

Job Search Advice for ESR Students & Alumni

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Introduction

Students enter the Earlham School of Religion with different levels of work experience and education, and at different stages of their career/vocational development. As they prepare to graduate from ESR and seek employment, some may need very little job search advice or guidance, as they have held many jobs or have changed careers several times throughout their lives. Others, especially those who come to ESR directly out of college, haven't had much opportunity to practice their career-related life skills and may need quite a bit of guidance as they seek their first full-time position.

Whether you are seeking a full-time ministry position or a part-time or full-time "survival job", we hope you find this resource helpful.

Finding Guidance During Your Job Search

It helps to know that there are others who have been in your shoes and can give you support and guidance during the search process. They can help

you locate employment opportunities and produce job search tools, as well as share in your excitement, accomplishments or fears as you seek employment.

Your On-campus guides include:

- **Faculty and Staff** - they may know of specific organizations or individuals with possible openings or good advice. They can help you edit your resume/CV and cover letter or assist you in developing your interviewing skills. They will also write letters of recommendation for you.
- **Your Advisor** - again, s/he may know of specific programs or organizations and can offer advice and clarity as you consider your options.
- **Your Friends & Classmates**—your friends are great for moral support and also as editors – hand them your resume/CV or cover letter for 35 seconds and then ask them what stood out or what they would change. This can be extremely helpful when tailoring your documents for a specific position.

Off-campus guides include:

- **ESR/Earlham Alumni** –Networking with alumni is very helpful in your job search. They can help you broadcast your search or let you know when they hear of openings.
- **Family members of Friends and Classmates** – let them know you are searching and what your goals are and they may know of openings or have advice for you.
- **Family Members** – ask for their assistance in gathering resources and seeking openings.
- **Former Employers, Service and Internship Supervisors** – they may know of organizations hiring and they are good resources for recommendations.
- **Members of your home church**
- **Chambers of Commerce** – depending on the city, Chambers offer services that might include job search packets, directories of members, or web pages for job searches.
- **The Internet** – here you have access to organization web pages and job search sites.
- **Community Agencies** – there are dozens of community agencies that offer targeted assistance for veterans, women, minority groups, teenagers, senior citizens, ex-offenders, and people with disabilities. Be sure to look for any specific resources in your community.
- **Off-Campus Job Fairs**—many communities and organizations, especially large employers, will host their own job fairs. The representative at Job Fairs can be very helpful in providing you feedback on your resume and other materials.

Job Search Tools

A successful job search requires the following tools:

- **Networking Skills** – learning to communicate with people who know people who know people is critical in the job search. See more about Networking on page 6.
- **Research Skills** – knowing how to identify and research possible employers is critical to performing the most effective job search. You have developed these skills throughout your academic career; now use them to research job opportunities.
- **Interviewing Skills** – it is imperative that you prepare well so that you are comfortable during interviews.
- **Résumés/CV's** – you will want a few different résumés that focus on specific jobs or skills. Résumés usually include your education, experience, skills and contact information. Some people are terrified of résumés, but once they learn more about them and actually start one, they may find résumés to be one of the easiest aspects of the job search.
- **Cover Letters** – this letter tells the prospective employer why they are holding your résumé in their hand. Although you will have a general format for most of your cover letters, and most of them will include the same general information, you will want to customize each letter to each position for which you are applying.
- **Thank You or Follow-up Letters** – these letters are another opportunity for you to demonstrate to the employer how your skills and qualifications are a good fit for the position.
- **References** – it is a good idea to ask at least three people – former employers, professors, service supervisors, mentors, or co-workers – if you can use them as references. Although you will probably only need names of references and their contact information at first, eventually you may be asked to provide letters of recommendation to prospective employers. You may use the References Worksheet at the back of this manual to make a list of possible references.

Finding Jobs & Employers

First, there are a few important things you should know about job openings.

There are 4 stages to a job opening:

1. An opening does not exist nor does anyone anticipate one existing soon.
2. Someone within the organization knows that a position may be open soon.
3. The position becomes open but has not been advertised.
4. The position is advertised.

