

Safeguarding Your Job Search

The College of Charleston Career Center offers [Handshake](#) as a resource for employers to connect with CofC students and alumni seeking employment opportunities. While we strive to keep fraudulent postings out of the Handshake system, the CofC Career Center does not endorse any employer or position listing. Please use caution as you search Handshake, and other online job boards, for paid and unpaid employment opportunities. If a posting appears suspicious, we strongly recommend that you research the organization carefully before applying. The information below is provided to assist you with conducting a safe job search, protecting your identity, and increasing your awareness of fraudulent job postings and scams.

Identifying Fraudulent Jobs/Scams

1. Fraudulent jobs are designed to obtain your personal information and/or steal your money. The jobs often look like easy ways to make money with very little effort. Remember, if it looks too good to be true, then it probably is!
2. Always know who you are sharing personal information with and how it will be used. If someone asks for sensitive personal information, obtain the person's name, the organization they work for and their phone number and tell them you will get back to them after you investigate further.
3. Many employers will ask for your Social Security Number and date of birth, but this information is not solicited over the phone or email. It is typically requested as part of a formal job application that candidates complete in writing, often on the same day as the first in-person interview.
4. You should not provide your credit card number, bank account number, PayPal account, or any PIN number over the phone or online. Do not respond to suspicious and/or "too good to be true" unsolicited job emails.
5. Do not agree to have funds or paychecks direct deposited into any of your accounts by an unknown employer, especially if you have not yet begun working for that employer.
6. You may be offered the option of direct deposit for your paycheck after you are hired. Most employers will make these payment arrangements during your first day or week of employment, on site – not before. If you will be working virtually, consider having your paychecks mailed to you instead of providing your account information.
7. Do not forward, transfer, send by courier (EX: FedEx, UPS), or "wire" any money to any employer, for any employer, using your personal account(s).
8. In general, applicants do not pay a fee to obtain a job (but there are some rare exceptions). If the organization charges a fee, please consult with a professional at the CofC Career Center before proceeding.

Researching Unfamiliar Employers

1. Always research the organization to see if they are legitimate by checking their profiles with the Better Business Bureau (BBB), local Chambers of Commerce, and other employer listings.
2. Contact the organization directly and ask if the person who posted the job actually works there. Remember, you should not share personal information unless you are confident that the person and the organization are legitimate.
3. Search the internet using key phrases, such as “fraudulent job postings” or “scam job postings,” to find articles and/or reports of scams that have been identified by others.
4. Google the organization name with the word “scam” in the phrase (e.g., “ACME Inc scam”) to search for any references to the organization in scam reports.
5. Verify that the e-mail address to which you are sending information has the same domain name as the organization. For example, if applying to “Organization X,” the email address should have “@Organizations X” somewhere in the address. There are some exceptions.
6. Do not provide a description of your appearance online or over the phone. Personal information such as height, eye color, ethnicity, etc. does not pertain to the job search.
7. Request business references for unknown organizations before interviewing with them off-grounds and schedule interviews with employers in public places only. Always use good judgment in all of your interactions with employers.
8. Be cautious when posting your resume online. Research the job search site to learn if it is legitimate. If you are unsure, limit the amount of contact information on your resume and use generic job titles.
9. If you have any concerns regarding a job opportunity posted in Handshake, please contact the CofC Career Center.

What to Do if You Encounter a Scam

1. If you identify a fraudulent job posting in the Handshake system, please contact the CofC Career Center immediately so we can investigate it.
2. If you are the victim of a scam or fraudulent posting, you should immediately contact the local police. The police are responsible for conducting an investigation (regardless of whether the scam artist is local or in another state).
3. If you sent money to a fraudulent employer, you should contact your bank and/or credit card company immediately to close the account and dispute the charges.
4. If the incident occurred completely over the Internet, you should file an incident report with the: <http://www.cybercrime.gov/>, or by calling the FTC at: 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357).