Starting Your Search

Start your search with SJSU Handshake (sjsu.joinhandshake.com), our database with thousands of on-campus, off-campus, internships, part-time, and full-time jobs. To filter opportunities:

1. Enter the City, State, or Zip Code of your desired work area.
2. Select Job Type (e.g. full-time job, internship, on-campus, etc.)
3. Select Filters to expand your options.

4. Narrow down your search by selecting an industry or job function.
5. Once you’ve created a search that populates opportunities of interest, select Create Search Alert on the right hand side to get notified of new opportunities.
6. Select the star symbol to save a job. To see your saved jobs, select My Favorite Jobs on the search page.

Once you’ve looked through SJSU Handshake, expand your search to other job/internship boards:

- Indeed.com
- LinkedIn.com/jobs
- InternBound.com
- Career Interest Area Specific Boards
- Nonprofit (Idealist.org) Opportunities
- Government Opportunities

Remember that it takes a college graduate an average of 6 months to find that first job (The Balance, 2017). The key is to start your job search early, as fall is peak hiring season for many companies. Use the guide below to get an idea of when to start your job search. However, keep in mind that new opportunities are posted everyday, so it’s never a bad time to start!

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Career Center programs are provided without regard to race, color, religion, origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age and/or disability. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities available with prior notice. Call for assistance: 408.924.6031.
Networking with Employers

70% of jobs are found through networking (Payscale, 2017). This is due to a number of reasons:

- **80%** of jobs are never posted.
- **40%** of new hires are from referrals, despite them being only **7%** of all applicants.
- **75%** of resumes never make it to the hiring manager because they are screened out by applicant tracking systems.

(Infographic from Jobvite, 2012)

Preparing Your Conversation Starter

Preparing a conversation starter helps you introduce yourself to an employer representative with confidence. You may meet employers at job fairs, info sessions, career education events, professional networking events, or student organization events. This 30 second introduction focuses on how your skills and experience bring value to the company. Here is an example:

“Hi, my name is Sammy Spartan. I’m very active on campus, whether it’s a football game or freshmen orientation. As a hospitality major at SJSU, I’ve honed my customer service skills and would love to use my passion to be a community manager at your company. Can you tell me more about what you are looking for in an ideal candidate?”

See more examples on this article “41 Brilliant Elevator Pitches That Will Inspire You to Write Your Own.”
Attending Job and Internship Fairs

Job and internship fairs are a great way to meet multiple employers. These are typically held in the fall and spring. Be sure to attend the “Making the Most of the Job Fair” workshop to make the most of the event.

**Before the Fair**

1. Login to SJSU Handshake to find information on employers and specific opportunities. Periodically check for new employers and/or opportunities up until the day of the fair.
2. Select 5-10 target employers that you want to meet. Learn more about the employer by visiting the employer’s website.
3. Tailor your resume to specific opportunities/companies you want to apply for. Prepare a general resume for any additional companies you might be interested in at the fair.
4. Prepare and practice your conversation starter, as well as questions to ask employers such as “What qualities are you looking for? What growth opportunities are available?”
5. Dress professionally in business attire. For more help, see the Interview Attire section on the Interviewing Guide.
6. Pack your gear: a tidy folder, multiple copies of your resume, a calendar, and your student ID.

**During the Fair**

1. Use the floor map to locate your 5-10 target employers.
2. Approach non-target employers first to practice your conversation starter and calm your nerves.
3. When visiting employer booths:
   • At booths with long lines, have brief conversations (5 minutes).
   • Initiate a handshake with a smile.
   • Avoid questions on salary or benefits.
   • Offer your resume to the recruiter.
   • Ask about the application process and whom to contact for follow up. Do expect to apply online.
   • Request a business card or LinkedIn connection if the recruiter is willing to share.
   • Shake hands to close.

**After the Fair**

1. Send an email thanking the employer for his/her time and reiterating your interest in the role. Include another resume and other application requirements. For more help, see the Thank You Notes section on the Interviewing Guide.
2. Follow the application process and continue checking job listings on SJSU Handshake.
3. After you accept an offer, stop interviewing. Instead, plan for success with your new employer.

