



EMPLOYMENT ALERTS

Scams/ Contract Positions/ Part-time Job or Internship?

Career Development Center

California State University, Los Angeles

www.calstatela.edu/careercenter

(323) 343-3237

We wish to inform you about three issues that may affect you as you search for work.

Employment scams

Among the many employment scams out there is the email solicitation sent seemingly out of the blue, in which the 'employer' contacts you about a job but then admits they have no current openings. The employer proceeds to offer training sessions (for a fee, of course) that will "enhance your candidacy."

Then there is the bait and switch scam wherein you apply for a job and get an interview. During the interview, you find that the job you applied for does not exist and the company tries to interest you in a different, less-desirable position.

Or how about the fictitious company that may pose under a well-known name and proposes what could best be called a "get rich quick without doing much work" scheme? Inevitably, this will involve a request to share your bank account number with this 'employer,' or it may even involve your receiving checks and sending out your own personal checks, or a similar sort of transaction.

Unfortunately, tough economic times are playing on the desperation of some job seekers and they may get taken in. Here is some important advice:

- Be very suspicious of job offers that are e-mailed to you out of the blue.
- Do not provide your personal information to someone you don't know, as this is likely to be sold to a third party who will try to sell you something or interest you in a commission-only job.
- Never ever ever provide your social security number or bank account information to anyone as part of your job search.
- If you receive an email from 'a friend' recommending that you apply for a job, contact that friend to see if he/she really made that recommendation.
- If you are uploading your resume to a website, include minimal contact information.
- Never pay anyone to help you find a job.
- Investigate the organizations to which you are applying.

Contract employees

Know the difference between being hired as an employee and being contracted to do work for an employer, or 'client.' We are all familiar with traditional employment, which involves being placed on the employer's payroll and being paid either a pre-determined amount (salary or hourly) or being paid on commission. These wages are, of course, subject to taxation and the employer issues a yearly W-2 form.

Independent contractors are *self-employed*, and they enter into a contract agreement to provide services to a client in exchange for an agreed-upon fee. The contractor invoices the client for work performed. The

client will not withhold taxes from the payment, as it is the contractor's responsibility to satisfy tax obligations.

If you are being hired as an independent contractor, you will have to sign a contract agreement. You will receive no benefits that may be available to regular employees. And, most importantly, you are not protected by employment laws that deal with unsafe work environments, harassment, or discrimination. Take special care before signing that contract and become more knowledgeable about independent contracting. Here is an excellent link that provides more detailed information:

www.jobweb.com/studentarticles.aspx?id=2303

Part-time job or internship?

Unfortunately, there are some employers that are offering 'internship opportunities' (usually unpaid), when really they are searching for part-time employees. What's this about? Well, in order for an internship to be a real internship, the experience must be a learning one – an extension of the classroom, in which the student applies their knowledge in a real world situation. There should be clearly defined learning objectives, the skills learned should be transferrable to other employment settings, and there should be the opportunity to translate the experience into academic credit, if desired. The intern should not displace nor do the work of a regular employee.

So, before agreeing to take on an internship, make sure you will truly be an intern, not unpaid labor.

In summary, if something appears too good to be true, it probably is. Be careful.

If you have questions about these or other career-related issues, contact your Career Development Center at (323) 343-3237, or careers@cslanet.calstatela.edu

9/2011

Career Development Center

