Navigating Anti-Blackness in the Job Search Process

Anti-blackness is pervasive in the United States, and the job search process is no exception. When anti-discrimination laws fail 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**
In the imposter system, describes the feeling of questioning your own or your credibility. If you’re doubting yourself or your abilities, talk about your feelings with trusted friends, look for a few of youraccomplishments 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 alumni, former supervision, and more. It might be difficult to find a mentor who shares your identity 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 alumni 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 valuable, including babysitting, student leadership positions, and an essay or a town. Check out tips for writing good resumes and cover letters or a resource, 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 specifically for Black job seekers. Employers who post there are seeking racially diverse candidates, and in some cases, diversity recruitment experts. While it’s rare that the hiring process will be 100% free from bias, finding and applying to opportunities through these channels might help 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 at the hiring team can make an interview feel even more difficult than it already is. Focus on what’s 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 these inequities arise. Do your research and know your worth. Our Blackboard module covers the basics of salary negotiation, including documentation and negotiation tactics. These resources will 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 an agency, 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 us via UVM Connect can help you find contacts outside of your existing network, including UVM’s affinity group for alumni of color.

The University of Vermont Career Center