**Attending Info Sessions**

Info Sessions are similar to job fairs but will only have one employer. They will typically start with an introduction from the employer representatives on the company and opportunities they are hiring for. Check SJSU Handshake for upcoming info sessions and prepare for an info session similar to the way you would prepare for a job fair. Be sure to check the event description to find what majors and class years the employer is looking for.
Utilizing LinkedIn

LinkedIn.com is a great tool for online networking. Not only is it useful for connecting with people in the industry, LinkedIn also allows you to showcase your experience and skills. 80% of recruiters use LinkedIn to evaluate candidates when hiring (Jobvite, 2016).

Making Connections

You probably know more people than you think. Start by adding your friends and family. Then, add your peers and colleagues.

To find alumni, search San Jose State University and select See alumni. From there, you can filter alumni by where they work, what they do, and what they studied.

To connect with an alum you do not know, request to add him/her and send a personalized message such as:

“Hi, my name is Sammy Spartan. I’m currently a junior at SJSU studying business, and noticed you were a recent alum of the program. I would love to connect with you as a fellow Spartan.”

Expand your network by joining professional organizations and groups. There may already be a LinkedIn group for your major. Finally, follow any target employers to stay updated on opportunities and relevant news.

Building Your Profile

Your LinkedIn profile is like an expanded resume - instead of being tailored to a specific opportunity, it is a portfolio of your experiences, skills, and work. Here are some tips for creating a great LinkedIn profile:

- **Claim your LinkedIn URL at linkedin.com/in/yourname** by selecting Edit public profile & URL on the right hand side. Include this URL on your resume so employers can find you easily.
- **Include a professional headshot.** Don’t have one? Check out our Profile Photo Booth at the SJSU Career Center.
- **Create your brand by utilizing the headline and summary sections.** Highlight your key skills and what types of opportunities you are looking for.
- **Make it dynamic** by adding work samples, photos, personal websites, blog feeds, and/or relevant social media.
- **Use industry keywords.** If you aren’t sure what they are, look at other professionals’ profiles, especially at companies you want to work.
- **List transferable and technical skills.** These skills can be scanned by recruiters on LinkedIn.
- **Utilize the social aspect** by asking for recommendations and endorsements.
- **On the Career interests box, turn the option Let recruiters know you’re open on.**
- **Fill out 100% of your profile.** This increases your chances of being seen by a recruiter.

For more help, check out the LinkedIn for Students resource page.
Conducting an Informational Interview

An informational interview is an arranged meeting or phone call with someone who works in an industry or company you are interested in. It can help you gather specific information about a job, industry, or company. Remember that you are not asking for a job.

Setting Up an Informational Interview

Before you contact someone, establish your objective. What is it you hope to gain? Who do you want to interview and why? Once you have an idea of your goal, determine who you want to contact. If you are looking to connect with alumni, use LinkedIn and search San Jose State University, then select See alumni. Another great resource is the SJSU Alumni Association.

When introducing yourself, clearly state your objective, for example:

“Hi, my name is Sammy Spartan. I’m currently a junior at SJSU studying business, and noticed you were a recent alum of the program. I would love to take you out for a quick 20-30 minute coffee or lunch break to ask you some questions about how you got to where you are. Hope to hear from you soon, and thank you for your time!”

Preparing for an Informational Interview

Prepare questions ahead of time before meeting or calling the person. Below are some suggested questions:

• How did you get into your career?
• What is a typical day like?
• What do you like most about your job?
• What are the key skills that one needs to be successful in the field?
• What was the biggest challenge you had when transitioning from college to the world of work?
• Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to students to prepare for the workforce?
• What professional organizations or resources would be helpful for me to know?

On the day of the meeting, dress appropriately and be on time. Close the meeting by thanking them for their time. You may also ask a question such as, “Do you know of any current opportunities in the field?” to let the person know that you are currently looking for opportunities. This may lead to a referral; however, do not assume that the person will give you one. Follow up with a thank you note or email.