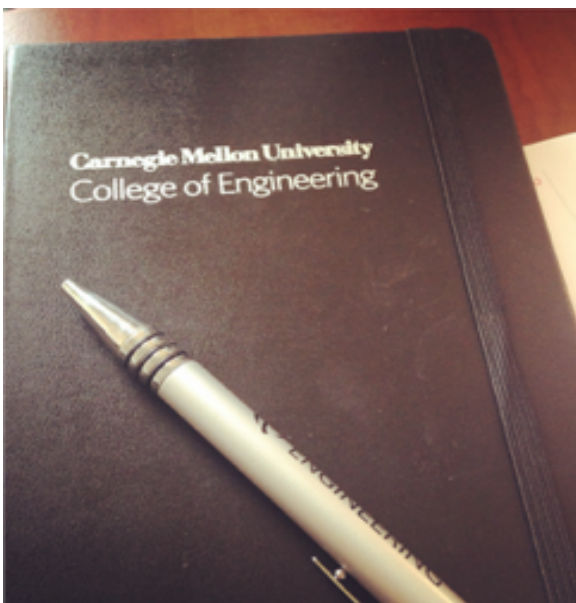




# Individual Action Plan

for Job Seekers



The CMU-SV Individualized Action Plan is designed to help job or internship seekers establish a plan for success. An individual search may feel overwhelming or confusing at times, but breaking it up into smaller action items will make the process smoother and more efficient. To stay on track and ensure essential milestones aren't missed, it is recommended that job or internship seekers review and edit their IAP frequently.

**Carnegie Mellon University**  
Silicon Valley

# Individual Action Plan

## Job Search Timeline in Detail

### 6-12 months out

#### Step 1: Self assessment and exploration

- Complete a self-assessment of your career interests and explore areas of career uncertainty.
- Establish a clear understanding of the salary range you will consider, your geographical preferences, the type of working environment you desire, the types of problems, products, or tools you want to work with, and the industry you want to work in.
- Make sure you are able to explain and identify your skills, interests, and values.
- Talk with a CMU-SV career consultant if any of your plans seem unclear.

#### Step 2: Research, research, research

- Research your field of interest – read books, online materials, blogs, articles, etc.
- Create a targeted list of employers that you would like to work for and research each employer on your list. Review the company’s website, LinkedIn profile and other social media accounts, and be sure you know essential information about each employer.
- Schedule informational interviews with people at each company in your field of interest to learn more about whether or not the employer is the right fit for you.

#### Step 3: Work on your job search materials

- Your resume should demonstrate your value, strengths, skills, and interests.
- Polish your online presence—website, blog, social media accounts, etc. Be sure to set privacy settings if necessary.
- Get professional business cards made to hand out at networking events.
- Make sure your voicemail and email signature are set. Your voicemail message should include your full name, what you’d like the person to leave (name, telephone number, reason for call, etc.), and how and when you will respond. Email signatures should include your first and last name, contact information, and a link to any relevant websites like a blog, social media accounts, or personal websites.

#### Step 4: Get active and attend events

- Attend relevant career-related workshops, activities, and events.
- Go to local networking events, hackathons, and meetups.
- Contribute to forums and discussion boards pertaining to your field of interest.
- Conduct informational interviews to obtain necessary information.
- Attend national and regional conferences of professional organizations in your field to learn more about opportunities, get involved in discussions, utilize job searching services, network, and add more connections to your professional network.

### 3-6 months out

#### Step 1: Start applying

- Find opportunities on job boards, search engines, company websites, through company referrals, from networking events, on LinkedIn, TartanTRAK, etc.
- Craft your resume and write a new cover letter for each position you apply to. It’s important to take a few extra minutes to tailor your materials for every single position.
- When possible, seek referrals from your contact list for specific positions.

