

*Muhlenberg*

# Job & Internship Search Guide

**Muhlenberg College  
Career Center**

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Hours of Operation  
Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**T**his guide will give you five steps to create a plan and implement a strategy for your internship or job search. Please note, using additional resources in the Career Center will be vital to successfully completing the steps below.



“A goal without a plan is a wish.”

– Antoine de Saint Exupéry

“**I know exactly where I want to be.**” You have your number one priority and this can be your main search location. Define how far you are willing to travel within this region to have a clearly defined radius for your search.

“**I have a few different locations that would interest me.**” Perfect! Rank the locations from most to least desired and you’ll be able to prioritize your efforts. You can always adjust this moving forward, but it will help focus your search initially.

“**I am open to going anywhere.**” This is great and gives you a lot of flexibility, BUT makes it very difficult to narrow your search and focus your strategy. Pick your top three locations to start with and adjust as needed.

Also, it may help to start by thinking about industries you are interested in (question #2 below). If you know the industries you are targeting, you could research their top geographic locations.

#1

**Define your target.** How can you reach a destination if you don’t have a map to get there? You do not want to just hope the right internship or job posting will magically appear. You want to proactively and strategically approach your search and this **starts with a plan**. Below are two big questions that are the foundation for your plan. **The order MAY VARY** based on what you know and don’t know about what you want to do and where you want to be.

*What are your top geographic areas of interest?*

Having an idea of where you want to be geographically will help to create a focused plan. This doesn’t have to be set in stone and you can pick multiple areas.

Here are common responses you may have to this question:

## Steps to a Search

1. Define your target.
2. Identify organization & build target list.
3. Attack: connect & apply!
4. Follow up.
5. Repeat/Revise/Revisit.

## Job Search Stat

On average, each corporate job offer attracts 250 resumes. Of those candidates, 4 to 6 will get called for an interview, and only one will get the job. (Glassdoor)

*Which industries are you interested in?*

Identifying industries you are interested in can help you start to figure out what companies and organizations operate in those areas. Here are three common responses to this question:

**"I know I am interested in a certain industry."** You have your target; check out step #2 below to start to build a target list of organizations and companies.

**"I have a few industries that interest me, but I'm not sure where to start."** Start by prioritizing based on your area of interest. If you aren't sure, take a look at a few companies that operate in that industry to see if anything gets you excited. Also, using LinkedIn to research who you know in those industries may help in getting a sense for that field. Go on LinkedIn and check out a company page to see what industry they are in; this will help you find other organizations in that industry.

**"I have no clue. What is an industry again?"** This is completely normal! Don't feel bad for not knowing what industry might interest you. Here are two easy steps you can take:

- a.) Are there companies or organizations that you consider ideal for what you want to do? If so, find out what industry they are in.
- b.) Explore what industries people with your major typically pursue. A great tool for this is on the Career Center website ([www.muhlenberg.edu/careercenter](http://www.muhlenberg.edu/careercenter)). Click on the Students tab then the "Explore Careers & Majors" button. You can also see what Muhlenberg alumni with your major have done by using LinkedIn's alumni tool ([www.linkedin.com/alumni](http://www.linkedin.com/alumni)).

If you are still struggling with finding some of these resources or answers to your questions...come see us! Career Center staff are here to assist with these questions and building this foundation, so don't feel overwhelmed. Making these decisions early and putting this plan in place will help you feel in control of your search.

**#2 Identify Organizations & Build Your Target List.** What organizations are doing work you are interested in? Now that you have narrowed down your target geographic location and industries, you can start to gain an understanding of what organizations and companies are operating in this space. Build a target list of employers that are doing work you are interested in and operate in your target geographic location(s). Aim for a list of 15 to 25 companies (per geographic area if you have multiple target locations).

## *How do you find them?*

There are many sites you can use to search for organizations by industry and location, but here are a few of the most popular:

- **LinkedIn.com/directory/companies** – LinkedIn’s company search is the easiest way to identify organizations in a specific geographic location and/or by industry. You can filter based on size of the company which helps to find some of the small to mid-size organizations in your target industry.
- **Glassdoor.com** – A well-known site that has company directories and employer reviews. Also, they have lists of best places to work in major metropolitan areas.
- **Buzzfile.com** – This site allows you to build lists of companies and filter based on factors such as industry, location, and size. Also, you can break down employers who hire specific majors.
- **Local Chamber of Commerce & City Websites** – Now that you have a location, you can investigate what the local Chamber of Commerce has to offer in terms of lists and directories.

## *Build Your Target List*

Write (or type) your 15-25 organizations for your location(s). This now becomes your target list. Our next steps are going to involve researching, connecting, and applying to these organizations. Think of this list as the launch pad to support your take off. You now have a very clearly defined target that you can easily find out how you are connected, what their recruiting process is for internships/jobs, and how you can be the most qualified candidate possible.

A quick note on organization. This is the time, if you haven’t already, to make a decision on how you are going to track and organize your search. You can use Google Docs & Calendar, Excel, a notebook, a paper calendar, or whatever you want. The key is that you have somewhere to note progress on networking with your target companies as well as track your job applications, their dates and contact information.

