

MENTORING SPARK

Quick ideas to light up your doctoral conversations.

► CAREER PLANNING



SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS

It has been said that looking for (and getting) a job, is a job. At the risk of oversimplifying the process, getting a job includes finding a good job announcement, submitting an excellent application, having **the**, (or one of the), top interviews, receiving an offer, and accepting an offer. The knowledge, skills, and ability (KSAs) for acquiring a job are mostly different than the KSAs to get an engineering degree or KSAs at a job. Thinking about **a) where to look for a job, b) whether an opportunity may be a good fit, and if so, c) how to frame documents to show the student's value to the hiring entity** can reduce stress by providing a process for students to follow.

Specifically, this spark is intended to help students think about where to look for jobs, and what knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are important during the process of applying to, being considered for, and obtaining a job offer.



► LEVEL 2

LEVEL 1: JOB EXPLORATION

LEVEL 2: JOB ACQUISITION

LEVEL 3: CAREER SKILLS



FACULTY FYI

Regardless of the career sector, the future work done by a graduate student reflects on the advisor; consequently, advisors may want to help students find a good match.

The process of obtaining a job varies greatly. This **Spark** is not intended to provide specific guidance, but rather to provide thoughtful consideration on the importance of **a) where to look for jobs, b) whether an opportunity may be a good fit, and c) tailoring documents to meet the job description**.

As a reminder, the **Spark** on Job Exploration provides definitions for the **Spark** series.



ACTIONS FOR FACULTY

- Explain to students that the process of acquiring a job typically requires multiple applications, as well as time to prepare, apply, and interview. In addition, the process is different for academic, government, and industry job openings. One example being that academia tends to have a hiring cycle, while industry hires as needed (especially for advanced degrees).
- Discuss with students **if** they should spend time investigating what jobs are available prior to the timing of actually applying for a job. There are arguments for Yes or No. Yes, to help them understand what is coming and what is needed to get those jobs, and No, to keep them from spending too much time job hunting versus finishing their degree.

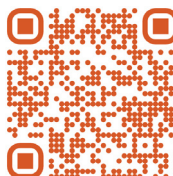
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A RESOURCE FROM:



Use this QR code to access this and other Mentoring Spark tip sheets:





DIGGING DEEPER

- With the school's student services/ (or similar name) support, set up an appointment for a visit. This service should have recommendations on how to look for a job (*job sites, career fairs, etc.*) and also services related to helping with resume writing.
- Members of a student's network who have jobs similar to what that student wants—space and students on the job market with similar interests—are both valuable tools/resources for learning what is needed during the application and interview process.

Please visit the RDI Mentoring Sparks website for examples and links to these tools and resources!



EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS

1. Have students gather a couple of job announcements and outline their applications; what needs to be tailored, what can be “*plug and play*” between them, and what might need to be started from scratch. We are not suggesting they make the documents, but to simply outline what is needed to allow for a discussion.
2. Have students make notes on the different job descriptions from the exercise above. **A) What skills and knowledge are required? B) What benefits does the job offer? and C) What are other strengths and weaknesses (such as location, travel, on-site/hybrid, etc.)?**
3. Have students review their networking map of careers and ask them if they have sufficient networks established, where are any gaps, and how they can use their network to help them acquire a job.
4. Have students review the CVs of faculty and/or recently graduated students who are in the same career sector for which the student plans to obtain a job. Have the students update their own CV based on strengths they recognize from reviewing the other CVs.



REFLECTION & NEXT STEPS

- **Student:** Consider your networking circles in relation to getting a job. Consider purposeful expansion of your network to fill any gaps.
- **Faculty:** Reflect on the mix of career sectors your students gravitate towards. Is there a particular job sector you could learn more about to help your students with their job acquisitions?



ACTIONS FOR FACULTY

- Have graduate students on the job market talk to your research group about how they are finding job openings and what the job application process includes.
- Have graduate students practice their job talks to the research group; not only is the practice helpful to them, but it will help other students realize what job talks entail.
- Help students to think about how their value will benefit a future employer (*refer to the networking Sparks and Communication Sparks*). When applying for jobs, it is important for students to respond to what is being asked, and not to simply submit a list of their skills.
- Explain to students that to submit their best application, they will need to tailor their resumes and CVs to fit the application.
- **GOAL Setting:** have students develop a goal related to investigating what knowledge, skills, and abilities are typical for a job advertisement.

Consider your networking circles in relation to getting a job.



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