8. The Job Search

If you are seeking a job, that will be your top priority. In most industries, jobs become available when someone leaves his/her position. Though you may want to find the perfect job right away, the reality is that it may not be there right now. Part of your job search should be thinking broadly about positions that may serve as a stepping stone to your perfect job. There is no magic formula for a guaranteed job in your field of interest, but there are ways to increase your chances of landing a great opportunity. What do we recommend? Read on. Even after you graduate, OCS services are still available to you.

Increase Your Visibility

So much of finding a job is connecting with others. Many job seekers spend 80% of their time looking for and applying to posted openings and 20% of their time actually connecting with people. We recommend the opposite. The majority of jobs never get advertised; even if they do, by the time you find the posting on a website, how many other people have also seen that posting and applied? The most successful job hunters actively seek out companies that interest them, and then connect with individuals in the company who are doing the type of work they want to do. The more people who know you, your goals, what you have to offer, and who have a vested interest in your success, the greater your chances of hearing about opportunities as soon as they become available. Developing and nurturing relationships with professionals in your field will yield greater results than passively waiting for openings to appear on a website.

Get yourself out there. Let people know who you are, what you are looking for, and what you have to offer. At the same time, get to know them, what worked and what didn’t when they were job searching, and any advice they have on looking for a position in the current economic climate. Talk with your professors, advisors, mentors, fellow Yalies, friends, relatives, neighbors, previous supervisors, and professionals in your fields of interest. Get involved
and start doing what you want to do in any way you can. Volunteer to develop a marketing campaign for a non-profit, oversee the finances and budgeting for a major fundraising event, or coordinate speakers for a conference. Continue to build your skills and experience, and gain greater insight into the industry or profession you want to enter. Read industry publications and attend related events, conferences, lectures or performances. Once at the events, don’t be a wallflower; get to know as many people as possible; you never know who is going to have a job lead or who is in a position to hire.

Become involved with the Yale Club in your area and attend events they organize. Connections from Yale can extend far beyond the students who were on campus when you were. Even if there is no Yale Club near you, it is still worth the effort to stay in touch with your friends from Yale. Friends in other cities may have interesting experiences and advice from their own job searches.

Check out Chapter 11: The Art of Networking for more advice on connecting with others.

Keep Moving

While you seek a permanent position, find an internship, part-time job, temporary job, or volunteer position. Even doing something a few hours a week can make a difference. Working or volunteering can help you expand your contacts in the field and develop valuable skills, and may even turn into a full-time permanent position, as many organizations look at past interns or volunteers for qualified candidates when positions become available, especially if you contribute in a way that makes you invaluable.

Be realistic about your financial situation. If you can take an unpaid internship, consider it. If you can’t then look for other industries in which you could still use the skills you cherish. For example, publishing is not done only in publishing houses; many non-profits, think tanks, government agencies, museums and corporations also have an in-house staff working on publications. Temporary opportunities may offer an entry point into a potentially fulfilling career, so don’t overlook short-term opportunities in the legal field, entertainment, arts, communications, teaching or non-profit. The important message is to keep moving and stay motivated. An alumnus says that “you might have to eat humble pie and take a job that doesn’t interest or excite you. There are millions of unromantic jobs out there. Have you really been applying to them?
And you never know; you might like that unromantic sounding job more than you would think."

We are not advocating a career waiting tables, but we do recommend that you look at every angle in making decisions about your future. What we want to emphasize is that finding a fulfilling job takes work and time, and there are many different routes that can lead to a successful place. It may be helpful to find something on a temporary basis to ease the financial and emotional strain while you search for the job you really want. Continue to explore your options by knowing which professions best suit your skills and interest. And finally, don’t be hesitant about asking for advice or seeking support.

Here are a few additional pieces of advice from Yale alumni:

Remind your friends and yourself that this is a time where the unemployed can become employed in a snap. So if it feels like you aren’t having any luck, or everyone else somehow knows what they are doing, remember luck changes quickly.

—Alumna

If you don’t have a job lined up by the time you graduate, don’t sweat it. Many of my friends who had no plans in May are now doing the most interesting and exciting work of everyone I know—they’ve found ways to go abroad, intern in DC, or even enjoy living at home while pursuing creative projects. Make sure that you keep looking for listings and talking to people (aka: networking), but remember that uncertainty in May has no bearing on happiness or success later on.

—Alumna

Some friends have jobs or travel plans even before graduating. Some get lucky or through connections get a job right away. Some move to Hawaii or China. Some find the jobs they have while “looking for a good job.” Figure out what you want, explore related opportunities from every angle, count on your friends, use networking connections, and keep trying — but by all means don’t give up.

—Alumna

Be willing to take whatever job you find, and do it while you look for something better. A college education is a privilege, and a Yale degree is something most people in the world never have the chance to obtain. Be thankful for what Yale has given you, but don’t view a degree as a
'free pass' or 'entitlement' to get a high-paying job. The world doesn’t think we ‘deserve’ anything for being Yale grads—you have to prove yourself again. Don’t compare yourself to friends who might be in more prestigious sectors or grad school. Life is long and mysterious, and even if you feel like you don’t know what you want to do with your life yet, it’s okay!

—Alumnus ’13

Like all things Yalies do, recent graduates put a lot of pressure on themselves to have everything figured out by September after graduation. I jumped into something without taking the time to evaluate where I was and what I wanted. Yale can do a number on your mind and body, so it’s important, if it is financially feasible for you, to take some time to recuperate, rest, or take a job that is less taxing. A lot of your friends will jump into high-pressure, high-stress environments. Avoid those if you can, at least for a little while—especially if you found your senior spring somewhat hectic and overwhelming.

—Alumna

How OCS Can Help

The Yale Office of Career Strategy has many resources to support Yale College alumni. Yale is committed to assisting alumni throughout all stages of the career development process. Whether you are determining what you want to do, searching for a job opportunity, changing direction, or dealing with any number of other career-related issues that the real world has in ample supply, OCS can help.

Regardless of where you’re living, you can still schedule appointments with OCS advisers; if you’re out of the area you can schedule a phone or Skype appointment versus in-person. Use the online appointment scheduling system found on the OCS website—ocs.yale.edu—to find a time to talk with an adviser. In appointments, we can discuss your interests, how they translate into careers, and support you through the process of finding and landing opportunities.

On the OCS website you’ll find career tools, a list of external career coaches, executive recruiters’ directories, online workshops, the Yale Career Network and the Symplicity job database.
If you are considering graduate or professional school, OCS can assist you. Be sure to read the “OCS Graduate School Guide” if you haven’t already; this publication is available on the OCS website. Application procedures for law school and medical school can be confusing due to the variety of options, so check out the info provided on the OCS website and talk with OCS advisers. Additionally, medical school and law school surveys from other alumni who have attended our most popular destinations are available on our website.

Keep your OCS profile updated on the Yale Symplicity System — yale-csm. symplicity.com/students).

To continue to receive the OCS newsletter, go to http://ocs.yale.edu/content/connect-office-career-strategy on the OCS website.