Your chances of obtaining a position increase dramatically if you make yourself known to those who do the hiring before an opening even exists. How? If you have been networking and if you have developed a positive reputation in your previous work and volunteer experiences, you will likely be in contact with people who can provide information about potential job openings. In addition you should be actively identifying organizations with which you would like to work, then sending your résumé and following up with a phone call to ask for an informational interview.

Only 25% of all job openings are ever advertised

Often by the time they are advertised there are already candidates identified for the position. This means if you look only for advertised openings you will miss 75% of all job openings! So, besides looking for advertised openings, you'll need to identify possible employers and contact them directly to inquire about openings.

The Online Job Search

Besides networking, the Internet can be one of the most useful tools for finding information about organizations or for locating actual job openings. Many organizations include information about current job openings, or at least the names and contact information of key people at the organizations on their web sites. Contacting organizations via e-mail is also a quick and easy way to make initial inquiries about possible job openings or application procedures. The majority of organizations now have an on-line application process, which may involve creating an account to apply or simply emailing your materials to a person in their office.

There are many job search engines online. Some of these sites include all types of listings that can be searched by location or job type. Other sites contain listings of jobs in one or more particular disciplines, such as science or art related jobs. Some employers have their own sites for submitting electronic résumés directly to their HR Department, while others use search engines such as CareerBuilder.com to scan résumés for skills and experiences that might benefit their company. No matter what websites you choose to use, you'll want to keep track of those you find most useful, we suggest creating a bookmarks folder for quick and easy searching.

Using the Internet to find job leads is a more passive way of job searching and may not be nearly as useful as networking. Use this as one piece of your job search, and not the only way you search for jobs.

A few key sites to use are:

- **Quaker Information Center** at <http://careers.quakerinfo.org/quakerjobs>
- **Idealist.org** - for nonprofit jobs, internships, and more
- **Professional Associations** - search for national, regional and state associations in your field, they often have a public jobs board

Using Social Media in your Job Search

Social media can be a great tool for your job search. There are three main ways to utilize social media:

- 1) **Researching organizations:** This is an excellent way to use social media in your job search. In addition to thoroughly reading a company's web site, check to see if they have any social media accounts that will allow you to learn more about their most recent projects, updates, launches or articles they are discussing.
- 2) **Creating a Professional Image:** Social media provides a host of outlets for you to create your professional image. You can use various platforms to share photos from relevant experiences, such as conferences, service trips, presentations, internships or work experiences. You can also post reflections on your experiences or research and articles you are currently reading. If you are interested in using social media in your job search, take time to craft a personal brand. We can help you to do this!

Google your name to see what a potential employer might find out about you and use this to your advantage so that they see you in a professional light.

- 3) **Networking:** Another excellent way to use social media is to expand and communicate with your network. Before tapping into your networks, work on developing your professional image so that your contacts have a way to learn more about you. Consider letting your current network know you are searching for job or internship opportunities. Be creative and specific when crafting your posts. You could mention your job search activities, i.e. "I visited Asheville, NC this week to visit potential employers" or "participated in the Ministry of Writing colloquium at Earlham School of Religion and met a lot of people". Use a variety of statements to keep your network interested and from time to time ask them for help by being specific about your needs and interests.

Finally, utilize social media as a way to grow your network. Find new contacts and send a polite and brief introductory message along with your request. If someone suggested you reach out to them, let them know. If they accept your request, start a conversation with them regarding your shared contact, the company they work for, the field they are in, or the research they are doing. Communication is the key to creating an engaged network.

Social Media Platforms

Facebook – Though this is a site that is commonly used for personal connections, you can expand your network of professional contacts and also “broadcast” to friends you are seeking employment. Note: Be cautious with your postings to ensure that your activities on Facebook won’t give prospective employers “red flags” about you. Check your photos, videos and comments for professionalism. You may want to consider adding the requirement that you approve any tagged photos or notes if you are going to utilize Facebook in a professional manner.

LinkedIn - This professional networking site allows you to create an online resume, expand your professional network, join groups, and participate in conversations/ask questions. Use LinkedIn to research potential contacts or companies, find connections in an industry, track your professional network and even search for jobs. Recruiters use LinkedIn, so it is helpful to build out your profile completely to make a strong impression. Join our group to get in touch with ESR College Alumni. Search for ESR Career Connection.

