

Navigating Anti-Blackness in the Job Search Process

Anti-blackness is pervasive in the United States, and the job search process is no exception. While anti-discrimination laws call on employers to eliminate racial biases from their hiring processes, Black job-seekers continue to face overt and covert discrimination. Therefore, we've compiled the following resources and advice to help navigate anti-blackness in the job search process.



Overcoming imposter syndrome

Imposter syndrome describes the feeling of questioning yourself or your credibility. If you're doubting yourself or your abilities, talk about your feelings with trusted friends, keep a journal of your accomplishments to remind yourself of all that you've done, and practice self-affirmations. Remember that CAPS, the Mosaic Center, and the Career Center can support you in this process, too.

Finding a mentor

Consider creating a "personal board of directors" to guide you including family, friends, UVM alums, former supervisors, and more. It might be difficult to find a mentor who shares your identities and works in your chosen field. Using tools like LinkedIn and UVM Connect can help you find contacts outside of your existing network, including UVM's affinity group for alums of color.



Describing your experiences

Make sure you're talking about all of your experiences on your resume and in your cover letter. All work (both paid and volunteer) is valid including babysitting, student leadership positions, or a retail job. Check out tips for writing good resumes and cover letters on our site, and meet with a Career Counselor for personalized support in deciding what identity-related information to include in your documents.

Searching for opportunities

Handshake and other job search websites are a great place to start your search. There are job search databases explicitly for Black job seekers. Employers who post there are seeking racially diverse candidates - and in some cases, are consulting with diversity recruitment experts. While it doesn't mean the hiring process will be 100% free from bias, finding and applying to opportunities through these channels might increase your confidence in the process.



Determining value alignment

A company's anti-discrimination policies only scratch the surface when it comes to determining the extent to which you will feel safe and uplifted at an organization. Research their mission, values, and practices related to equity and inclusion. Check to see if there are company reviews on Glassdoor or Handshake, or if anyone in your network has experience working at the organization. Look at their staff and leadership teams; to what extent do you see yourself represented?

Interviewing effectively

A lack of racial diversity on a hiring team can make an interview feel even more difficult than it already is. Focus on what is in your control. Research the organization and brainstorm questions ahead of time including how the company engages in equity and inclusion work. Learn about the STAR method for answering interview questions, and consider setting up a mock interview with a career counselor or mentor to practice commonly asked questions.



Negotiating your salary

Racial and gender-based wage gaps are well-documented, and the salary negotiation process is where some of those inequities arise. Do your research and know your worth. Our Blackboard module covers the basics of salary negotiation, and websites like NerdWallet and Glassdoor are essential tools - they'll also help you take into account current economic conditions.

If you believe you have experienced discrimination in a hiring decision:

You can file a claim with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which is a federal office, or a town, county, or state Fair Employment Practices Agency. Each situation has different reporting requirements, including documentation and filing deadlines. Consider consulting with a legal aid office or lawyer for case-by-case advice.

For additional support:

Make an appointment with a Career Counselor through Handshake or by emailing career@uvm.edu.



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