CAREER & PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

TIPS TO AVOID JOB SCAMS

When conducting a job search, it is the responsibility of each individual to research the integrity of the potential employer. Use special caution and common sense when supplying personal information through the internet or via email.

Read all information carefully.
If the opportunity sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Just because a job lead appears in a legitimate publication, it doesn't mean that the job or company is, necessarily, legitimate.

Protect Your Personal Information.
Students should never give a potential employer their personal information such as credit card numbers, social security numbers, or bank account numbers, and never spend any of their own money on an employment "opportunity" unless very certain that it is for a legitimate reason (such as training costs).

Visit the Organization Web Site.
If the organization in question doesn't have a web site or the web site doesn't seem to match the advertised job, there may be cause for concern. Note the professionalism of the web site. Is there specific contact information? Are jobs and career information actually posted on the site? Lack of pertinent information is a red flag.

Use Personal Contacts, Linked-in or other Networking Sites
Do you have any connections to help you find inside information? If you belong to a professional association, they may be able to put you in touch with people who can advise you. Search Linked-In by "People" and the Advanced Search Fields for "Company Name." Click the "Current Companies Only" checkbox to receive information on people currently listed as employed by this company.

Use Google
Search by the name of the organization to gather information and recent news. You can also search by "<company name> scam" to see if this company has been reported in any type of fraudulent activity.

Check with Consumer Services
Two organizations to utilize are the Better Business Bureau or the Federal Trade Commission to see if any complaints have been lodged against the company.

Investigate the Company's References
If you aren't sure a company is legitimate, request a list of employees or contractors. Then contact the references to see how satisfied they are. If a company isn't willing to share references (names, email addresses and phone numbers), this is a red flag.

Poor Communication Skills
Be cautious when an employer cannot communicate accurately or effectively on the web site, by email, over the telephone, etc.

Exercise Caution When Asked to Pay Any Fees
Most legitimate employers will not charge to hire you! Don't send money for work-at-home directories, advice on getting hired, company information or for anything else related to the job. There are some well-known internship programs that do require payment to place you in internships. Remember that Handshake can provide CAL U students with internship and job postings.

Review Payment Information
When information about salary isn't listed on a job posting, try to find out if you will receive a salary or be paid on commission. Find out how much you're paid, how often you are paid and how you are paid. If the company doesn't pay an hourly rate or a salary, be cautious and investigate further.

Interview in Public Places or Places of Business.

What Should You Do if You Think You Have Been Scammed?

- If you doubt the legitimacy of an email or phone call, contact the career center at careers@calu.edu or 724-938-4413, to the attention of Director, Rhonda Gifford.
- If you believe you are the victim of fraud, contact Public Safety at 724-938-4299 or your local police.
- If you reply to someone using your CAL U email, but later suspect it was a scam, contact CAL U's Technology Services at 724-938-5911 or UTechRequests@calu.edu for additional steps to protect your account.

Additional Information about Job Scams:
- The FBI Cyber Division "Cyber-related Scams Targeting Universities, Employees, and Students."
- Federal Trade Commission video about Job Scams: http://ftc.gov/jobscams