



Overview of the Job Search

Office for Alumni Affairs & Career Advancement



STEP 1: KNOW YOURSELF - SELF-ASSESSMENT

Suggested Timeline: September-October (for students in a one-year program or the first few months of your program) and ongoing throughout your career.

The starting point in the career development process is identifying your skills, values, interests, and personality style to determine what types of positions are of interest and would be a good fit.

Begin by asking yourself the following types of questions:

- When working, what am I doing when I am the happiest?
- What moves me deeply?
- What problems do I want to solve?
- How important to me is security, money, and/or prestige?
- Is impacting social change, and/or working internationally important to me?
- Do I prefer to work in a laboratory, with people, analyzing, solving organizational problems, or educating the public?
- Do I want to improve individual health or have a broader impact?
- How will my career needs balance with my personal life?
- Do I want to impact policy, create healthcare systems, or regulate systems?
- What are my long term professional goals?
- What are my greatest professional strengths and what do I find most challenging?

Identifying Your Skills Recognizing the skills you can bring to an employer is important both in finding a position that is the right fit, in articulating your strengths during a job interview, and in determining what skills you are lacking or want to develop during your time at Harvard Chan. There are different types of skills:

Hard skills – which include expert knowledge (generally more objective)

Examples:

- Profession-specific job skills such as: quantitative analysis, laboratory techniques, programming, project management.
- Career-related knowledge such as: an understanding of issues related to a specific disease, understanding government regulations, or knowing research protocols.
- Research and investigation skills.

Soft Skills – which include interpersonal skills (generally more subjective)

Examples:

- Oral and written communication skills
- Time Management
- Organizational, administrative, or supervisory skills.
- Strategic thinking/planning
- Relationship-building skills
- Leadership
- Work Ethic
- Flexibility
- Ability to work under pressure/to meet deadlines
- Positive attitude

- Self-confidence
- Ability to work collaboratively/in a team

STEP 2: RESEARCH THE POSSIBILITIES/CAREER OPTIONS

Suggested Timeline: Throughout your time at Harvard Chan

The next step is to do research, gather market information and evaluate career options. Learn about the different types of employers engaged in work related to the field of public health and beyond and about the culture, mission, areas of specialization, major accomplishments, and current developments in those organizations and fields.

Key questions to explore include:

- What are examples of career paths in the field?
- What are typical titles and job descriptions and which are of interest to me?
- What kinds of work environments do they offer?
- Are the culture, mission, environment, and job responsibilities consistent with my skills, values, and interests?
- Where can I make contacts for internships, fellowships, or permanent job opportunities?
- Is there sufficient opportunity and growth potential?
- What are the salaries for those with my education/experience/skill level?
- How can I best prepare myself to be competitive in this field?

There are many opportunities to interact with a broad range of public health practitioners and scholars during your time at Harvard Chan. Connect with faculty and staff, attend events and conferences, and take advantage of the opportunities created by the Office for Alumni Affairs and Career Advancement, which include employer information sessions, career fairs, site visits and alumni/student programs. These are all chances to learn about trends in the field as well as different employment options. Try to make personal connections to those doing work in which you have an interest.

You can also learn about types of employers and opportunities through [Career Resources](#), which you can access through the Office of Career Advancement webpage. [CareerConnect](#) includes the job listings

posted by our office (and also allows you to view and rsvp to workshops and events sponsored by our office and to schedule an appointment with a Career Coach).

STEP 3: SET GOALS

Suggested Timeline: As early as possible and definitely by December/January (or six months before graduation) and ongoing.

Now that you have conducted research and are beginning to understand the options available to you, it is time to **focus on how to fill the skills and experience gaps for the career options that you have identified**. You will want to continue to explore each option through conversations with professionals in the field, as well as with staff and faculty.

Your “story” or elevator speech - Write down your career goals and prepare a few sentences that you can give to people in writing and/or in person (in a minute or less) that gives them a sense of your background, the type of position(s) you are seeking and how they can be of assistance to you.

The Harvard Chan Career Advancement Office can help with individual career coaching to facilitate career decision-making.

STEP 4: SEARCH FOR JOBS – JOB LISTINGS AND NETWORKING

JOB LISTINGS

Suggested Timeline:

Job Listings: Generally, apply to positions with immediate openings no earlier than three - four months before you are available.

Be aware that some job listings have application deadlines way in advance of graduation (sometime 9 - 12 months in advance of graduation) for positions that will begin after you graduate. The types of positions with advance deadlines are generally fellowships and positions in consulting and academia.

Job listings: The types of sites that you visit depend upon the nature of the position(s) you are seeking. In addition to the job listings on [CareerConnect](#), below are 15 recommended public health and general job listing sites:

1. **Publichealthjobs.net** - <http://www.publichealthjobs.net/> - Association

of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) job listings

2. **APHA Public Health CareerMart** - <http://careers.apha.org/jobs> - American Public Health Association Job listings
3. <http://seo.harvard.edu/> - Harvard University Job listings.
4. **Public Health Jobs Worldwide** - A comprehensive source of public health careers and emergency assignments around the world
5. **National Association of County and City Health Officials** - <http://careers.naccho.org/jobs/> - public health job postings
6. **Public Health Employment Connection** - <http://cfusion.sph.emory.edu/phec/index.cfm?CFID=4372425&CFTOKEN=17313927> - Rollins School of Public Health job postings
7. **CareerShift** - <http://www.careershift.com/Default.aspx?sc=hsph> - comprehensive job and company search tool
8. **Indeed.com** - meta job search tool
9. **Simplyhired.com** - meta job search tool
10. **Idealist.org** - tool for jobs in the non-profit/public sector
11. **Higher Education Recruiting Consortium** - <http://hercjobs.org/> - job listings in higher education
12. <https://www.higheredjobs.com> - higher education job listings
13. www.devex.com/jobs - Global (humanitarian, health and sustainability) jobs
14. **Usajobs.gov** - US federal government jobs
15. **LinkedIn Jobs** - <https://www.linkedin.com/job/linkedin/jobs/>

