

# Post-Graduate Opportunities

## INTRODUCTION:

Many students consider taking time off prior to starting a graduate program. Taking time off can allow you to develop professional maturity, build your experience, and explore a field you have always been interested in. Before searching for post-graduate opportunities, you need to evaluate a few things.

1. How much time are you planning on taking off? When do you hope to start a graduate program?
2. Why are you interested in a specific graduate program or field of study? What are your career goals with the graduate degree?
3. What types of post graduate experiences will allow you to gain additional skills/experience that will strengthen your graduate school application?

If you are struggling to answer some of these questions, we encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career counselor in the Career Center or an advisor in the Pre-Professional Advising Office.

Based on your individual circumstances, there are multiple options for pursuing post-graduate experiences. Most students will consider the following types of options:

- **Public Service Opportunities**
- **Research Opportunities**
- **Industry Opportunities**

## PUBLIC SERVICE POST-GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES:

Interested in working in public service? Do non-profit or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) appeal to you? Does the federal government intrigue you? What are the differences between these sectors? What population do you want to work with? Perhaps you wish to travel internationally or stay within the United States. Or maybe you just simply want to volunteer your time.

Explore the possibilities for paid or unpaid work in the public service sector whether you are working abroad or in your home community. Some programs offer short-term (1-2 year) commitments and other opportunities may just be geared towards a more short-term experience with flexible timing as you apply to graduate or professional school.

### Public Service Hiring Trends

Non-profits and NGOs: Many students find success directly contacting a non-profit agency or NGO that interests them, or networking with people who are working in a specific area of interest to learn more about opportunities available. These organizations generally do not have a lot of funds for advertising their available openings, and typically do not have the staff or funds available for travel to campus to meet with students. Set up an appointment with a Career Counselor to work on developing your strategic outreach plan.

International Searches: If you are pursuing an international opportunity, there will be an added dimension of complexity to your job search. Understanding the challenges and working them into your search up front will make it that much easier. Every country has different laws and regulations for obtaining visas. Timing will be important as you become familiar with each country's unique application processes, so planning 6-12 months in advance is advised. Assess your level of competency with the respective language skills you will need to use in your target country/job. Learn about the country's culture, traditions, general practices, and any restrictions you should be aware of.

Government: The federal government is infamous for an extensive, thorough application process for both internships and full-time positions. Our experience working with students interested in federal government opportunities is that the earlier they begin looking for opportunities, the more successful they are in securing a position. Many deadlines for positions that require security clearance are late October. Check out the Partnership for Public Service's website to learn more about specific options and application deadlines. You will want to begin developing tailored documents for the federal job board. Check out "Where the Jobs Are" to learn about nearly 273,000 positions the government is hiring for between now and September of 2012.

## **RESEARCH POST-GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES:**

If you are looking for ways to get a year or two of experience, research can be a great option.

Research positions exist for numerous fields, not just the sciences. Before beginning to search for opportunities, examine whether research will be the best fit for you and how it relates to your long-term goals. Part of preparing for a successful search involves examining your education and experiences and how they relate to the position you are seeking. This becomes especially important when you are developing a resume. The JHU Career Center has great resources that can assist you as you create a resume and other documents.

After considering whether research is right for you and creating a resume, it's time to begin to identify a target list of research opportunities and potential employers. Here are a few sources to get you started:

### **Science-related Research**

- Universities tend to have numerous Research Assistant positions available at all times. You can check the Human Resources section of their website and/or contact departments directly to learn more about what's available. Students interested in eventually pursuing a Ph.D. in the sciences can also consider PREP research programs. While many are specifically designed for underprivileged and/or minority students, others will accept applications from all students.
- National Institutes of Health Post baccalaureate Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) program and the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Research Training Award (CRTA) provide opportunities for recent college graduates to spend a year engaged in biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). To learn more, visit <http://www.training.nih.gov/student/Pre-IRTA/irtamanualpostbac.asp>.
- Government-funded clinical trials and studies may have research positions available. Visit <http://clinicaltrials.gov/> and search for opportunities based on area of interest, geographic location, etc. For each listing, you can then contact the principal investigator(s) to inquire about open positions.
- Many students also find research opportunities by identifying researchers they would like to work with and contacting them directly to ask about opportunities to get involved in the project. You can use the database of researchers through the Welsh Medical Library to identify projects and

find researcher contact information at Johns Hopkins  
[http://www.welch.jhu.edu/welch\\_tutorials/Collexis.cfm](http://www.welch.jhu.edu/welch_tutorials/Collexis.cfm).

