

## Career Planning and Job Search Timetable for Students

---

Following is a job search timetable for each year of college. It is not meant to frustrate Seniors, who have no way to reach back into the past. It is meant to provide a best-case layout for your college years. Those in a 2-year program should simply compress the time frame. Those in graduate school should seek to cover previous tracks as much as possible and sync the final-year activities with those listed for the Senior Year. And unemployed graduates should review all the information to see if there are any new steps that could be completed to enhance their job search. Keep in mind that it is never too late (or too early) to start.

- **Freshman Year**

- Take time to understand yourself as an individual. You can do this by paying attention to the classes you most enjoy, activities in which you participate, and by talking to your friends and family about career ideas and possibilities.
- Develop an ongoing relationship with your academic advisor. Ask about majors, electives, general education requirements, academic policies, and how they align with possible career options.
- Take a wide variety of classes to broaden your exposure to potential career paths.
- Focus on good grades from the start; if you fall behind, it can be difficult to recover.
- Take career assessments through your campus Career Center to find out more about how your aptitudes, interests, personality, and values match with potential career paths.
- Seek out career counseling to help you gain greater understanding of your career assessments and to begin career research and exploration.
- Explore volunteer opportunities in the community as a method to gain crucial experience for your resume.
- Develop your first resume and continue to refine it by adding content throughout your college years as your experience increases and your vision sharpens in focus.
- Target working in an industry and/or career of interest in a support/clerical position part-time during the school year and/or full-time during the summer. Industry and/or career experience of any type will be the most rewarding for seeking out future internship experience, even if the pay rate is lower than other jobs. Make the investment now in your future career.

- **Sophomore Year**

- Identify specifically what you plan to achieve in your education. Understand your goal and chart the path which will take you there. Plan with the end in mind.
- Choose your major based upon alignment to your career planning and eventual career focus.
- Focus your coursework within your major. Don't use up all of your elective credits early.
- Ask recent graduates for the names of the professors and classes that most benefited their career. Work in those same professors and classes into your class planning.
- Conduct general informational interviews with several employers to better understand different career field needs and what you can be doing now to prepare for those needs.

Ask questions about the employment outlook, anticipated salaries, background requirements for getting hired, and what they like best (and least) about their careers.

- Begin to build and develop your personal network.
- Join a campus organization or club in an area of professional interest and attend the meetings regularly. In addition to providing valuable vocational information, you will develop your teamwork and leadership skills. It also looks good on your resume. It shows potential employers that you were able to juggle school, work and being involved in an organization or club. Be a joiner throughout college.
- Continue career planning with a greater emphasis on understanding the targeted professions and the needs of employers for entry level talent. Plan and develop your work and academic experiences to match this profile.
- Develop a relationship with the Career Center, including assistance with preparing for work after graduation and internship experience during college.
- Identify at least three marketable skills you already possess for your chosen career, as well as three more that you hope to develop by the time you graduate.
- Target working in an entry level internship or research position within your chosen field part-time during the school year and/or full-time during the summer.

- **Junior Year**

- Keep your grades up; the classes will begin to get more difficult, so continue to focus on excelling in your studies.
- Develop relationships with the professors in your major. They will be contributors to your job search, both directly as a referral source and indirectly as employers inquire about the leading students in the major. They can also provide you with references and letters of recommendation.
- Run for lower-level offices (Secretary, Treasurer, etc.) in your extracurricular activities in preparation for the higher-level offices (President, Vice President) next year. These activities provide excellent resume material and interview examples which will take you beyond academics.
- Attend both on- and off-campus job fairs to gain exposure to both potential internships, as well as potential jobs after graduation.
- Fine tune your resume and cover letter as you continue to expand your skills and experience.
- Begin planning for your final year with the Career Center to ensure your preparation is on target for meeting the needs of potential employers.
- Schedule a mock interview and interview coaching with the staff at the Career Center to fine tune your interviewing skills for internship interviews.
- Target an assistant level or professional level co-op or internship within your chosen field part-time during the school year and/or full-time during the summer. Attempt to locate a position as close as possible to the type of work you would like to be doing after graduation.
- If you're planning to continue your education, research areas of interest, universities and programs. Study for and take appropriate graduate admission tests. Gather application materials and check on application deadlines and rolling admissions policies.

- **Senior Year**

- Keep your grades high, while focusing your attention on the direct applicability of your coursework to your chosen profession. This year will be your greatest preparation for the world of work.
- Complete as many courses within your major as possible. Use available electives to further your educational experience within your chosen field, rather than taking non-related classes.
- Pursue professional level work experience part-time during the school year.
- If you have not yet acquired work experience in your chosen field, offer your services as a volunteer. Volunteer experience is still experience.
- Direct any special projects within your major toward your chosen field or profession.
- Fine-tune your resume for graduation.
- Meet with your academic advisor and do a final audit of your requirements to make sure all requirements will be met by graduation.
- Schedule a mock interview with the staff at the Career Center to ensure that your interviewing skills are well honed.
- Obtain at least three letters of reference.
- Attend on- and off-campus job fairs to gain a better understanding of the types of opportunities available after graduation.
- Utilize the counseling resources at the Career Center to further broaden your job search.
- Activate your personal network, enlisting their support in your job search.
- Begin interviewing as early as possible in your final year. Some of the best positions are filled by the end of the first semester.
- Make it your goal to find your new job as early as possible in your final year.
- Learn how to evaluate job offers and negotiate salary before you receive a job offer so that you can effectively negotiate the best possible terms.
- If you're going on for further schooling, obtain letters of recommendation, take (or retake) graduate admission tests if you haven't already, and apply early. Be sure your application packages are complete.
- Register for Graduate & Professional School Financial Aid Service (GSPSFAS) if required, and consider applying for graduate, teaching, or research assistantships.
- Inform the Career Center of your employment/graduate school status as soon as it is confirmed.