

# CLIMB to your CAREER

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Where will you be in four years? Will you be ready to join the work force?

Maybe you have your future planned: You know what you want to be after graduation and you have an idea of how to get there. Or, maybe you aren't even sure what you want to major in—never mind know what kind of career you want to have after college.

No matter if you're decided or unsure—if you're planning to graduate in four years and find your place in the work force, take steps now to reach your goals. **It's never too early** (or too late) **to start**. But—the earlier you start, the easier it will be to prepare!

First, develop the habit of stopping by the Career Development Office on a regular basis. Check in a few times during your first year, more often during your sophomore year, frequently during your junior year, and weekly during your senior year.

Here's a timeline to guide your progress:

## **FRESHMAN YEAR**

*Ask questions – Explore your options (up to 30 hours)*

- Schedule an appointment at the career center to familiarize yourself with the services and resources available.
- Take interest and career inventory tests in the Career Development Center.
- Start a career information file or notebook that will include records of your career development and job-search activities for the next four years.
- Identify at least four **skills employers want** and plan how you will acquire these skills before graduation. Visit your career center for information on the skills.
- Scan the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** which is filled with information on hundreds of occupations. Check out career-search books in the career center library.
- Attend a resume-writing presentation and explore other career planning workshops. [Write your first resume](#).
- Attend on-campus career and job fairs to gather information on potential careers and employers.
- Explore your interests, abilities, and skills through required academics.
- Talk to faculty, alumni, advisers, and career counselors about possible majors and careers.
- Join university organizations that will offer you leadership roles in the future.
- **Collect information on experiential education programs, internships, and summer jobs available through the career office.**
- Consider volunteer positions to help build your resume.

## SOPHOMORE YEAR

*Research Options – Test Possible Paths (up to 60 hours)*

- Update your resume (with your summer activities) and have it critiqued in the career office.
- [Identify organizations and associations in your interest areas for shadowing opportunities and informational interviews.](#)
- Begin exploring internship, summer, and school-break job opportunities that relate to your interests.
- Explore at least three career options available to you through your major.
- Review your progress in learning four (or more) skills employers look for in new hires.
- Attend on-campus career and job fairs and employer information sessions relating to your interests.
- **Work toward one leadership position in a university club or activity.**
- Begin to collect recommendations from previous and current employers.

## JUNIOR YEAR

*Make Decisions – Plot Directions (up to 100 hours)*

- Schedule an appointment with a member of the career staff to have your updated resume critiqued.
- Review your participation in an internship with a career staff member.
- Participate in interviewing, cover-letter writing, and other job-search workshops.
- **Practice your skills at mock interviews.**
- Review your progress in learning four (or more) skills employers look for in new hires.
- [Attend on-campus career and job fairs and employer information sessions that relate to your interests.](#)
- Take leadership positions in clubs and organizations.
- Consider graduate school and get information on graduate entrance examinations.
- **Ask former employers and professors to serve as references or to write recommendations to future employers.**
- Start your professional wardrobe.

## SENIOR YEAR

*Search – Interview – Accept – SUCCESS!*

- Update your resume and visit the career office to have it critiqued.
- [Actively and thoughtfully apply for positions that are of interest to you.](#)
- Develop an employer prospect list with contact information from organizations you are interested in pursuing.
- Gather information on realistic salary expectations. Your career services office will be able to help.
- **Attend local association meetings to meet potential employers.**
- Draft a cover letter that can be adapted for a variety of employers and have it critiqued.
- Participate in interviewing workshops and practice interviews.
- Read two or more professional or trade publications from your major and career field on a regular basis.
- If you are planning to go to graduate school, take graduate school entrance exams and complete applications.
- Follow up on all applications and keep a record of the status of each.
- Go on second interviews. Evaluate job offers and accept one.
- **Complete The Outcomes Survey and report your career decisions.**

Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.