” or “Describe a typical day on the job.” Save questions like this for when you are interviewing for a specific job.
- Ask good questions to show that you have thought about your career goals and researched the organization. Examples: "I am interested in the area of telecommunications and noticed on your web page that you have co-op opportunities in your telecommunications department. Can you tell me more about the job duties of a co-op?" or "What skills are most important for your design position?" See below for more examples.
- Ask for a business card or contact information. Inquire about the best method for following up with an organization. Thank the recruiter for their time and indicate an interest in communicating again.

After the Fair

- Make notes as you leave about the information you gathered, especially the follow-up plans.
- Send a thank-you note right away.
- TAKE INITIATIVE and follow up with company representatives through phone calls, e-mails, or letters – this will make you stand out as an interested and eager candidate.

Additional Tips

- Build relationships with recruiters at local career fairs... the same ones tend to come back year after year. Don't wait till your senior year to show up!
- Act and speak professionally.
- Arrive early in the day. Be there when recruiters are fresh, alert and attentive.
- Be patient and anticipate crowds and lines. Try visiting the tables with fewer crowds first.

Questions Career Fair Recruiters May Ask You

- In what type of position are you most interested?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What interests you about this field? Why did you choose your major?
- Why do you think you might like to work for our organization? What do you know about our organization?
- What are your career goals?
- What courses did you like best? Least? Why?
- What is your overall GPA? Do your grades accurately reflect your ability?
- Describe your computer skills/experience.
- What background and experience will you bring to our organization?

Suggested Questions To Ask Recruiters

- What qualifications do you look for in people you hire for these positions/your organization?
- What skills are most important for the engineering co-op position available in your department?
- What type of projects do co-ops typically work on in your organization?
- What particular computer equipment and software do you use?
- What kind of supervising and training do co-ops receive?
- What percentage of your interns/co-ops are hired as full-time employees upon their graduation?
- Can you describe the hiring process at your company?
- What are your hiring plans for the coming year?
- What additional experiences would you suggest I get between now and the time I graduate?
- What do you like most about working at _____?
- How should I follow up if I'm interested in pursuing employment with _____?

Note: The Engineering Co-op Office offers Career Fair Preparation Workshops are before the major Career Fairs on campus; check our web site for dates and times.