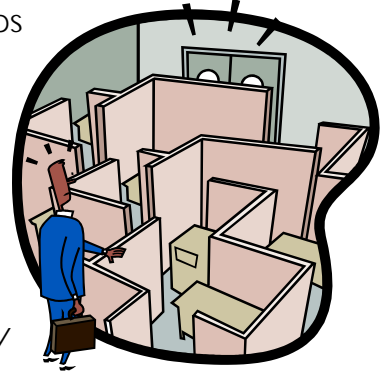


## Getting Started

Many incoming students expect to work, for a variety of reasons, during their program. Current students encourage you to look for jobs that will help supplement what you are learning in classes.

*"I really think it is important to work, especially in HBHE. I learned a lot more about practical skills from my job than I did in classes. Our classes tend to be heavy on the theoretical side, and light on the practical side. I cannot emphasize enough how incredibly beneficial my job was to my skill development."*



*"Pick a job that gives you experience: interviewing, coding, data analysis, focus groups, creating interview guides- these will be far more instructional than some of our courses."*

We realize that finding opportunities (especially from far way) can be a daunting task; most new students arrive without a general understanding of different types of research assistant (RA) or teaching assistant (TA) positions and their respective pay and benefits. You will receive some information on Applicant Information and Orientation days. In addition, this year's orientation committee has updated job search information to include our assessment of what you might generally expect (keeping in mind the variation among students with different interests, needs, skills, and funding), as well as some specific tips and common places, on and off-campus, where current students work. One major tip is to ask faculty, staff and students to explain exactly what a job includes (the big ones are tuition, health insurance and pay) and how it may differ from other types of research or teaching jobs offered in the department. We think you'll find that most people in HBHE are willing to answer any questions you have or, at least, refer to someone else (usually Linda Cook) who can help you.

Students usually look for work to fulfill tuition remission requirements or to supplement other funding sources. Some students accept non-paid positions to gain experience or access to interesting faculty, but you should expect to find a paid position, if you desire one. Once you find a (paid) job, we strongly suggest that you verify your payroll and insurance information sometime within your first month of work. **Students who start work in August usually see their first paycheck at the end of September.** This is often a big surprise to new students!

## Job Requirements for Tuition Remission

The Graduate School has specific requirements for students (and departments) who receive tuition remission. In general, the department informs those students

receiving tuition remission for the fall semester sometime during the prior summer. The major point is that tuition remission requires students to work in an RA or TA position for an average of 15 hours per week (which varies depending on the job). Master students must make at least \$3,000 per semester (approx. \$12-13/hour) and doctoral students must make at least \$5,000 per semester (approx. \$16 to 18/hour) to remain eligible for a remission. Health insurance is included with these types of positions, but student fees (beyond tuition) usually are not included.

There are two main ways students fulfill the work requirement for tuition remission purposes: they work in a state-funded position (RA or TA) or they work for a faculty member in a grant-funded position. Grant-funded positions can include jobs that do or do not meet the general requirements for tuition remission. Many students (and some faculty) are not clear on what benefits a position includes when they accept a job offer, but assume they have the same benefits as their working classmates (don't assume this!) In particular, faculty who support students with their own grant funds may set hourly wages and other benefits (e.g., holiday or snow day time) at their discretion. Many faculty members follow the Graduate School guidelines for state-funded positions, but you should ask your employer what to expect for pay and benefits before you start work; your remission may depend on your clear understanding of what you're getting. Typically the department receives a set amount of tuition remissions for the school year. However, sometimes additional tuition remissions appear throughout the year.

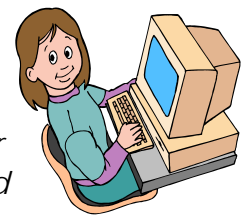
*"I wish I had known that I might get tuition remission even though wasn't in the first quartile. Money can come in unexpectedly and if that happens, you need to be in a job that qualifies for remission, since it is really hard to find a qualifying job on the spot. Position yourself for it up front...."*

### **Other jobs**

*"There are a lot of cool jobs out there"*

*"There is a constant stream of job opportunities, so don't settle for the first one you come across unless you're desperate. I didn't find my "right" job until November, and I'm happy as a clam."*

*"If you have a special skill like fluency in another language or lab instructor experience contact those departments for assistantships."*



In addition to graduate research assistantships and other more formal positions within the university, there are several other more "informal" ways to make money. There are often things to do such as telephone surveys, data entry, and

other opportunities with shorter time commitments. These positions can provide you with an opportunity to explore different areas of interest as well as make connections with faculty and staff.