Twitter - This microblogging site can also be a great way for you to interact with people of similar professional interests. Twitter can be a great tool to network and communicate with others in your field, and also to research companies. Companies are increasingly using Twitter to promote jobs and internships. The only privacy option is to make your entire account locked, so be mindful about how you use Twitter if you use it both professionally and personally.

Google+ - This site allows you to connect with people through a variety of self-created circles, making it easy to tailor your image and shared content. This site can help you expand your network, share and find relevant information, and research companies. You can also connect with or create company Google+ Pages.

*A note on professional branding: Professional branding is important for anyone who is job searching or building their career. It's important to create a brand that portrays you in a professional light that portrays a strong positive

impression of you as a high-caliber individual who would be an asset to their organization.

Networking — Using Your Resources

The list of job search “guides” is long — there are so many people who can help you with your career/vocational development — and these people are your best source for finding meaningful work! Most employers fill openings by hiring the friends, relatives, and acquaintances of the people who work for them; however, many people are just a little hesitant to rely on others to help them with their job search. Some people are too shy to pick up the phone to call a contact, and others feel they are “using” people. However, networking doesn’t just mean asking someone if they know of a job opening.

Networking means:

- building meaningful relationships, a good rapport, with many of the people in your life
- working with people to find connections that will be mutually beneficial
- becoming a support person to others

Networking might occur while doing service, completing an internship, talking to professionals in your field of interest, or visiting with ESR graduates at Homecoming.

Before you do anything else, sit down and make a list of all the people you know personally. These people are your **primary contacts**. You can use the contacts worksheet at the end of this document.

When you have a list of contacts, call them to ask if they have information about organizations or individuals that might be hiring and if they have the name of a contact. Ask for permission to mention their name when you call the contact.

The names of contacts you get from your primary contacts are your **secondary contacts**. It’s now time to call or write to your secondary contacts, making sure you mention that your primary contact suggested that you call or write to him or her. Some of these secondary contacts will simply lead you to other contacts, however some might actually be potential employers.

The 3 Keys to Networking:

- 1) **Be intentional.** Know why you are reaching out to someone and what you hope to gain from that contact. Always offer to help your contacts—a simple “Let me know if there is anything I can do for you” will go a long way.
- 2) **Follow up.** Send a thank you to a recent contact to follow up on a conversation or email. Get in touch with any new leads and let your initial contact know that you did. Stay in touch periodically through a quick email or phone call to check in.
- 3) **Track your contacts.** Keep an organized list of your contacts, including the dates of when you spoke, if you promised to follow up with something, any pending action items, and when you should reach out again.

Steps to Employment (a.k.a. the Job Search Process):

We hesitate to call these “steps” because the job search process is not really linear, it’s cyclical. You’ll need to perform many of the “steps” at the same time and return to each as you gather more information and discern more about yourself and your employment options.

1. Identify Potential Employers

- **Call or email organizations** you learn about online, from networking, or from other researching resources, to inquire about possible openings or to schedule informational interviews.
- **Talk to people you know** – parents of friends, former employers, mentors, and such – to glean information about potential opportunities.
- **Never ignore a lead.** At first a job may sound just so-so, but after contacting the organization and learning more, it may turn out to be a great opportunity.

You can use the Possible Employers worksheet at the end of this document to write down information about the employers and track your progress.

2. Research Employers

Now it’s time to find out more about each of these potential employers. What is their product or service? How large is the organization? How stable is it? What is its organizational structure? Are the workers happy? What is the name and address of the person who does the hiring? Again,

you can answer these questions with the help of your “career guides” or by scheduling informational interviews.

As you research organizations and job openings, think back to your goals and objectives and consider how they relate to the jobs. If you find yourself attracted to a job that does not match your stated objectives, it may be that your objectives are changing. Or, it may be difficult to find jobs that match your objectives so you have to adjust the goals a little.

3. Choose Your Targets

You now have to make some hard choices based on the piles of information you have gathered on a variety of jobs. From this large group you need to pick a manageable number (10-20). Your clear idea of your goals and objectives will guide you in your decision making.

