5 TIPS FOR LANDING A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

*Stand out from the competition*

Securing an assistantship is highly competitive and there are limited opportunities available. However, in order to stand out from the competition, it is important to pursue these opportunities strategically and with utmost professionalism. Here is a tip sheet to help you research opportunities and effectively prepare your professional marketing package.
1. WHERE TO LOOK

Expand your search and get familiarized with the UIC campus. Many SPH students have found assistantships beyond the UIC School of Public Health. Students have secured opportunities on both West and East side of campus including: Cultural centers, Centers & Institutes, Colleges, Student Affairs, Academic Programs, Career Centers, Research Departments, Campus Units etc. Some of the online platforms used to post opportunities include:

☐ [UICcareers.com](http://uiccareers.com): This is a job search database exclusively for UIC students. Once you are registered and an official student, you will have access. Click [here](http://uiccareers.com) for more information on uiccareers.com and job postings

☐ [SPHVIEWS Listserv](http://sphviews.org): This is a very active listserv for the UIC School of Public Health community. There are a wealth of listings posted on this listserv on a regular basis. [Click here to subscribe](http://sphviews.org). Contact SPH Career Services if you have any issues subscribing to the listserv

☐ [UIC Human resources website](http://hr.uic.edu): This site lists job opportunities as well as graduate, research, and teaching assistantships

☐ [UIC Events/Announce](http://events.uic.edu): Within the UIC events calendar is a "position available" section where opportunities are listed

☐ [Click here](http://uicevents.org) for additional campus information on graduate assistantships

☐ Other Tips:
  - Talk to 2nd year students with graduate assistantships – they may be asked to refer other students as they transition out of their role
  - Research departments of interest and identify individuals/faculty that are working on research projects aligned to your interest – inquire about opportunities. Here is a link to the [UIC Directory](http://uicdirectory.org)

2. DO YOUR RESEARCH BEFORE APPLYING

Learn more about the department and get familiarized with their services and/or projects. Although the assistantship may not be directly related to your field of study, you should be prepared to showcase how your skills and experience will add value to the unit.

☐ Explore their website and any social media channels

☐ Carefully read through the requirements and responsibilities and reflect on why you would be a good fit
3. CREATE A POLISHED MARKETING PACKAGE – RESUME & COVER LETTER

☐ Tailor your resume to the position – integrate keywords from the posting and highlight relevant skills and experiences – [Click here for resume tips and samples]

☐ If a cover letter is required, avoid sending a generic letter. Include relevant examples and address your interest in the position as well as why you qualify – [Click here for cover letter tips]
  • Show genuine interest in the position and department

☐ Review the posting carefully and follow instructions (how to address the letter, special information to be included in the letter, email subject line) this can be a deal breaker!

☐ Ensure that your documents are error free

4. E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

☐ When submitting your application via email, be sure to use professional etiquette (correct name and honorific) to the person you are addressing.

Example:

Dear Dr. Rodriguez:

My name is Sebastian Smith and I am a second year Master of Public Health student with a focus in epidemiology. Enclosed please find my resume and cover letter for the Data Analyst Graduate Assistantship.

I believe that my skills and background with data collection, managing multiple datasets, designing assessment projects, and conducting statistical analyses acquired through my course projects and applied practice experience will serve beneficial in this role. If you have any questions or need additional information to support my application, feel free to contact me at 312.555.5555.

Thank you,

Sebastian Smith, MPH Candidate ‘20
Division: Epidemiology and Biostatistics
University of Illinois at Chicago – School of Public Health

☐ Always include a message in the email and inform the reader that application materials are enclosed

☐ Here are additional [email etiquette tips]
5. PRACTICE & PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

☐ Prepare to answer these key questions:
  • What do you know about this organization and why do you want to work for us?
  • Tell me about yourself

☐ Practice answering interview questions. Here is a link to sample questions

☐ Dress to impress – even though this is a campus job, it is still a professional job opportunity and it should not be treated any differently. Need ideas? Check out the Interview Attire Pinterest Board

☐ Be prepared with questions to ask
  • After the interview ask about next steps and when you can follow-up

☐ Be prepared to provide professional references
  • Always update your references and keep them informed of upcoming interviews
  • Check out How to format a list of professional references - the balance careers

☐ Always send a thank you email (within 24 hours)

☐ Follow-up within the timeline provided by the interviewer (don’t overwhelm the interviewer with multiple follow-ups)

☐ For additional interview tools and tips, visit the Interview Tools section of SPH Career Services

☐ Need practice? schedule a mock interview with SPH Career Services or the central UIC Career Services Office

Visit the UIC Human Resources page for additional Assistantships information
UIC 101 Graduate Assistantships Video