First Year: A Time of Self Discovery

As you begin your college education, it’s perfectly okay not to know what you want to do later in life. Take time now to learn as much as you can about your skills, personality, lifestyle preferences, interests, and values. This information will help you choose a major so you can begin to explore the exciting world of career possibilities that await you!

Are you asking these questions?: “Who am I? Where do I fit in? What do I do best? What major should I choose?” If so, follow these five steps:

1. **Explore majors** through general education classes and **develop your interests and skills** through student organizations, sports, extracurricular activities, and part-time work.
2. Get acquainted with what’s available at the Career Center Library. Read about different occupations.
3. **Talk about your career interests** with parents, friends, professors, and other individuals who are already employed.
4. Register for BruinView™ (career.ucla.edu/Bruinview) and schedule a Same-Day Counseling Appointment. Take self-assessments to learn more about your interests, skills, values, and strengths.
5. **Study hard** and keep your grades as high as possible.

Sophomore Year: Expand Your Career Horizons

Continue to explore and gather information about career fields. The best resources are people who work in the career fields that interest you. Summer jobs, internships, and volunteer activities will provide first-hand insights.

Are you asking these questions?: “I know my major, but what can I do with it? What career options do I have? What’s out there?” If so, follow these steps:

1. Continue to **expand your knowledge** of career options. Make a list of those which sound interesting.
2. Learn more about the **job market** by visiting the Career Center Library, and by researching materials available on the Internet, including the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* online at www.bls.gov/oco
3. Conduct **informational interviews** with people who work in career fields of interest to you. Spend a day on the job with a professional.
4. Pursue internships, part-time and summer jobs, and volunteer activities to **gain work experience** and learn more about your work preferences.
5. **Attend career fairs and other career-related programs** to increase your knowledge of a range of occupations. Visit career.ucla.edu/FTE.

For more information, go to career.ucla.edu
Junior Year: Narrow the Options
Internships and summer employment will help you acquire new skills, learn more about careers, and develop a network of contacts. Aim for outstanding academic performance, especially in your major. Now’s the time to go back and once again ask the questions “Who am I?” and “What do I want?”

Are you asking these questions?: “I’m looking at several career options - which is the best for me? What do I need to do to prepare for this career? How have my interests changed since my first year and how will this influence my present action?” Then follow these six steps:

1. Narrow down your choices and discuss your career ideas with a career counselor. Are you satisfied with your early decisions?
2. Research companies and work environments. Pinpoint organizations with job titles that use your skills and for which you believe you are a good match.
3. Begin to establish professional contacts through informational interviews (see Chapter 3) to assist with your career exploration and job search campaign.
4. Continue to gain career related work and internship experience.
5. Start preparing for graduate school if your career choice requires an advanced degree. Check admission requirements, testing dates, and timelines for applications.
6. Attend the annual Graduate and Professional School Fair in October. For more information, visit career.ucla.edu/GradSchoolFair.

Senior Year: Make a Career Decision
Plan ahead and set reasonable career goals for yourself. Remember that this is just one in a long line of career decisions. Your first job will not be your last and you don’t know where it might lead you, so keep an open mind. Remember that graduate school applications, letters of reference, and test scores must be submitted early. BruinView™ campus interviews (OCR), job listings, and career fairs will help you identify prospective employers and career positions.

Are you asking these questions?: “What types of jobs are available? How do I find the job that’s right for me? Should I go to graduate school now or later?” Follow these five steps:

1. Discover successful job search strategies by attending workshops at the Career Center and consulting with a career counselor.
2. Prepare for your first job. Talk with UCLA alumni about their first year on the job and some of the challenges you can expect. Join the UCLA Alumni Association at www.uclalumni.net.
3. Use your contacts to identify job opportunities and get referrals using LinkedIn.
4. Explore all opportunities. Attend career fairs and employer presentations. Register for BruinView™ campus interviews (OCR) and apply for jobs at career.ucla.edu/BruinView.
5. Confirm your remaining degree requirements at the beginning of the year so there are no surprises when it comes time to graduate.