## Humanities and Social Science-related Research

- Similar to the sciences, universities tend to have numerous Research Assistant positions available at all times. You can check the Human Resources section of their website and/or contact departments directly to learn more about what's available. Many colleges and universities also offer certificate programs and/or Master's programs where research is a key component.
- Research fellowships are offered by a variety of organizations ranging from non-profits to educational institutions and more. Many are for 9 months to two years. For example, the Institute for Women's Policy offers Research Fellowships that assist in the professional development of students and graduates interested in equal opportunity and economic and social justice for women. University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics also has a fellowship program. Note: The stipend and benefits package will vary based on your fellowship.

Research opportunities can often be generated on your own by contacting faculty members at colleges and universities, or investigating research being done at companies in your field of interest. You need to be willing to move beyond only searching for posted opportunities. Networking can be extremely important when trying to move into a research position. Speak with a career counselor about ways to begin networking with alumni.

## INDUSTRY POST-GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES:

There are many excellent full time job opportunities in a variety of industries that will allow you to develop different skills sets, experience working with others in a professional work environment, and build your knowledge in a specific field. Students who are planning on taking at least two years off prior to starting a graduate program are ideal candidates to pursue options in industry. Due to the cost of hiring and training, employers usually expect at least a two year commitment from a candidate that is applying for full-time jobs in their organization.

A full-time job search can take anywhere from 2-6 months depending on your field, so you need to plan to start this process early. If you are unsure where to start, meet with a career counselor in the Career Center to help you explore your options.

### Starting a Full-Time Job Search:

- Self assess your skills and interests. A career counselor can help you work through this process.
- Meet with a career counselor to obtain resources tailored to your individual goals. Each job search is unique and we tailor our services in individual appointments to give you the individualized information you need.
- Conduct informational interviews with alumni in your fields of interests and research key employers.
- Have your resume and cover letter critiqued in the career center and begin applying for job postings.
- Network, Network, Network! Attend upcoming employer information sessions, career fairs, networking events, conferences etc. Tell everyone you know about the type of position you are looking for. It may help to start a networking log in an Excel spreadsheet to track information

about the contacts you make during your job search and if you need to follow up in the future.

- Schedule a mock interview to work on your interviewing skills. Interviewing takes practice. Make sure you set yourself up for success by practicing well in advance.
- Stay positive and be persistent--this can be a long process!

## **NEXT STEPS:**

### **Explore Options & Learn**

Discover the differences between industry, public service, non-profit, non-governmental organizations, and research and learn about job opportunities within each sector. The below resources will get you started in gaining more information about your specific areas of interests. A combination of reading about different jobs and reaching out to your network of friends, family, faculty members, supervisors, and JHU alumni to get more information about what it's actually like to work in a particular organization or sector is a good strategy to start exploring the possibilities.

#### **J-Connect: JHU Job and Internship Database:**

<https://jhu-csm.symplcity.com/students/>

Sometimes students who are open to different types of industries like to read job postings and save any position that looks interesting to their Favorites folder. Meet with a career counselor to discuss how your skills may transfer into the job postings you saved. You will also use this platform when applying for jobs.

#### **Career Center On-Campus Recruiting Program:**

<https://jhu-csm.symplcity.com/students/>

Sign the On-Campus Recruiting Agreement in the Profile section of your J-Connect account. Some employers conduct interviews for positions in the Career Center on campus. The seasons for these interviews are generally September - November and February - March. Meet with a Career Counselor to learn more about the program and what is required of you to participate.

#### **Vault:**

<https://jhu-csm.symplcity.com/students/> (Login access through J-Connect homepage under the "Vault" icon, then "Career Insider". You will have to register for your own unique account, but the Career Center has already paid for your ability to access the information.)