## **Step 2: Interview**

- Read books and review materials on interviewing.
- Practice technical and behavioral interview questions.
- Research the employer and people you will be interviewing with.
- Prepare ahead of time by practicing your initial entrance and introduction, plan your outfit, plan your transportation and route, and practice verbal and nonverbal communication in the mirror.
- Arrive prepared and on time. Have a notepad and pen handy, have good hygiene, demonstrate strong verbal and nonverbal communication skills, demonstrate confidence, and smile!
- After the interview, reflect on what went well and what you can do to improve for next time, look up any information that was unclear.
- Send a thank you note to each person you interviewed with.
- Keep in mind, there are many rounds of interviews (phone screen, technical interviews, behavioral interview, phone or Skype interview, video interview, group interview).

## **Step 3: Network**

- Go to local networking events, hackathons, and meetups.
- Add new connections on LinkedIn.
- Contribute to forums or discussion boards pertaining to your field of interest.
- Follow up with your contacts –update them on where you are in your search, if you’ve accepted an offer, what your next steps are, etc.
- Reach out to contacts about potential job opportunities, send your resume if necessary.

## **0-3 months out**

### **Step 1: Assess your IAP**

- If things aren’t going as planned, reevaluate your job search strategy—what is working, what is not working, what challenges have you experienced, what help do you need?
- Assess if you are putting the needed amount of energy and time into your job search and whether or not what you are spending your time on is working.
- Meet with a CMU-SV career consultant to assess your IAP and make a new plan if necessary.
- Schedule a mock interview to have your interview skills assessed for areas of improvements.

### **Step 2: Evaluate offers and negotiate if necessary**

- Evaluate whether or not the package is what you were hoping for and if salary is in the range you were considering.
- Be sure you have a clear understanding of the expectations for the role and how you will be evaluated.
- If the position requires you to relocate, then consider if this is a geographical location that you desire.
- Consider whether or not the position is one that you are excited about and will help you grow professionally.
- If you have any concerns or uncertainties, you should talk with a career consultant and plan your next step.
- If you have any concerns or think there are aspects of the offer that need to be improved, then you should discuss this with the employer and be clear as to what aspects of the offer need improving and negotiate until you each come to a common and mutual understanding and agreement.

### Step 3: Accept or decline offers

- Once you've evaluated all offers, you should come to a decision about which offer is the best fit for you at this stage in your career. While salary is important, this should not be the only factor when determining whether or not you should accept or decline an offer.
- Accept the offer you are most pleased with and be sure to respectfully decline any other pending offers.
- Make sure you are familiar with CMU's offer and hiring policy.
- **Once you accept an offer, your job search ends.** Accepting an offer says to the employer that you are committed to them and no one else. Reneging on an offer is unacceptable and has damaging consequences for all involved. Therefore, you should be sure you are accepting an offer that you are pleased with to avoid any negative outcomes.
- After accepting, you should cancel any upcoming interviews.

### Step 4: Get ready for your new job!

- Make travel plans and moving arrangements (if applicable).
- Find housing (if applicable).
- Research the local area.
- Make sure you have all paperwork and employer needs in order.
- Have a clear understanding of the employer's expectations.
- Find out more about your team, the company, etc.
- Establish a success plan for your first 30, 60, and 90 days of new employment.

# Individual Action Plan

What's your plan?

---

## 6-12 months out

Month (12): _____ What's your main focus for this month?	
Actions:	Deadline:

Month (11): _____ What's your main focus for this month?	
Actions:	Deadline:

Month (10): _____ What's your main focus for this month?	
Actions:	Deadline:

Month (9): _____ What's your main focus for this month?	
Actions:	Deadline:


Month (8): _____ What's your main focus for this month?	
Actions:	Deadline:

Month (7): _____ What's your main focus for this month?	
Actions:	Deadline:

### 3-6 months out

Month (6): _____ What's your main focus for this month?	
Actions:	Deadline:

Month (5): _____ What's your main focus for this month?	
--	--

Actions:	Deadline:

Month (4): \_\_\_\_\_  
 What's your main focus for this month?

Actions:	Deadline:

**0-3 months out**

Month (3): \_\_\_\_\_  
 What's your main focus for this month?

Actions:	Deadline:

Month (2): \_\_\_\_\_  
 What's your main focus for this month?

Actions:	Deadline:

Month (1): \_\_\_\_\_  
 What's your main focus for this month?

Actions:	Deadline: