02 Career Planning

Career Development is a lifelong process. This is how you can maximize your career journey.

YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

Are you headed toward your dream career? When you are focused and know your strengths and interests, you can target the industries, organizations, and positions that best match your talents and personality.

Your immediate goal should be to make the best career choices possible at this point in your life. Keep in mind; it’s only natural that your dreams and aspirations may change over time. Changing interests and personal circumstances, combined with the rapidly evolving nature of the world of work, will require you to remain flexible and make numerous career related decisions throughout your lifetime.

There are six stages in the career development process (see chart below), each of which you may visit at multiple points throughout your life. They often overlap and may occur in any order. However, it is important to start by knowing yourself.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

ONE
Know Yourself.

Evaluate who you are and what you want.

• Assess your interests, personality, skills, & values.
• Speak with family, friends, mentors, and supervisors about how your interests and characteristics align with potential career options.
• Meet with a career counselor.

TWO
Explore Options.

Learn about careers that interest you.

• Research career information online (job titles, companies, industries, job market trends).
• Conduct informational interviews with professionals.
• Attend career programs, events, and conferences.
• Join student organizations.
• Explore academic areas through a variety of GE courses.
• Shadow a professional in a field of interest.

THREE
Gain Experience.

Clarify your direction through experiential education.

• Participate in an internship.
• Volunteer for a cause.
• Get a part-time job.
• Gain practical on-campus experience such as research, writing for the newspaper, taking on a leadership role in a student group, etc.

FOUR
Set Goals.

Determine what path you would like to pursue.

• Reflect on what you’ve learned through your research and experiences.
• Consider where you are and where you want to be.
• Develop an action plan with strategies to achieve your goals.
• Meet with a Career Counselor.

FIVE
Seek Goals.

Develop skills to achieve your goals.

• Write a strong resume and cover letter.
• Develop thoughtful, polished application materials.
• Practice and enhance interviewing skills.
• Attend career fairs and recruiting events.
• Leverage your network.

SIX
Enhance Career.

Continuously develop as a professional and seize opportunities for growth.

• Be diligent, hard-working and respectful to colleagues and supervisors.
• Maintain positive relationships to build a strong network.
• Get involved with professional associations.
• Seek opportunities for continuing education.
• Regularly reevaluate your career goals, along with your values and priorities, which may shift over time.
Are You Career Ready?

NACE’s 8 career readiness competencies represent the skills, experiences, and attributes that employers look for when recruiting. Mastering the skills below will prepare you for a successful transition into the workplace.

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- Exercises sound reasoning
- Obtains, interprets, and uses knowledge, facts, and data
- Demonstrates originality and inventiveness

Professionalism/Work Ethic
- Demonstrates effective work habits and personal accountability
- Demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior
- Able to learn from mistakes

Oral/Written Communications
- Clearly articulates thoughts & ideas
- Able to express ideas to others
- Writes effectively and clearly

Digital Technology
- Leverages existing digital technologies
- Adapts new and emerging technologies

Leadership
- Leverages the strengths of others to achieve common goals
- Uses interpersonal skills to coach and develop others
- Organizes, prioritizes, and delegates work

Teamwork/Collaboration
- Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers
- Able to work within a team structure
- Can negotiate and manage conflict

Global/Intercultural Fluency
- Values, respects, and learns from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions
- Demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individual differences

Career Management
- Articulates personal skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences
- Identifies areas necessary for professional growth
- Takes the steps necessary to pursue opportunities

Source: Career Readiness Resources; www.naceweb.org/Career Readiness>Overview & Resources, Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges & Employers
FOUR YEAR CAREER PLAN

FIRST YEAR: A Time of Self Discovery

As you begin your college education, it is 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 Career Center resources. Learn about different occupations.
3. Talk about your career interests with parents, friends, professors, and other individuals who are already employed.
4. Register for Handshake (ucla.joinhandshake.com) and schedule a counseling appointment. Complete the On-Campus Recruitment Orientation found on MyUCLA under the “Finances and Jobs” tab. Take self-assessments to learn more about your interests, skills, values and strengths.
5. Study hard and keep your grades as high as possible.

SECOND 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 five steps.

1. Continue to expand your knowledge of career options. Make a list of those which sound interesting and update your “Career Interests” on Handshake.
2. Learn more about the job market by visiting the Career Center and by researching materials available online, including the online Occupational Outlook Handbook at www.bls.gov/ooh.
3. Conduct informational interviews with people who work in career industries of interest to you. Spend a day on the job with a professional. Sign onto UCLAone.com to connect with Bruin alumni.
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.
**THIRD 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.

**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?

**If so, 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 Admit UCLA: Graduate and Professional School Fair in October.

**FOURTH/FIFTH 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. Handshake on-campus interviews (OCR), job listings, and career fairs will help you identify prospective employers and career opportunities.

**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?

**If so, follow these six 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.alumni.ucla.edu and be sure to sign on to UCLAOne.com.
3. Use your contacts to identify job opportunities and get referrals using LinkedIn.
4. Explore all opportunities. Attend career fairs and employer info sessions.
5. Register for Handshake campus interviews (OCR) and apply for jobs at ucla.joinhandshake.com.
6. Confirm your remaining degree requirements at the beginning of the year so there are no surprises when it comes time to graduate.