Once you are logged into Career Insider, powered by Vault, you will see a "Download Guides" link across the top toolbar. Under "Browse by Category" halfway down the page is an "Industry Guides" section that provides over 40 in-depth guides to various industries and tips for building resumes and interviewing in various industries. You can also research information about specific employers in Vault.

#### **Spotlight on Careers:**

<https://jhu-csm.symplcity.com/students/> (Login access through your J-Connect homepage)

Peruse "Government/Law/Social Services" to find the "Federal Government" section. Here you can learn about various career options and current trends in government as well as tips for how to navigate the online application process and develop your Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs). This resource also overviews a variety of industries that you may be interested in.

#### **Going Global:**

<https://jhu-csm.symplcity.com/students/> (Login access through your J-Connect homepage)

Going Global is a great resource that can assist you in your search both within the United States or abroad. It has specific country information ranging from a listing of employers with the largest assets and revenues in the country to Resume/CV, interviewing, financial and cultural advice for the country. For example, if you are searching for an opportunity in South Africa, and not finding anything through the "JHU Job and Internship listing" in J-Connect, another avenue may be to search the Going Global "Job Resources" section for the country to find a listing of internships, job fairs and

career events unique to South Africa. There are also electronic links to newspapers and staffing firms specific to the country.

### **Alumni Networking on LinkedIn:**

[www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

Join the Johns Hopkins University Alumni group on [LinkedIn](#) and participate in the Career Networking Subgroups. If you need help learning how to utilize LinkedIn, you can find information on the Career Center website <http://www.jhu.edu/careers/handouts/usinglinkedin.pdf>.

### **JHU inCircle:**

<http://alumni.jhu.edu/JHUincircle>

inCircle is managed by JHU's alumni office. It is a networking tool designed for all JHU students and alumni to keep in touch with each other, regardless of where you are located around the world. By updating your profile and contact information, you can connect with alumni in your geographic or career interest area.

### **The Career Center Library:**

Located on the 3rd floor of Garland Hall, the Career Center library houses a variety of books, magazines, and handouts to be used at any time on a drop-in basis. Meet with a Peer Assistant to discuss what books or electronic resources may be most appropriate for your unique questions.

Check out the business card files for contacts of previous employers and alumni who have come to campus. Research the JHU Alumni Directory, housed on a library computer, to find alumni of interest.

### **Career Center website: <http://www.jhu.edu/careers>**

The website is a great starting point to find out about all your available career services options, including handouts with detailed resume and cover letter advice and the Major and Career Profiles to learn about areas of specialization, what employers want, and what alumni working in these fields have to say.

### **Partnership for Public Service: <http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/>**

Learn how to become a strong civil servant and find the best places to work within the federal government.

### **Idealist.org: <http://idealist.org>**

Find volunteer opportunities or paid, full-time positions working for non-profit or governmental organizations both within the United States and abroad. Search over 98,000 organizations worldwide using specific search criteria such as keyword or area of focus to find organization details and contact information. They also publish a free guide called "Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers for First Time Job Seekers" available at: <http://www.idealists.org/en/career/guide/firsttime/index.html>

## **Meet with an Advisor**

### **Career Center:**

- Explore career options that match your skills, interests and values
- Learn how to talk with people working in these fields (aka informational interviews)
- Think about your demonstrated and transferable experiences
- Create a resume and/or cover letter
- Develop your action plan and strategic goals
- Network to learn about positions in your area of interest
- Practice interviewing through a mock interview
- Job search support throughout the entire process

To make an appointment with a Career Counselor, please call us at 410-516-8056 between the hours of 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday.

### **Pre-Professional Program & Advising:**

If you are planning to take a glide/gap year or two but eventually hope to apply to professional school (medical, law, business, etc), then it is a good idea to schedule an appointment with a pre-professional advisor. He/she will discuss steps you can take now to prepare for applying down the road. These include beginning to have letters of recommendation submitted on your behalf, establishing a working relationship with an advisor, and other steps. To learn more about the office and its services and to schedule an appointment, please visit <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro>.