Note: You don't have to wait until you've compiled a specific number of possibilities before you begin to contact the potential employers. You may chose a few, contact them, and then chose a few more. Just take on what you can manage at that time. A few small steps at a time might be more manageable than a giant leap.

4. Contact Potential Employers

Now it's time to contact each organization by sending them your cover letter and résumé. After you send your résumés, continue identifying, researching and contacting more organizations to keep yourself busy during the long wait, and to increase your pool of opportunities.

The purpose for contacting these employers is to get an interview. To actually get the interview you have four options:

- 1) You can simply wait for them to call you and ask you to interview
- 2) You can ask the hiring manager for an interview in your cover letter
- 3) You can follow-up your cover letter and résumé with a phone call and ask the hiring manager for an interview. State in the closing paragraph of your cover letter that you will be following up in a week via phone to ensure that they have received your materials. This keeps you in the driver's seat a little bit longer.
- 4) You can do both 2 and 3! You have a much better chance of getting the interview if you follow option #4.

Note: It's very important that you address your cover letter to the person who does the hiring. To learn this person's name try looking online or calling the organization.

5. Follow-Up

Following up with a phone call lets the person who is doing the hiring know you are serious about the position.

6. Wait

Remember that a search takes time. Organizations also have other responsibilities beyond processing inquiries and applications. Two to three weeks is the average waiting period. During this wait, you can begin identifying and researching more organizations.

What Now?

Many students ask when they should follow up on their applications. We suggest that all applications be followed by a call to see if the résumé was received, but what if nothing more is heard after that? It is appropriate to call and ask when a decision might be made or what stage of the hiring process the organization is in. You might also ask if you will be notified either way or only if they want to interview you.

7. Interview

After the wait is over, hopefully the next step will be interviews. If you feel you need to brush up on your interview skills, search for articles and tips about interviewing on the internet. Also ask a trusted friend, professional contact, professor, advisor, etc. to do a mock interview with you.

8. Offers, Negotiations and Decisions

Not every organization can have you! You may have to make a decision between two or more job offers that interest or excite you. When you receive an offer, make sure you:

- Sound pleased and express your interest
- Take notes on the starting salary, benefits, start date, etc.
- Ask when the company needs your decision
- Let the hiring manager know when to expect your decision

If an offer is lower than you expected or require, express your enthusiasm for the opportunity then reveal your concerns in the offer. Indicate your desired salary or compensation package and ask if some form of accommodation can be worked out.

If you do receive more than one offer and must make a decision, these few pointers may help you in your selection.

Below are questions that you might ask yourself in making a decision:

- Which organization fits your personal interests and needs the best?
- Are your abilities suited to the organization?
- How did you get along with your prospective supervisor in the initial interview?
- How much responsibility will you have?
- How well do the projects/assignments relate to your goals?
- Is the work worthwhile? Who is going to benefit from the work you will do?
- Compare the benefits of each. What can you learn? What will you earn?

9. Accepting the Offer

Once you have made a decision to accept an offer, you should call your new manager first, accept the offer and settle any final details. Then, you should send a confirming letter outlining the details of the offer. If you receive an offer in writing, read it carefully and return it promptly, and if you have any doubt, have an attorney or mentor review the letter for you. Once you have accepted the offer, discontinue your job search and withdraw your applications from any ongoing searches. If other offers were made to you, you must contact the organizations and politely decline their invitation to join them.

Key Tips You Can Count On

In summing up, here are a few things to remember during your job search adventure:

1. **Check and check again.** When you find a resource that lists current openings, check back often to see what's new.
2. **Start early and keep at it.** If you are hoping to have a job by graduation, start identifying possible employers and making yourself known to them NOW!
3. **Use multiple strategies.** Network, broadcast, call, write, visit, check the web, check newspapers...do it all!
4. **Don't be afraid to reach!** You may not meet every qualification for a job. If you feel confident that you can do well in the position, try for it anyway! Just like you are looking for the perfect job, they are looking for the perfect employee; BUT, they might be willing to let go of one preference or requirement if the right person comes along.
5. **The job search is a series of waves.** Research, contact, follow-up, follow-through, wait...research, contact, follow-up, follow-through, wait.... You may have to go through several waves before finding the right job.
6. **Always follow up on leads!** Enough said.

