

## STRATEGIES FOR NAVIGATING DURING COVID-19

The long-range economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis are unclear at this time, but near-term hiring plans for most employers are already in a state of flux. The links below are intended to help students stay abreast of the shifting environment and develop strategies for navigating during the uncertainty, as well as prepare for a post-crisis job market. A few points to maintain perspective:

- As COVID-19 cases increase and response measures tighten, most employers will suspend hiring activity. The degree of uncertainty that is predicted to sustain through April is likely to cause many employers to put an indefinite pause on plans. This doesn't mean they won't hire again, just that right now they can't make accurate predictions.
- The health crisis may loom for 1-6 more months or longer, but it will subside. How much upheaval it will leave in its wake is open to speculation. However, there is reason to believe that most things currently shuttered will resume some semblance of operation. Students should focus on positioning themselves for fast re-entry into the job market when conditions begin to re-stabilize. That means spending time now deeply researching interest fields and employers, perfecting resumes and social media profiles, expanding their network of professionals, and honing interviewing skills.

Some industries are currently experiencing or will experience increased demand for goods and services because of the crisis, such as health care, pharmaceuticals, grocery chains, delivery services, virtual technology tools, remote instruction, and others. As the crisis lingers, many of these industries will need to ramp up hiring.

- One lesson many employers learned after the 2008 Recession was not to cut off talent pipelines. Those that were able to stay in touch with potential candidates rebounded quicker than others. For the current crisis, that means students who have already made significant inroads with employers should maintain contact and consider ways they can engage remotely, even temporarily. For example, are there projects that could be performed on a contract basis?
- As people working remotely adjust to new virtual options, some newly adopted practices will be sustained. That means new businesses or services may emerge from the crisis, creating opportunities for students with a more entrepreneurial orientation. Researching where some of these trends are heading may lead to some unexpected opportunities.

### **FOCUS ENERGY EFFECTIVELY**

With so many aspects beyond individual control, students are advised for the present to focus on maintaining a positive mindset and on what can be controlled. Don't abandon the dream job, but devise a Plan B and Plan C to get through the next steps. Use the immediate time to make investments in foundational career development and job search skills. These include:

- Clarifying skills that can be offered to employers
- Matching skills to fields and industries less impacted by COVID-19
- Developing a brand and translating it to an online profile and application materials
- Conducting informational interviews to increase knowledge and expand professional networks
- Investigating contract positions, remote work and other flexible working arrangements
- Acquiring technical and soft skills through tools like LinkedIn Learning

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<https://careers.umd.edu/strategies-navigating-during-covid-19>