

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS THE FIRST YEAR AFTER GRADUATION

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The Citadel  
THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
CAREER CENTER



1. **Register for / Update account with *The Gate*.** If you continue your search upon graduation and have not already registered with *The Gate* as a Student, **register** with *The Gate* as an Alumnus. If you are already registered as a student, note that graduating student accounts will automatically be given Alumni status within a month following graduation and will receive email notification. (The “move” will be based up the graduation date you supplied on your account). **Upload a revised Resume(s)** with new contact information, revised dates/timeframes, and revised verb tense, as appropriate.
2. **Before** you are in a position to evaluate offers regarding your first job or graduate school admission, be sure to review [www.citadel.edu/career\\_services/Interviewing/EvaluatingAnOffer.pdf](http://www.citadel.edu/career_services/Interviewing/EvaluatingAnOffer.pdf) so that you are ready for making this big decision. Also consider other life planning factors that will weigh into your decision-making, such as where you will live, whether you will rent or own your home, etc. Review a new resource section of our website on the Information for Students’ page called “Beyond Graduation” via [www.citadel.edu/career\\_services/info-students.htm](http://www.citadel.edu/career_services/info-students.htm) (lower left side of page).
3. **Immediately after you accept employment (military or civilian) or admission to graduate / professional school, follow-up with your remaining contacts.** Once you have officially accepted employment or graduate admission, it is considered professional courtesy to follow-up with those who are still considering your candidacy. Doing so allows them to move forward with their search and it places you in a position of favor; should you ever apply to the organization in the future, they will remember whether you provided appropriate follow-up or left them in the dark.
4. **Recognize your “new” status.** Whether you have accepted employment or admission to graduate / professional school upon your graduation from The Citadel, your status is one of a “new person on the block”. Recognize and accept that you are starting over. Your college diploma and experiences brought you this far, but you have to continually compete for position. And as you compete, carefully listen to those who have gone before you to know which fights are worth fighting, which battles will likely not be won, and how you may best fit into your new environment.
5. **Avoid duplicating your efforts.** As you begin your first job or your first year of graduate study, keep all the work you have done to get to this point for reference. This includes your application materials (resumes, cover letters, reference page, thank you letters, follow-up letters, research, etc.) whether you were offered a position or not, as well as employer contact information. Eventually, you will need to begin the next job search. So why start from scratch? Reference these materials in your next search and update them as appropriate to your needs. (This is one of the reasons you should create a *Career Planning Portfolio*).
6. **Update your resume on a regular basis.** Most employers will review your performance yearly and sometimes more often the first year on the job. Use your performance reviews as a time to update your resume. First, it will help you accurately track your duties and accomplishments vs. having to think back several years. Second, you will be ready for your next job search at a moment’s notice. (Some opportunities come along when you least expect them...and you cannot ask someone to wait for you to update your resume). Third, if an opportunity comes along to apply for a promotion, your resume is ready to go with a few minor adjustments vs. starting from your senior year (or starting from scratch if you did not save your senior year resume). Those in graduate school should update their resume at least once per year of study so that it is current when you are ready to apply for full-time employment.
7. **Begin planning your next step.** It is never too early to consider where you will go from here. During your first year on the job or at graduate school, look ahead a year and consider the steps you need to take between now and then. Re-visit and use the available resources throughout the Career Center website at [www.citadel.edu/career\\_services](http://www.citadel.edu/career_services).
8. **Continue to build your professional network throughout your life.** This will help you find new opportunities to develop your career and will also provide opportunities for you to help others. (Consider joining The Citadel Mentoring Network on *The Gate* to offer advice to current students regarding their searches). More than likely, you will need to add at least one person to your initial reference page to serve as a reference when you seek the next job. On day one of your first job / graduate study, begin developing professional relationships with those who may be willing to serve in such a capacity when the time is right.
9. **Additional tips may be found among the following resources.**
  - a. **Quintessential Careers.** An online tutorial for achieving success on the first year after college. [http://www.quintcareers.com/career\\_success\\_tutorial/](http://www.quintcareers.com/career_success_tutorial/)
  - b. **“Life After School. Explained.”** A quick reference guide from Cap & Compass. Available online via [www.CapandCompass.com](http://www.CapandCompass.com) for \$12.95. Includes tips on saving and spending money, getting an apartment, taxes, first day on the job, insurance, and more.
  - c. **MyMoney.gov** is a federal government site dedicated to teaching Americans the basics of financial management.