**#3 Attack, Connect & Apply!** At this point, you have taken the time to create a solid plan which will allow you to take action. Your goal is to build some contacts in your target organizations to learn about their hiring process for internships and jobs as well as gain insight into how to market yourself as an applicant. Also, this will help you to build advocates for your application when you do apply.

## Job Search Stat

It can take up to two months to get hired. That’s from the moment a candidate begins a job search to the point where they take the offer.

(Careerbuilder)

**Remember**, there are many ways to identify target organizations; the sites above are just a few examples. Sometimes, even something as simple as a Google search for types of companies in a given location can return what you may need.

Who do you know and who can help you? Think about some of your closest ties (family, friends, classmates, faculty, work/internship contacts) with whom you would share your target list of companies. Showing them some of the organizations you are targeting will give them a clear picture of how they can help (most people DO want to help). Also, sharing this list makes you look organized and demonstrates to them how seriously you are taking your career development.

Be strategic –don't try to do it all at once. Plan out how you will investigate and connect with each company on your list. The first step is figuring out if you know anyone or if you can get introduced through someone you know. LinkedIn is a great tool to figure out how you are connected or can get connected to your target list. If you find the company on LinkedIn, their company page should tell you:

- any 1st degree connections on LinkedIn – people you know or have connected with on LinkedIn already
- any 2nd degree connections on LinkedIn – people you can get introduced to through someone you already know

Additionally, you can use LinkedIn's alumni tool ([www.linkedin.com/alumni](http://www.linkedin.com/alumni)) to find out if any Muhlenberg alumni are working at the company.

If you have exhausted your searches and have no connections or loose ties to anyone at the company, get creative. Do they have events you may be able to attend? What can you find on their website? As a last resort, you can reach out "cold" with a call or an e-mail to try to make a connection. You can find more advice on how to do this in our Networking Guide. The key to this step is doing everything you can to make a connection and gain advice on getting a foot in the door for an internship/job there.

As you try to connect with people from your target list of organizations, your goal is to get more information and advice, NOT to ask for a job or internship. You want to build a connection and learn about the process; if you lead with asking for a job or internship, it may be tougher to get a response. Remember to view our Networking Guide to help with reaching out to contacts at your target organizations.

### *Find Postings and Apply*

While your main strategy is targeting organizations and networking, you also want to spend a portion of your time looking for postings. The goal is to build connections before you apply, but sometimes you won't be able to do that. Here are three types of job boards to consider:

a. Company Job Boards – The benefit of having a target list of organizations you are interested in is that you can directly check their website to see what jobs or internships they have posted. This is a much more direct way to search and gives you an understanding of the specific organization application process. Note that larger organizations may have robust job boards that you'll need to search, while mid-size organizations may list a few positions, and smaller organizations may not post anything.

b. Career Center Job/Internship Postings – The Muhlenberg Career Center has postings from employers specifically looking to recruit Muhlenberg students and alumni. You can set up a profile on this database at [www.muhlenberg.edu/hiremules](http://www.muhlenberg.edu/hiremules).

c. General Internship/Job Boards – These are general sites that you can use to search using keywords and locations. There are TONS of these websites out there, so find a few that you like and trust. Here are some examples:

- i. [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)
- ii. [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com)
- iii. [www.linkedin.com/jobs](http://www.linkedin.com/jobs)
- iv. [www.internships.com](http://www.internships.com) (internships only)
- v. [www.looksharp.com](http://www.looksharp.com) (internships only)
- vi. [www.internshipprograms.com](http://www.internshipprograms.com) (internships only)

d. Niche/Industry Specific – These are websites that are specific to certain industries. There are many of these that you can find, below are just a few well known examples:

- i. [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org) (Nonprofit)
- ii. [www.dice.com](http://www.dice.com) (Technology)
- iii. [www.mediabistro.com](http://www.mediabistro.com) (Media)
- iv. [www.efinancialcareers.com](http://www.efinancialcareers.com) (Finance)
- v. [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) (Federal Government)

Make a plan for the job boards you are going to use and how often you plan to check them. Also, reference our guides on resumes and cover letters and be sure to have the Career Center review all your application documents!

#4

**Follow up!** This is probably the hardest part of the job and internship search. Following up can make the difference for your search. Stay in touch with contacts. As you connect to people in your target companies, it is really important that you stay in touch with them. You can do this by making a note to check in with them every month or so or send them relevant articles to your discussion or their work. An easy way to stay in touch is to simply update them on how you are doing (school, job search, etc) and ask how their month is going. It is always nice to reach out when you aren't necessarily asking them for something. You can find more about this in the Networking Guide.

Quick tip: Set up a Google alert ([www.google.com/alert](http://www.google.com/alert)) for your target companies so you get an email when they are in the news. This will help you stay in touch with relevant information.

#5

**Repeat/Revisit/Revise** At this point, hopefully you have a plan for your search. This plan should be FLEXIBLE. As you research and connect with your target organizations, it is likely you will uncover more organizations you are interested in pursuing. You'll need to revisit your plan and strategy often to revise as needed. If you don't feel completely confident in the direction you are heading, that is normal at this stage in your career. The key is continuing to have a plan so you are able to move forward and adjust as you go.

The Career Center can help you create your Internship/Job Search Plan, so please don't hesitate to come in and talk to us!

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