Is Career Services open this Fall?
For the Fall 2020 semester, University Career Services is providing all resources, programs and events virtually! Additionally, 1:1 in-person career support is being provided on a limited basis. Career counseling and industry advising appointments are available over the phone, video chat, and in-person. Schedule appointments via Handshake: gmu.joinhandshake.com/appointments or call us at 703-993-2370. Drop-ins for quick questions about Handshake, on-campus job search, resumes and cover letters are being conducted Monday through Friday, from 1 to 3 pm by phone at 703-993-2370, and in-person in SUB I room 3400 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Resume reviews are being done by email and all events are taking place virtually.

Can I still work on campus this semester?
Yes. You can find on-campus jobs, federal work-study, internships and research positions in Handshake. Some positions will require you to be physically on-campus, others will be remote. There are also part-time jobs in Handshake offered by employers in the Fairfax area. Career Services is hosting a Part-Time Job Fair virtually on August 26. Registration for the fair is required by August 24. Schedule an appointment for assistance finding a job for the semester.

Are there even any jobs/internships available?
Yes! There are over 7,000 active job/internship postings advertised specifically to Mason student and alumni in Handshake right now. The 2020 Fall Career Fair will be held virtually October 8-9 and over 150 employers with open jobs/internships are expected to attend. Visit our event calendar for details on how to register to attend the fair.

How do virtual job fairs work?
Employers’ virtual booths often open days prior to the fair. You can visit the e-booths early to prepare: 1) watch company-branded videos and read recruitment materials 2) see job and internship opportunities and 3) use the Question and Answer feature (submit questions to employers and check back later for responses).
On the day of the fair, the booths become ‘live’ and actual recruiters are available via video, phone, and text chat to tell you more about their employment opportunities, company culture and to learn about your interest and qualifications. Dress well (at least from the waist up), be prepared to introduce yourself, ask questions and apply to positions following employer-provided instructions.

I accepted a job offer, but my employer has pushed back my start date indefinitely due to coronavirus. What should I do?
Ideally, move forward in a way that would allow you to both honor your commitment and take care of your financial needs. For example, look for short-term jobs you can do in the interim. This question is so complex though, that we recommend you schedule an appointment with Career Services to talk through the best way to handle your specific situation.
Are internships still happening this year, and when should I start looking?
Yes, internships are still happening! If necessary, most employers have found an alternative to their traditional, in-person internships such as 1) virtual internships: internship performed fully online or remotely, 2) micro-internships: short-term, project-based assignments and 3) externships: training programs. Different types of internships can be found on Handshake, company websites and industry-specific job boards. The best time to look depends on the industry or type of employer for which you want to intern. Schedule an appointment with an industry advisor for assistance.

What if I can’t do an internship?
Part of becoming career-ready by graduation is getting 6-12 months of relevant experience while at Mason. You can gain experience through volunteering remotely (for location select “virtual” on idealist.org and volunteermatch.org), building your portfolio through freelance work and by leveraging your coursework. Research papers/projects you do for class are also great career experiences if you are strategic.

- Pick a topic that others are interested in as well
- Interview alumni/experts in the field to expand your network within organizations of interest
- Use the tools, technologies, approaches to build technical (industry-specific) skills
- Ask for feedback on the transferrable skills of teamwork/leadership, problem solving, critical thinking
- Use final paper as writing sample for job applications, post it on LinkedIn or in portfolio to build brand, apply to present at conferences, etc.

What skills should I focus on developing now? What do employers want?
Employers want candidates who have transferable skills, such as communication (especially important right now), digital technology (including various teleworking platforms), and professionalism/work-ethic for working remotely. These skills broadly apply to any employer or industry. However, employers also want industry-specific or technical skills and certifications. Check out LinkedIn Learning for thousands of free videos on in-demand technical skills such as scrum, blockchain, cloud computing, data analytics, UX design, business analysis, social media marketing and video production.

What if I lost my job and I just need quick money to pay my living expenses/tuition?
Try to freelance or use company websites, Handshake, and remote job sites to find opportunities. Schedule an appointment with Career Services for support with your job search. Current students should also seek assistance from the Student Support and Advocacy Center which has information on several financial resources such as the Patriot Pantry, Covid-19 Student Emergency Assistance Funding, and the Stay Mason Fund.
It is hard to find a job right now and no one is sure when the economy will rebound. What career advice do you have?
Realize that there are opportunities in even the toughest situations. Our career advice is for students to be open to the possibilities. Pursue opportunities that sound interesting, would allow you to use your strengths or make a great story 5 years from now. It’s important to wake up every day with a sense of purpose. So volunteer, do freelance work, or develop skills until you land a paid job or career-relevant position. Spend 80% of job search time talking to people about your career interests/qualifications (networking is the most effective job search strategy) and 20% applying to positions advertised online.

As an international student, I am having a very difficult time finding a job in the U.S. What can I do?
Conduct a parallel job search to increase your chances of success---apply to jobs in the U.S., your home country, and another country in the world (like Canada) at the same time. In the U.S., look for employment related to your major across the entire country, not just the DC area, particularly with employers who do business in your home country and have a history of hiring and sponsoring H1 B visas. Passport Career is a great resource for you. Of course, feel free to schedule an appointment with Career Services for assistance.

How can I network while social distancing?
There are several at-home networking strategies you can use. Talk to your faculty about your career interests, find Mason alumni on LinkedIn, invite a former supervisor to a video chat coffee break or participate in virtual career events. For insights on how to use Handshake’s peer-to-peer messaging feature, attend an upcoming Handshake Tips from Mason Students session.

How can I best prepare for a virtual interview?
For tips, watch our workshop on this topic. Then, practice! Video record your responses to common interview questions using InterviewSteam and send your interview link to careers@gmu.edu, a friend or mentor for feedback. Of course, you can also schedule a live video practice interview appointment through Handshake or by calling 703-993-2370.

I graduated. Can I still use Career Services?
Congratulations! And yes, our office serves Mason alumni (for life).

Is Career Services doing anything extra to support the Class of 2020?
Absolutely. In addition to the Handshake job database, career counseling appointments and online workshops already offered, Career Services is hosting the 2020 Fall Career Fair virtually October 8-9 from 11 am to 3 pm. More than 150 employers are expected to attend. For details and information about registration, check out our event calendar.

Didn't see your question?
Reach out to us directly at careers@gmu.edu or 703-993-2370