

## HIRING DISCRIMINATION, FINDING A JOB IN FILM, AND OTHER JOB SEARCH QUESTIONS ANSWERED



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### [Intern Fairs](#)

*Dear Genie,*

*I have been to many internship fairs at my university. What is a good opening line after you have introduced yourself? I think it is vital to get their attention and I don't seem to be able to get the right words out. Thanks.*

*Opener*

Dear Opener,

I'm not familiar with the logistics of your school's internship fairs, but some general advice follows. . .

So called "openers" may not be as important as you think. The key phrase to remember is "Job search begins the day after an intern fair." While employers do identify "special" candidates through their 5-minute discussions at a fair-like event, more critical consideration is granted after these brief exchanges (or at least that was the case when I was a recruiter). Follow up is the key.

At first, I encourage you to simply introduce yourself, state your goals, and ask a question during your intern fair interactions. Shaking hands, state: "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a (state grade and major) who is very interested in serving as an intern with (name company) during the (state time period). I am most interested in (state functional area of interest), but I would like to discuss other options with you. Do you hire interns to serve within (name field of interest) related roles?" Then hand them your résumé while waiting for a response. ALWAYS GET A BUSINESS CARD OR WRITE DOWN PERTINENT INFORMATION REGARDING THE RECRUITER!!! This includes name, title, address, phone, fax and email. After talking for an appropriate length of time, thank the recruiter, inquire regarding "What should I do next if I am interested," then continue to the next organization.

After you have "made the rounds" for the first time, sit down, think about your exchanges, and then identify those organizations you are most interested in. Return to those representatives and state: "I spoke briefly with you earlier. Now that I have had the opportunity to quickly review the literature you gave me and think about the options you offer, I am very, very interested in taking next steps. What should I do to formalize my candidacy and be considered a very strong candidate?"

By following up you are showing interest and, I hope, during a second face-to-face you will be more relaxed and focused. Also, you must follow up with a quick thank you note to reinforce how interested you are.

As indicated by the phrase stated above, an appropriate cover letter with your resume faxed, emailed, or mailed after the event can only help. Keep at it! You'll do great. I am sure you did well during your events. Don't be too harsh a critic.

If you wish to discuss details, I would be able to provide more targeted strategic advice. GO FOR IT!!!

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### [Teaching Portfolios](#)

*Dear Genie,*

*I am finishing up student teaching and need to look for a teaching position. How do I put together a portfolio to show teacher recruiters? Are there any resources on the web?*

*Mr. Kotter*

Dear Gabe,

Portfolios are extremely important—not only for potential teachers but in other industries as well—because portfolios can present palpable evidence of a candidate's abilities. Think of your portfolio as the perfect opportunity to present yourself far more extensively than is possible in a résumé and cover letter. Don't waste this opportunity to look great. Each element within the portfolio must display to the interviewer a level of competency in a variety of areas. For student teachers, the portfolio can help you attain a job even if you've only had minimal experience. For veteran teachers, the portfolio displays a maturation

that emerges through experience and time.

As a student teacher, you should select a format that arranges your portfolio chronologically, by material, or by the skill demonstrated—don't be afraid to be creative, but be sure to appear professional. Do not include superfluous materials. A few samples of the transparencies or worksheets you have created is adequate. Do not bombard recruiters with a thousand examples of one thing. Each element in your portfolio should focus on a different asset that you could contribute to your class. Use a variety of components, including print, pictorial, audio, and video, to reveal the qualities of creativity, intelligence, and ingenuity. You may want to include lesson plans, video footage of you teaching, transparencies, sample assignments, recommendations, and evidence of outside interaction with children. Your portfolio should be well organized, tabbed, and labeled. In addition, your students should play a key role in your portfolio: you should clearly demonstrate interaction between you and your students. This interaction can be easily illustrated through video footage of you and your students working together through lessons which emphasize that interaction, and through sample assignments that initiate an interaction.

