Applying in times of crisis

Are you looking for a (side)job, but are you discouraged by all the vacancies that are now disappearing into thin air? It is very understandable that you might be stressed out just thinking about applying for a job. You are not alone in this. We at Career Service speak to many students who are looking for help to get started in this changing job market.

We will give you some tips on how to prepare yourself to make the transfer to the job market in these uncertain times.

Know what you want

Randomly applying to every vacancy you come across is not the best plan of action. Especially now, employers are looking for people who know what they want and who can portray this in a clear manner. So, start looking for your motivation, look at what type of organisation fits with that and apply specifically for a job like that. Do you not yet know what you want? There are many tests online that can help you on your way, but a good conversation with a(n) (experienced) expert can also help you further. You can also get inspired by looking on LinkedIn at what alumni from your study are doing now and where they are employed.

Focus on qualities that are important now.

Due to this crisis, many organisations became aware of the fact that they need to be flexible and innovative. This requires their employees to move with them, come up with new ideas and for them to be ready to further shape the initiated digital transition. Students, young people with fresh ideas, fit perfectly within that picture. Be sure to emphasize these so-called 21st century skills and include them in your CV. Accompany these with examples in which you have used these qualities. For example, during a project, side job or board position. Striking examples make your application that much stronger.

Prepare for an online interview

More than ever the recruitment and selection of new employees is taking place via the internet. Digitalisation is now also taking off in this process. Go look for specific vacancy websites, portals and tools that can support you in this process. Be sure to get familiar with having online conversations (read the 10 tips for online job interviews).

Online networking

Were you planning on starting to broaden your network during a career event? You should continue with this plan but do it digitally. Look at the companies that were supposed to attend or that attended the event last year, and approach them online via email or their contact page for a short online introduction. You can also look on LinkedIn for people with interesting jobs and invite them for a short networking conversation.

Gaining work experience

If you do not (immediately) succeed in finding a good job, don’t wait too long. There are many different ways to gain work experience in the meantime. Paid work that is increasing right now is for example tutoring students online, working as a delivery person and online support for the elderly who need the help in their daily tasks. Do you want to develop a specific skill? There are think tanks for students, online business games and volunteer jobs enough these days to start working on your skills.
If plan A doesn’t work... there are 25 other options A

If you don’t succeed in getting your dream job, you should start thinking outside of the box. Maybe the area that you are graduating in doesn’t have that many job opportunities right now. But within which other sectors could they use your talents, motivations, norms, and interests? You could also consider starting work at a different position within a company that you really like. This way you not only gain work experience in certain skills and develop these further, but you can also find out if that organisation is a match for you. When the job market starts to get back to normal you can start shifting positions within that company or look further outside of that company.

Life Long Learning

Are you noticing that employers have certain requirements that you do not (yet) meet? Maybe there is an extra course that you could take. For example, when it comes to IT skills it is for sure useful to delve into this topic. There are also many online courses and tips (often for free) that you can take. Besides the offline information at the library, there is also a lot of information online that will make you a lot wiser through self-study. The knowledge you acquire in another way than your study programme you can also add to your CV.

A little extra help please

These are just a few tips, but do you need more help, a more structured approach or want more information about a specific topic? Check with the career officer from your faculty or with the department student support for the possibilities for extra tips, trainings, and individual guidance.