

## **Beware of Employment Fraudulent Activity and Job Scams**

Recently nationwide reports of job scams have become commonplace on college campuses and online job boards. This criminal activity is designed to gain access to student's money, bank account information, social security number, or identity. These scams are often posted on online job boards, in newspapers, or sent to you via e-mail. Career Services and Employer Relations (CSER) staff utilize the online job portal, **Ramtrack**, to facilitate connections between students and potential employers/internship sites. Staff in CSER do not endorse specific job/internship postings or employers. Although we make an effort to validate the quality and legitimacy of postings on Ramtrack, scammers are becoming harder to identify. We encourage all users to use a critical eye in evaluating all opportunities on any posting system. Please read the following information and resources obtained from the *Federal Trade Commission* (FTC), the Balance, and the *National Association of Colleges and Employers* (NACE).

### **To Report a Job Scam**

If you've been targeted by a job scam please contact University Police at 508-626-4911 and Career Services and Employer Relations at 508-626-4625 to share your information and start an investigation into the complaint.

There are a variety of employment scams that criminals use to lure students, below are the most common:

### **Mystery Shopper Scam**

FSU has had this particular scam surface recently within the last few years. Although there are legitimate mystery shopping companies that hire college students and others to provide feedback on stores, restaurants, and businesses, a majority are not factual opportunities. There are numerous scammers posing as mystery shopping companies. This type of scam can occur through an unsolicited e-mail or via a job board posting. The fraudulent company asks you to pay a fee to become an employee. This is a scam because you should not have to pay a company to become an employee. Another variation of this scam occurs when the employer asks you to review a wire transfer company and complete a money transfer, this action then becomes a payment forward scam as described above.

### **Phishing Scam**

This scam happened last year to several FSU students and occurs when you receive an unsolicited e-mail from an employer stating they saw your posted resume. The "employer" states your skills match the position for which they are hiring, but they need more information from you. The employer asks for personal information, which they may use to steal your identity. Before providing any information, be sure to research the company and verify the posting. Always be cautious when sharing personal information, such as mailing address, phone number, social security number, identification number, or banking information.

### **Payment Forward Scam**

This scam occurs after you apply for a position or reply to a spam e-mail. The employer will reply with instructions for a "test" before employment. As part of the test, you receive a check in the mail and are asked to deposit the check into your account and send a certain amount via wire transfer to another person. The employer promises that you will keep a percentage. It is a scam because the check is not valid; and if you deposit the check and transfer the money, you will be responsible for the funds.

### **Application Fee Scam**

With this scam, you are charged between \$25 -\$100 for a "guaranteed" employment opportunity application. People have used this scam by posing as members of the cruise line industry, the U.S. Postal Service, and other organizations. Always check with the company in which you are applying to learn more about the application process. Employment applications should be free, and there are no "guaranteed" positions.

**How Do You Spot a Scam?** Review the information below to identify potential "red flags" for employment scams.

- **Catchy job titles.** Scammers often use words in the job title to catch your attention, such as “Work at Home”, “No Experience Necessary”, “Make \$1000 a week”, or “Work just one hour a week”.
- **Required payment.** When payment is requested for training materials, starter kit, or other items it could be a scam.
- **Lack of employer details.** If few details about the employer are included in the ad, posting, or e-mail, such as no company name, website, e-mail address, or location, then this may be a scam.
- **Fake website.** If the website is hosted by a free domain, such as Yahoo, it may be a scam. Scammers will use a legitimate company’s website information and post it as a fraudulent site. Research the company name and check domainwhitepages.com to identify when the website was created. If the website was created recently or owned by someone not in the same location as the company, it could be fraudulent.
- **Unsolicited e-mails.** If you receive an unsolicited e-mail and it comes from a free domain e-mail address (e.g., gmail.com, hotmail.com, or yahoo.com) it could be a scam. If the name of the e-mail signature does not match the name of the e-mail, this may be a scam. Never click on a link in an e-mail from someone you do not know, it could be a virus or other malicious software.
- **Personal information requests.** Requests for personal information via e-mail, such as a copy of your ID, bank account information, or social security number, can be used by identity thieves.
- **Guaranteed job offered.** Legitimate employers do not promise a job before discussing your skills and experience.
- **Specific words or phrases.** Beware of words in the job description, such as wire transfers, PayPal, eBay, package forwarding, or money transfers, these are indicators of a scam.

### Additional Links

Below is a list of helpful resources for learning more about employment scams or to research possible fraudulent employers.

- [Federal Trade Commission](#) - Learn about employment scams or file a complaint.
- [Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](#) - File a complaint with IC3 or review Internet crime prevention tips.
- [Better Business Bureau](#) - Research employers by reviewing reports, complaints, and accreditation status.
- [RipOff Report](#) - Discover complaints about companies.
- [Job Scam Examples - Typical Job Scam Examples](#) - Review job scam examples and share scam information.

### Check for complaints

Your [local consumer protection agency](#), [state Attorney General's Office](#), and the [Better Business Bureau](#) can tell you whether any complaints have been filed about a company. Just keep in mind that a lack of complaints doesn’t mean the business is on the up-and-up. You may want to do an internet search with the name of the company and words like *review*, *scam*, or *complaint*. Look through several pages of search results. And check out articles about the company in newspapers, magazines, or online, as well.