Don't dread this task. Have fun with your portfolio and use it to your advantage. A good portfolio will give you a definite advantage over other applicants. Don't forget to go to your university's career center for more information on portfolios. Also, at the library public library you will find numerous book such as Eric Follo's *Career Portfolios: Helping Beginning Teachers Help Themselves* that may even give you examples of portfolios. Finally, check out the websites devoted to teaching and job hunting, such as EducationCrossing.com, which addresses issues that arise in the world of teaching, and which provides helpful tips for the job search, including why portfolios are important.

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### Hiring Discrimination

Dear Genie,

*I am a university student in Georgia. I am having a rather difficult time finding a part-time job in this town because I am a transsexual. I am in the process of changing my gender, and people do know sometimes when they see me, and because of this I cannot find a job in the Athens area. I have many bills and financial responsibilities that I have to take care of, and if I don't find a job soon, I'll have to quit school.*

Facing Discrimination

Dear Facing,

I sympathize with your situation. Of course, it is illegal for employers to discriminate on the basis of gender or physical attributes. That being said, unless you want to wage a lengthy and uncertain legal battle, you have little recourse against discriminating potential employers. However, I do have several suggestions for finding part-time work so you don't have to take time off from school.

First, visit the office of career services at your school. The office will have many part-time job listings and the career counselors will be familiar with some of the companies and their hiring attitudes—thus helping you to focus your search and save time and energy. Second, gay employers will probably be more accepting of your transsexuality. Find out if there are any local gay newspapers or magazines that contain job postings; in some cities there are even gay temporary agencies. You may also consider finding, say, bartending work in a gay bar. Finally, consider part-time jobs, like telemarketing or word processing, where outward appearance is irrelevant.

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### Finding Jobs in the Nonprofit Sector

Dear Genie,

*How do I find out about job opportunities and interviewing practices within the non-profit sector? It's not like other industries that interview on campus and have job fairs and forums.*

In a Perfect World

Dear Utopia,

You're right: finding a job in the nonprofit world is somewhat less straightforward than doing so in other industries. But the good news is that job opportunities in social services are increasing. Although there are fewer job fairs and on-campus interviewing opportunities, the nonprofit job search is not appreciably different from the for-profit search. Once you've established the field in which you want to work (child advocacy, arts, or urban housing, for example), make a list of the agencies that offer those services in your area and contact them directly. At the same time, keep an eye on the classified listings (both online and print) and network as much as possible. Fortunately, nonprofits are always looking for volunteers, so a good route to take is to volunteer at one of your top choices, prove yourself as a desirable employee, and then when an opening becomes available, chances are you can move into a full-time, paid situation.

Keep in mind when you begin interviewing that, like for-profit employers, nonprofit employers are concerned with the skills you possess and not just your warm heart and good intentions. Yes, you should have a passion for your field, but you should also be able to demonstrate marketable skills such as analytic ability, writing and communication skills, financial or marketing knowledge, etc.

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### To Use or Not To Use a Headhunter

Dear Genie,

*I've been to see a headhunter and they haven't yet told me their price. In your experience, are these types of firms worth it?*

Mr. Kurtz

Dear Joe,

There are two kinds of headhunters (otherwise known as executive recruiters, search firms, professional recruiters, or executive search consultants): retainer-based firms and contingency-based firms. Retained search firms generally find candidates for senior level positions earning upwards of \$75,000 per year. They are paid an up-front fee of 20-35% of the candidate's first year salary and they receive that fee whether or not the position is successfully filled.

The more commonly known search firms are contingency-based. These firms are paid 15-30% of the candidate's first year salary and they receive the fee only if the search is successful. Contingency firms are used for both general and specialized positions with salaries ranging from the high teens to six figures.

Thus, you as the job candidate should not pay a headhunter fee no matter the search firm you use. Are these firms worth it? Statistically speaking, search firms are not the most common way to find a job. However, people do find jobs through headhunters all the time (I got my first job through a search firm), and since you don't pay for the service, you only stand to gain by signing up with as many reputable firms as you can in your city.

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### Archaeological Internships

Dear Genie,

*I am changing my major this semester from finance to anthropology. I was wondering whom to contact to get information on internships dealing with fieldwork in archaeology. I would be willing to work anywhere in the world and would really like to work on projects dealing with the early centuries.*

Digging for Internships

Dear Digger,

There are two excellent resources to aid in your search (and everyone else's for that matter) for internships in archaeology: your university's career center and Granted.com. First and foremost, nearly every college has a career center that has not only internship listings but also career counselors who are eager to help you with anything from finding internships to planning a career path. You should always take advantage of your career center because the information you are searching for may be closer than you suspect on your own campus.

