Target List Guidelines
(Jobs & Graduate Schools)

Target List
After researching career areas and the job/grad school market, you are ready to build your target list, prioritized by your level of interest. Create a “Plan A” with a maximum 10 companies/schools listed and a “Plan B” with other ones of interest. Devote a majority of time on Plan A, establishing contacts and securing meetings.

In a single day, you can implement your job search by sending out personalized cover letters and targeted resumes to every contact on your Plan A list. Five days later, you should follow up with a telephone call. Your telephone call should be directed to the department head. You should inquire about a possible appointment to meet at his or her convenience, to get advice on career options and to learn more about the company or program.

Maintain contact and continue building relationships with your Plan A list even as you move into Plan B. You never know when an opportunity will arise and when it does, you want to be top-of-mind.

Identifying Contacts
Once the target companies or schools are identified, you can focus on building a list of contacts. Contacts may be found from directories, journals, professional memberships, LinkedIn groups, CareerShift or even searching DragonTrail by company name.

Some contacts may be found by “Cold Calling,” calling a person with whom you have had no prior contact and for whom you have no detailed information. Once you have established rapport with this contact, this previously unknown individual becomes a source of vital information who can now provide referrals and guidance. This person may be a hiring manager, admission counselor, or may know the names of those who are. This informal method of contacting prospects requires an assertive approach on your part but may produce huge dividends.

Initiating Contact
Pursue the company, not the job. When developing your target list, don't concern yourself with ads for job openings and inquiries into who is hiring; instead focus on:
1. Compiling a target list based on companies, organizations, universities or programs involved in the kind of work you want
2. Selecting organizations in your field and initiating contact with them
3. Including small or medium-sized organizations/ programs, contacting the manager/admission rep whenever possible
4. In larger organizations, asking for the person in charge of your desired career area

Key Points to Consider
- Whenever possible, go directly to the department of interest, giving you someone aware of hiring needs, even if they don't have positions posted or advertised. This demonstrates your pro-activeiveness and provides a good source of information.
- Do not ask for a job... yet.
- Get to know the "gatekeepers." If the person you are trying to contact has an assistant, a secretary or a receptionist who screens phone calls and arranges appointments for that person, introduce yourself and, without being pushy, try to establish a relationship. Get the person's name and make sure that he or she knows your name, building your reputation early.

Target List Grid:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Company/Grad School</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Key Contacts</th>
<th>Core Business/Elements of Program</th>
<th>Why are you interested? (match what they do to what you want)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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For a full page Target List diagram that you may print and use, see the Target List Grid Worksheet at uab.edu/careerservices, Career Quicktips & Worksheets, Target List Grid Worksheet

Explore ~ Experience ~ Prepare ~ Succeed