

Permanent vs. contract employment: Weighing your options

A traditional career path for engineers after college has typically involved securing a full-time permanent position with a company, in hopes of eventually gaining upward mobility within the organization.

While permanent employment can provide security and stability for entry-level engineers, contract employment should be considered as another option for aspiring engineers who may prefer the flexibility and freedom to work in different environments while acquiring a variety of different skills.

There are pros and cons to each type of work arrangement. In a permanent position, your employer expects you to commit to working for them for at least a couple years before exploring new opportunities. So while you have

the security of a permanent position, there is less freedom to leave a new job for something better.

While a contract position does offer more freedom and flexibility, they are usually short term (project-based) and do not usually lead to a permanent position within the company where you function as an external employee.

For entry-level engineers, contracting is a great opportunity to work in different cultures and environments while gaining a variety of skills and developing a large network of fellow engineers (leads for new contracts!).

Both options should be considered as they each have beneficial aspects. Be sure to weigh the pros vs. cons.



Why should I consider a contract position after I graduate?

Contract work is a great way to gain valuable experience in a number of different areas of your chosen field while developing a multitude of different skills. You also do not have to make a long-term commitment to a job you may not end up liking. Contracts are typically short in duration (6 months to a year), giving you more freedom to explore opportunities that are more to your liking. Also, if you are not yet sure exactly what you want to be doing in your

field, contracting may be a great option for you. There is risk involved in securing new contracting positions after each contract, but your breadth of experience (skills, people, technologies, cultures) will make you a much more valuable commodity. This also helps to increase your earning potential too! So don't rule out contract positions.

- **Tom Cicero, Associate Director of ECC**
(10+ years of contract recruiting experience)

EVENTS

F1 Student Alumni Panel
Tuesday, March 7th | 4:30 – 7PM
SCE Cardinal Room (3rd Floor)
[Details & RSVP Info](#)

International Student Career Week
March 13th – 16th | SCE Illinois Room
Multiple events hosted by OIS
[Schedule of events with details](#)

All-Majors Career Fair
Thurs, March 16th | 10AM – 2PM
SCE – Illinois Room (3rd Floor)
[Details & list of employers](#)

Internships, co-ops and jobs posted on [UICcareers](#) **ENGINEERING: 591**

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Career Advice from the Experts

We have hand-selected recent articles with career development advice to help you prepare for your future career in engineering.

Featured articles this week: Permanent vs. contract employment

- [Temp, Contract-to-Hire & Direct Hire: What's the Difference?](#)
- [5 Reasons to Accept A Contract Position While Job Searching](#)
- [Should I be a Contract Worker or a Permanent Employee?](#)

Engineering Career Center

816/818/820 – SEO

[Walk-in Hours](#)

Tuesday – Thursday | 11AM – 3PM

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- Resume and cover letter reviews
- Interview preparation
- Salary and job offer negotiation
- Internship & full-time job search strategies
- Career Fair preparation (Elevator speech)
- Professional etiquette
- Networking & LinkedIn tips
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