The second vehicle that you may employ in your search is the Internet. Use Granted.com, search for internships and to find helpful links and other information about archaeology and anthropology. In addition, the Archaeological Fieldwork Service provides information on archaeological internships that are available worldwide. Finally, be sure to check out the American Archaeological Association.

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### Finding a Job in Film

Dear Genie,

*I am writing to you because I am at a loss in terms of how to go about finding a job in the film industry here in New York. I graduated magna cum laude about a year and a half ago with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, majoring in film, but am finding it difficult just to break in. I have done some freelance work since graduation, but am looking for something steady right now in this field, so that I may pay off my undergraduate loans. I have already tried the old standby of faxing out mass résumés, but this does not seem to work. I aspire one day to direct motion pictures, but for now am just trying to find related work. Any kind of advice or guidance you may be able to give me, would be greatly appreciated.*

The Next Scoresese

*P.S. I have the grades and portfolio to get into one of those top film schools for graduate studies (M.F.A.) but by no means can afford it! They are outrageously expensive, and so I am wondering what scholarships are out there for someone who wants to attend film school on the graduate level. I had an overall grade point average of a 3.8!*

Dear Martin,

I asked my friend, Sam, to address your concerns. Sam is an AD (Assistant Director) who lives in New York and has worked on many major films over the last eight years. Here's his response:

"The thing that troubled me in this letter was that he is looking for something "steady." Hah. It doesn't exist. Look at me, I have been at it for eight years, achieved some level of success (at least as an AD, if not as a director) and I don't know where my next check is coming from. If this guy wants steady, he should try a different field.

"However, I might add that Los Angeles has more steady work in the film industry than New York. New York is really an outpost town. We have "production" work, i.e. work on a particular film, like I do. But most of the steady work, which would be salaried jobs in development, script reading, general "assistant-ing" etc., are at the studios which, except for Miramax, are almost entirely in LA. Almost all the films are generated, at least from a business standpoint, in LA. So I think the entry level game in LA is better because the base of the pyramid is much larger there.

"That said, one can have a good career in film right here in New York and still get to know people outside the film industry (which is not possible in LA). I know many people who do. When I started, I used to take any work I could find (including some extremely shakey projects in a warehouse in Long Island City) in production as well as casting, office work...anything. I exploited any and all contacts I could find, including the college friend of someone my father worked with (this contact led to one of my best early jobs). Eventually (if you are willing to subvert your whole life to working like a schmuck at really demeaning things like mopping floors and getting bagels) you meet a cell of people and you start getting calls for work. One thing this guy has to realize is that his GPA doesn't mean anything to the people looking for a Production Assistant. I got more jobs as a PA because I could drive a standard transmission truck than because I had honors in Literature from a really good school. It's hard, but you have to swallow your ego. The good news is, once you get past the entry level and start rising in the ranks, then your education actually starts to pay off and it's really satisfying.

"I really don't know about the film school thing. I always thought I could learn as much working as I could in film school—and save 100 thousand dollars in the meantime. I don't think film schools give many scholarships. I always thought when the time came to direct a movie, I could spend the money making it that I would have spent on film school. I still believe that these years of working have been an incredible education, and when the time comes I will be ready to direct a movie. Not to mention the invaluable contacts I've made and the fact that my debt is for my mortgage and not for some ridiculous degree."

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## Finding a Teaching Job

Dear Genie,

*What is the best way to identify private schools who hire teachers with BA's but no certification or experience in the classroom?*

Mr. Kotter

Dear Gabe,

Alas, I'm afraid your task is going to be something like finding a needle in a haystack. To begin, very few public schools hire teachers without certification. The exception to this rule is schools that have been declared in a state of "emergency"—schools, for example, with such a shortage of math teachers that they will hire candidates with no certification but with a BA in math. It is also easier to find nursery or pre-K jobs without certification. In the private sector certification is not always necessary, although every state and school has its own requirements.