- 7. Stay organized.** You will be checking multiple places for jobs, and it can be easy to lose track of what positions you have and have not applied to and whether or not you have followed up with different employers. Whether you use a notebook or google doc, find a way to track your progress and make notes on next steps. There is a sample worksheet in the back of this book.

Helpful Forms Below Include:

My Potential References
My Potential Contacts
Great Web Sites to Remember
Possible Employers
Tracking my Applications
Elevator Speech for Networking
Expenditure/Salary Estimates

My Potential References

Include professors, advisors, coaches, work or internship supervisors, volunteer coordinators, clergy, etc. References used will depend on the position for which you are applying.

		Contacted	Received
Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____		
Email Address _____			
Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____		
Email Address _____			
Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____		
Email Address _____			
Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____		
Email Address _____			
Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____		
Email Address _____			
Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____		
Email Address _____			
Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____		
Email Address _____			

My Potential Contacts

Include family, friends, friends of family, family of friends, former co-workers, former supervisors, professors, clergy, teammates, coaches, neighbors, alumni, club members, etc.

		Contacted
Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____	
Email Address _____		
Outcome: _____		

Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____	
Email Address _____		
Outcome: _____		

Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____	
Email Address _____		
Outcome: _____		

Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____	
Email Address _____		
Outcome: _____		

Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____	
Email Address _____		
Outcome: _____		

Name _____	Title _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization _____	Phone _____	
Email Address _____		
Outcome: _____		

Great Web Sites to Remember

Date Last
Checked

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

http:// _____
description: _____

Potential Employers

Organization _____
Contact(s) _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____
Address _____

Notes _____

Organization _____
Contact(s) _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____
Address _____

Notes _____

Organization _____
Contact(s) _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____
Address _____

Notes _____

Organization _____
Contact(s) _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____
Address _____

Notes _____

Tracking my Applications

Organization: _____
Position(s): _____
Contact Name: _____
Email/Phone: _____
Materials Required: _____

Key Information/Notes/Outcomes: _____

Materials Due Date: _____ Materials Sent On: _____
Follow-Up On: _____ Followed up On: _____

Organization: _____
Position(s): _____
Contact Name: _____
Email/Phone: _____
Materials Required: _____

Key Information/Notes/Outcomes: _____

Materials Due Date: _____ Materials Sent On: _____
Follow-Up On: _____ Followed up On: _____

Organization: _____
Position(s): _____
Contact Name: _____
Email/Phone: _____
Materials Required: _____

Key Information/Notes/Outcomes: _____

Materials Due Date: _____ Materials Sent On: _____
Follow-Up On: _____ Followed up On: _____

Expenditure Worksheet

Use this worksheet to estimate your expenditures and get an idea of your salary requirements. Realize that the cost of living is higher in some areas than others, so take your area of interest in consideration when estimating the costs.

	Per Month
SHELTER/HOUSEHOLD	
rent/mortgage	\$ _____
utilities: gas, electric, phone, internet.....	\$ _____
furniture, appliances, decor etc.	\$ _____
property taxes	\$ _____
FOOD	
meals at home	\$ _____
meals out	\$ _____
INSURANCE	
health	\$ _____
life	\$ _____
rental or home owners.....	\$ _____
car	\$ _____
HEALTH	
out-of-pocket doctor/dental/optometry costs	\$ _____
out-of-pocket medicines.....	\$ _____
gym membership	\$ _____
TRANSPORTATION	
public transportation	\$ _____
car payment.....	\$ _____
car maintenance.....	\$ _____
gas.....	\$ _____
car club memberships (i.e. AAA)	\$ _____
ENTERTAINMENT	
vacations/travel	\$ _____
movies, theatre, museums, music, concerts, etc.	\$ _____
PERSONAL	
clothing	\$ _____
haircuts, cosmetics, toiletries	\$ _____
gifts	\$ _____
memberships	\$ _____
donations.....	\$ _____
SAVINGS FOR GOALS	
other than retirement	\$ _____
for retirement.....	\$ _____
DEBT REPAYMENT	
school loans.....	\$ _____
credit cards	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____