We suggest that you look outside the department as well at some of the research centers on campus, other departments, and other schools. Some examples of places current HBHE students work (outside of HBHE) are:

- Biology Teaching Assistants (may not be possible due to HBHE 172)
- Center for Healthy Student Behaviors
- Centers for Health Promotion/Disease Prevention
- Department of Family Medicine
- Highway Safety Research Center
- Injury Prevention Research Center
- School of Nursing
- Sheps Center

### **Job Search Tips**

There are a wide variety of ways that people have found their jobs. Some people found jobs right away and navigated the process easily while others found the process frustrating. The main way that students found their job was through **networking!**

*"Everything really worked out perfect for me as far as jobs go."*

*"I wish I had known that it is difficult to find a job here-especially working for a professor. For some reason I was under the impression that it wouldn't be that difficult."*

### **Where to look**

There is no central place to look when it comes to finding jobs, which many students find frustrating. Many jobs are sent out by email, there are postings on bulletin boards, and a few websites. Here is a good website to help you start your search: <http://www.sph.unc.edu/students/career/student.cfm>

### **Networking**

**Do not underestimate the power of networking!!!**

*"Talk to 2nd years, talk to professors, talk to people who you don't even think are affiliated with the department. I got my job because someone in the department passed along my resume to my now-boss and encouraged her to interview me. People in this department are often willing to put themselves out there for the students- even people who you might not expect to be so*

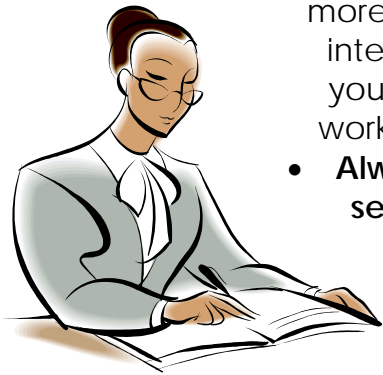
*generous or you may not know that well! So don't be shy and definitely be persistent."*

One of the best ways to find a job is through networking and word-of-mouth. Build relationships with faculty who are working in fields you are interested (or even think you might be interested in). A great place to start is with your advisor.

*"I had emailed my advisor and the first time I met her she had already made the initial contact that turned into my job."*

### **Some tips for contacting faculty:**

- **Start talking with faculty early in the process.** One student indicated that they began a relationship with a faculty member when they started applying and that relationship eventually led to their current job.
- **Be pro-active, but realistic.** Faculty are very busy and some faculty are more available to students than others. If you're interested in working with a particular faculty member you may also want to contact students who have worked with them
- **Always attach your resume to emails, but don't just send your resume.** Make it clear why you contacted them and what your interests and skills are.
  - **Be prepared when meeting with faculty.** Know what you want to get out of the meeting and what you are going to say. If you just want to "talk" more about what the faculty is doing that is fine, but be prepared to have questions ready to ask!
- **Don't be shy.** Most students find HBHE faculty very approachable. They also know that we are looking for work—you won't be the first student to ask them if they have any positions available.
- **Take advantage of Applicant Information Day and Orientation faculty meeting opportunities.** These are times set aside for you to talk to faculty—so use them!



*"I started talking to a faculty member at Applicant Information Day in the spring. I mentioned that I would be here over the summer and that I was looking for work. I ended up working for a research study over the summer with two faculty members—this led to a research assistantship for the school year."*

### **Use your classmates!**

Second year students are an excellent resource. You can use your buddies or refer to the list of second years willing to be contacted about their jobs.

## **When to Start**

ASAP! Some students choose to wait until they arrive to begin their job search.

*"An early start emailing professors over the summer would probably have sped up the process for me"*

Fortunately, most students who want jobs eventually find them, regardless of when they begin to look. However, those students who find work during the summer months – or at least begin to scope possibilities – have a few advantages. One plus is that faculty members with grants usually plan ahead. Hence, fall jobs are often posted the spring or summer before the fall start date. For natural procrastinators, the job search forces incoming students to get their resume in shape, establish their email account and to learn how to navigate the university system. All of these tasks will serve your peace of mind come August.