With or without certification, the best way to find a teaching job is to focus your search on specific states and communities and contact the schools and/or districts individually. HB.org has a database of school districts that will give you basic information about every school district in the country. In addition to JobWeb and ERIC, the following resources will be useful:

- Council for American Private Education (CAPE), a coalition of national organizations serving the interests of private schools (K-12) in the United States. (301) 916-8460.
- *Careers in Teaching Handbook*, by David Haselkorn and Andrew Calkins, Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., Belmont MA, 1993. Provides a "snapshot of the profession," information on preparing to be a teacher, licensure and certification, opportunities for persons of color, finding a job in teaching, and making the most of a career in teaching.
- Schools.com, a searchable database of schools and other education resources.
- Teach for America, the national teacher corps of outstanding recent college graduates of all academic majors and cultural backgrounds who commit two years to teach in under-resourced urban and rural public schools.
- TABS- The Association of Boarding Schools - boarding school information and resources; includes directory containing information on over 250 TABS boarding schools.
- Peterson Preparatory School Directory- Database of private secondary preparatory schools.
- Private School Employment Network - Database of private school jobs organized by specialty.

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## Getting a Job with Little Experience

Dear Genie,

*I recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in business management, and I am having difficulty finding a job. The problem is that every employer wants to hire someone who has a lot of work experience, and, unfortunately, I am lacking in this department. Currently I am submitting résumés all over the state of Illinois, and I am not having much luck! Please give me some advice about what I should do.*

Trying Really Hard

Dear Trying,

You're expending an enormous amount of energy—but most of it is in the wrong directions! While it is true that most employers prefer candidates to have some work experience, you do not need seven years in upper management to qualify for an entry-level position. Believe it or not, your academic work has given you a lot of valuable job skills. And if you've had any part-time jobs or internships at all, you need to re-evaluate those experiences and present them on your résumé and in interviews in the best possible light. Granted.com's career advice, will help you translate the work you've done for your business management degree into marketable skills for your résumé.

That takes care of re-framing your past. Now how about your future? While you are looking for a job, I would strongly suggest you find an internship in your field, even if it's unpaid. Studies have shown that **30%** of entry-level hires have held internships with their employers. An internship will give you hands-on experience in your field and expand your networking circle at the same time.

But wait, that's not all: you still need to modify your job search techniques. **Stop sending your résumé all over Illinois!** You are wasting your time and money. Instead, send your résumé only to those companies that meet the following requirements:

- Companies in industries where you want to work.  
Companies whose cultures are a good "fit" for your interests, skills, and personality.

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## Working in the Arts

Dear Genie,

*I'm looking for a job in a performing arts organization, but I haven't been able to find information as most of the job books are geared towards big business. Can you steer me in the right direction?*

Sincerely,

Give Me Somebody To Dance For

Dear Somebody,

A good place to start is Granted.com, which contains many listings in the performing arts. Next, contact your local Chamber of Commerce for information about the performing arts companies in your area. Most cities—with the exception of major arts centers like New York and Los Angeles—have relatively few performing arts organizations, so don't be surprised if your search doesn't yield many names. Once you have your list of companies, call each one and ask them to send you copies of their promotional materials so that you can learn more about what they do before you approach them for jobs. You may also want to take a look at past reviews of performances—via an online search if your school provides that service for free, with microfiche if it doesn't. Finally, always pursue any personal contacts you have—ask anyone you know who works in the performing arts for their advice, opinions and perceptions about the companies in your area.

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## Moving Out

Dear Genie,

*I'm thinking about moving to another city after graduation. Should I move there and then start looking for a job, or should I start my job search here and move if/when I get a job offer?*

*Sincerely,*

*Outta Here*

Dear Outta,

It's never too soon to begin your job search, particularly when you're moving to another city. Start researching now, before you graduate. Get your résumé in order and compile a list of companies in the new city where you may want to work. Start subscribing to job alerts at [Gratned.com](http://Gratned.com) every day. After graduation, the decision about whether to find a job or move first really depends on your finances. If you can afford to move first, do, since it's easier to take interviews and establish a network of contacts when you actually live in the city.

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