If you've picked up this handout, you're already looking at alternatives to graduate or professional school. An internship or career search can be tough, especially if you don't know where to start. Career Services wants to assist you in starting off on the right foot by providing information on how you may utilize the skills you possess as a science major in a variety of positions and fields.

Some of the skills you have developed through your coursework are: Analytical, Laboratory, Problem-Solving, Communication (oral and written), Critical Thinking, Technical (equipment), Teamwork, and Information Handling. Through the use of these skills, you contribute to the work of an organization.

As you explore organizations and professions, and get one step closer to answering the BIG question: "What am I going to be when I grow up?", some occupational categories to consider include quality control, diagnostic development, toxicology, genetics/ecology/microbiology, botany/zooloogy/entomology, clinical trial monitoring, biologics, research, laboratory technician, medical illustration, project management, research, or sales.

By meeting and developing relationships with professionals, you may gain mentors, role models, and friends. This is sometimes called networking—a scary term for an otherwise simple concept.
Tips for a Successful Search

- Define your goals.
  What area would you like to “test-drive” to see if you like it? Develop a list of criteria. Employers want applicants who understand their strengths and have specific goals.
- Plan to spend time each week on your search.
  Schedule and organize the time you spend on your search. Stay focused and motivated. It is easier and more effective to do a little each week instead of trying to do everything at once. Be proactive in your search.
- Research and identify opportunities (also see resource list at the end).
  There are three ways to find opportunities: A) You can search advertised listings; B) You can be proactive and approach employers that interest you, and C) You can build your network of people who can help you identify unadvertised listing. It’s best to spend time on all three approaches.
- Prepare and submit application materials.
  Every employer has specific requirements; following instructions is key. Always send a cover letter with a resume unless it specifies otherwise.
- Keep records and follow up.
  Typically, the best time to follow up is a few days to a week after you think they have received your application. If at all possible, don’t leave a message. Keep calling at different times until someone picks up.
- Interview effectively.
  Career services staff can provide suggestions and strategies to help you interview with confidence and competence.
- Make the decision that is right for you.
  There isn’t one best internship or job opportunity. Career services staff can assist you in weighing all of your options.

Getting Started: Information on Careers in Biology

- American Institute of Biological Sciences
  http://www.aibs.org/careers/
- American Society for Microbiology
  http://www.microbiologycareers.org/
- Association of Zoos and Aquariums
  http://www.aza.org
- Biospace.com
  http://www.biospace.com
- Biotechnology Institute—Links
  http://biotechinstitute.org/teachers/careers
- Botanical Society of America
  http://www.botony.org
- California Community College Biological Technology Initiative
  http://www.cccbiotech.org
- Careers in Science & Engineering
  http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/careers/contents.html
- Environmental Careers Organization
  http://www.eco.org
- Human Genome Project Information/ Careers in Genetics and the Biosciences
- Microbiologist Careers (eHow)
  http://www.ehow.com/list_6052847_microbiologist-careers.html
- Science Careers
  http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org
- Society for Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology
  http://www.simhq.org/
- The American Physiological Society
  http://www.the-aps.org/
- Top Ten Companies in Biotech

Potential Employers for Biology Majors

- Abbott Laboratories
  http://www.abbott.com
- Alexian Brothers Health Systems
  http://www.alexianbrothershealth.org/jobs/
- Argonne National Laboratory Internships
  http://www.anl.gov/jobsearch/search/jsp
- American Medical Association in Chicago
  http://www.ama-assn.org
- Brookfield Zoo
  http://www.czs.org/czs/About-CZS/Careers
- Chicago Botanic Gardens
  http://www.chicagobotanic.org/internship/index.html
- Chicago Environmental Network
  http://www.chicagoenvironment.org/jobintern/index.cfm
- Clarke Mosquito Control
  http://www.clarke.com
- Field Museum Internships
  www.fieldmuseum.org
- IL Environmental Protection Agency
  http://www.epa.state.il.us
- IL Department of Natural Resources Internships
  http://dnr.illinois.gov
- IL State Police Forensic Science Unit
  http://www.isp.state.il.us/forensics/
- Johnson & Johnson
  http://www.jnj.com
- Lincoln Park Zoo
  http://www.lpzoo.org/careers
- Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation
  http://www.mcgrawwildlife.org/