How Professional Associations Can Help Your Career

Amarillo College Library
What is a Professional Association?

- A professional association or society is an organization that consists of people in a career field and promotes their interests. Associations can be local, state, national, and international.

- Some examples are the Amarillo Music Teachers Association, the Potter-Randall County Medical Society, the Texas Library Association, the American Nursing Association, and the International Federation of Sports Physiotherapy.

- Membership dues help finance the organization. Students can join most professional associations, often at a reduced rate or even for free.

- Amarillo College has some student associations, such as the AC Paramedic Students Association and the AC Student Nurses Association.
How Can a Professional Association Help Me?

Among the services associations *may* provide are the following:

- Information about the profession
- Publications
- In-person networking opportunities
- Continuing education/professional development
- Volunteer/internship/mentor information
- Job listings
- Easily accessible information on the Internet via websites, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Web casts, podcasts, and so on.
- Professional ethics information
- Group insurance
- Political representation through a lobbyist
- Reduced prices for goods and services
How Can I Identify an Association for My Field?

One way to find an association is to do a search with the occupation, the word “association” or “society,” and perhaps another word to narrow the search. Use Google or another public search engine. See the examples below. Also, the Occupational Outlook Handbook has them in “Additional Sources of Information.”

**American Nurses Association**
The ANA represents America’s registered nurses (RNs). We promote high nursing quality, address nursing ethics & other workplace concerns, address the latest...

**California Nurses Association**
Includes membership information, news, practice alerts, press releases, newsletter, and consumer information.

**National Student Nurse”s Association**
Features online membership applications, NCLEX study aids, an online store, discounts for products, services, and publications.

**Welcome to Delaware Nurses Association**
Delaware Nurses Association: non-profit, professional membership organization for registered and advanced practice nurses; information on meetings, ...

**New York State Nurses Association**
The New York State Nurses Association is the professional membership, labor union and nursing education resource for Registered Nurses in New York State.

Associations usually have the “.org” domain. In Google, you can limit your search by entering “site:org” with no spaces.
What about Specialties?

Professional associations may exist for your specialty.

In Google, you will probably see a list of popular searches on a drop-down menu.
Some Career Fields Have More Than One Name.

In this search, the user is searching for “lawyer” and “attomey” at the same time by going to Google's Advanced Search. Sites containing either one will be retrieved because the boxes are joined by the **OR** connector. This strategy works with occupations and fields: physical therapy, physical therapist.
Website Example 1: American Nurses Association

This site has numerous links leading to information useful to students. “Considering Nursing?” leads to information about the career. Links may be worded differently, so you may need to do some exploring on a site to find the career information. Most association websites will have some career information.
Website Example 1: American Nurses Association

This “Careers and Credentialing” section might also hold useful information for a career research assignment.
Website Example 2: National Funeral Directors Association

This professional association site has some very helpful career information, but it takes some exploring on the site to find it. Don't give up if you don't find career information immediately.

Exploring a Career in Funeral Service

Are you interested in:
- Helping Others?
- The Human Biological Sciences?
- Community Involvement?
- A Business Environment?

A Funeral Service Professional:
- Works with the bereaved, providing sensitive, effective intervention during a time of emotional need.
- Is a professional caregiver who enables families and communities to express their concern for life and the living.
- Is a motivated man or woman who practices a unique vocation and who is legally required to possess certain professional qualifications.
- Is involved in a variety of activities within the community.
- Carries out administrative and logistical tasks required by law, custom and accepted practice.

Duties and responsibilities of a funeral service professional:
- Provides support to the bereaved during initial stages of their grief.
- Arranges and directs funeral ceremonies.
- Arranges for removal of the deceased from the place of death.
Are There Other Helpful Websites? Yes!

- Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or MySpace (still heavily used by musicians) may have a page for an organization in your field.

- Sites devoted to career research, such as the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) site that resides on the U.S. Department of Labor site, may have links to professional associations.

- Example: Below are professional associations for paralegals and legal assistants identified through OOH.
  
  - National Association of Legal Assistants
  - National Federation of Paralegal Associations
  - American Association for Paralegal Education
  - American Alliance of Paralegals
  - National Association of Legal Secretaries

- Note: Enter the “shortcut” ooh in Google or another public search engine to go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook online. Enter your occupation in the search box on the left side of the page. Be sure to view the AC Library’s Occupational Outlook Handbook tutorial.
Are There People I Can Ask? Yes!

Some people who may be able to help you are listed below. Professionals in your career field will probably know which associations are the major ones or can help you find out.

- Your professors in your career field.
- Active practitioners in your career field.
- Librarians. They may be able to guide you to sources.
- The AC Careers and Employment Services Office can be reached at 806-371-5459. The office is located on the Washington Street Campus.
Citing a Professional Association

**MLA Citation Style Example:**


#### Librarians Can Help with Career Research.

- Call the Research Help Desk at 806-371-5468 or toll-free at 866-371-5468.
- Receive walk-in help on the fourth floor, Lynn Library (WSC), and at the West Campus Library.
- E-mail questions to library-help@actx.edu