NETWORKING

Suggested timeline: Ongoing throughout your career

NETWORKING refers to the process of identifying and contacting individuals who may be able to provide you with information, advice, or job leads and/or the names of other individuals who may be able to provide you with such information. INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING is a type of networking. Networking and informational interviewing are proactive strategies for developing personal and professional relationships/connections to gather information and

gain exposure. If done properly, they can lead to job opportunities and long-term relationships.

The vast majority of jobs are obtained through the networking process. Networking gives you access to what is called the "hidden job market." These are the jobs which are filled through personal contacts, referrals, or by being in touch with the right person at the right time.

Developing, expanding, and maintaining your network is a critical career development skill. Many people shy away from networking because it feels uncomfortable to ask advice and seek support from people you may not know personally but it is an essential professional skill acquired through practice. Many of the people you contact will enjoy speaking about their work and the opportunity to help someone who is entering the field.

Even when applying to a job listing, it is helpful to have a personal connection to someone who works with the employer or someone who may know someone or something about the employer. Reaching out to your personal network to gain information or for someone to put in a good word on your behalf will enhance your chances of being considered for the position.

We have a tip sheet in [Career Resources](#) on networking which will help you figure out how to find potential contacts, approach contacts and prepare for the networking meeting.

More about potential contacts: Contacts can be classmates, faculty, administrators, [alumni from Harvard Chan](#) (you can search alumni using a variety of filters – those designated as ASK mentors have expressed a willingness to be a resource for current students), [Harvard University alumni](#), as well as alumni from other schools you have attended. Contacts can also be individuals who present in classes, at events and conferences, internship or practicum colleagues and supervisors, those in professional associations or who are experts in your field as well as individuals in your personal life.

STEP 5: PREPARE YOUR JOB APPLICATION MATERIALS/APPLY FOR JOBS

Suggested Timeline: Make sure resume or CV is in good shape early on and plan to update regularly.

Cover letters and other application materials are generally created for specific job listings.

You must make sure that the substance and format of your written application materials (resumes/cvs, personal statements, cover letters, etc.) are top notch – they should be targeted for the specific job(s) to which you are applying, highlight your most relevant skills and not contain any typos or errors.

Our office has a resume tip sheet and sample resumes and cover letters under [Career Resources](#). Resume workshops are held multiple times throughout the semester. Career Coaches also hold weekly drop-in hours in Kresge Cafeteria to assist students with job application materials. Students may also have their resumes and other application materials reviewed as part of an individual career coaching appointment.

STEP 6: INTERVIEW

Suggested Timeline: Throughout your time at Harvard Chan and your career

Job interviews are opportunities for you to convince an employer that you are the best candidate for the position - Do you have the qualifications? Are you genuinely interested in the position? Are you a good fit for the organization?

Interviews are also an opportunity for you to assess whether the position is a good fit for you - What does the work involve? What is the work culture like? Does this position match my professional goals, values, skills, and interests?

The key to successful interviewing is advance preparation and practice. It is critical that you are able to discuss how your skills and experience relate to the position and the value you add. Prepare stories that highlight your professional or academic accomplishments. You must make sure to research the employer and interviewer. You can practice interviewing using interview stream (accessible through [Career Resources](#)) and/or schedule a mock interview with a Career Coach. Read our “Guide to Acing the Interview” for additional advice and sample interview questions. We also hold interview workshops multiple times throughout the year.

STEP 7: NEGOTIATE THE JOB OFFER AND SALARY

Suggested Timeline: After you receive a job offer.

Once you have a job offer, you may have an opportunity to negotiate some of the details, including salary. When doing so, you need to be aware of the constraints of the employer and help them understand why you deserve what you are requesting. Also, be mindful that your negotiation strategy may be different depending upon whether you are speaking with a human resources representative or your potential boss. While salary is a critical part of a job offer, there are other factors which may be as or more important to you, such as job responsibilities, flexibility with respect to hours or location, opportunities for professional growth, etc. Evaluate the entire package and when negotiating, try to propose all of your requested changes at the same time. Remember that you may be negotiating with people with whom you are going to work so try to be respectful and not overly antagonistic during the negotiation process. Sometimes what is non-negotiable at the time of the offer may be negotiable at a later date.

We have a salary negotiation tip sheet on our office webpage under [Career Resources](#) and you can schedule an appointment with a Career Coach if you want assistance with your job offer negotiations.

ADDITIONAL JOB SEARCH TIPS

- *Take advantage of social media to make connections and create a positive professional on-line presence*, which includes maintaining an up-to-date and dynamic LinkedIn profile.
- *Cast a wide a net.* Think broadly about the types of opportunities and employers for someone with your background, skills and interests. Also think broadly with re: to geography.
- *Make every networking meeting and interview count!* Be prepared and practice your answers to typical interview questions. Give every opportunity your best shot.
- *Be flexible.* You may be able to find a good job but feel that it is not the perfect job. Consider whether the job will give you skills and experience you are seeking or be a stepping stone to your ideal position(s). The position you accept should help you move in the direction you want to go in your career.

Updated June 2016

