



Four Year Career Plan

Figuring out what to do after college can be intimidating but planning early and getting help can make all the difference, take a look at our Four-Year Career Plan. We will get you moving and keep you going in the right direction! Your career starts now.

First Year

Acclimate and Explore: Acclimate to college life and begin preliminary career exploration.

Career Development

- Begin with [self-assessment](#) by identifying your interests, abilities, and values.
- Talk with faculty, mentors, family and friends about majors and occupations.
- Visit Career Development Services. Learn how more about careers, make decisions, and set goals, and use the Career Resource Library to learn.
- Browse [CAREERLink](#), an online job bank and web-based recruiting system used by Winston-Salem State University.
- Be intentional about your college years. Write down short-term/and long-range career goals.
- Attend workshops and events.
- Consider career-related experience through an externship, internship, co-op, research, or volunteer experience.
- Create a preliminary resume and cover letter.
- Build employment skills through a wide variety of experiences on and off campus.
- Conduct an informational interview with a professional to learn about the realities of a career.
- Start building your professional wardrobe.

Academic Development

- Get to know faculty, staff and advisors.
- Practice speaking up in class, become a leader in discussions.
- Try out classes that you like and find interesting.
- Maintain a personal academic file with grades, reports, projects, honors and activities.
- Establish a strong GPA.
- Meet with your academic advisor to plan your course of study.
- Meet with an Academic Advisor/Career Advisor to connect your FOCUS 2 results and your choice of majors

Personal/Social Development

- Join a campus club or organization to acquire skills.
- Assess your changing relationship with your parents and family.
- Allow time for friends and leisure activities.
- Attend the Student Involvement Fair to learn about organizations & clubs on campus.
- Get to know Resident Assistant in your residence hall.
- Involve yourself in team-related activities.
- Document your experiences, skills, and accomplishments.

Second Year

Assess & Explore: Assess your skills, interests, and values

Career Development

- Take on leadership roles in clubs, activities.
- Participate in an informational interview with someone in your field of study.
- Decide on a major if you have not already done so.
- Update and fine tune your resume and cover letter.
- Practice your interview skills with a friend, employer, or career counselor.
- Gain career-related experience through an internship, co-op, research, or volunteer opportunity.
- Contact professional associations in your career field or area of interest that may allow student membership.
- Begin networking for references and letters of recommendation.
- Attend Career Fairs, Employer Information Sessions, workshops, and other career events.
- Evaluate your career goals & objectives in connection with your strengths, knowledge, skills, and values.
- Join a student organization that is related to your major or career of interest.
- Start building your professional wardrobe.

Academic Development

- Meet with academic advisor to review core and major requirements.
- Continue involvement in campus and community.
- Target course electives that will enhance your marketability to employers.
- Consider an International Programs global experience that will enhance your career development with a semester abroad.
- Meet with your academic advisor about declaring a major (if you have not done so already).
- Make a special effort to get to know some professors. Speak with faculty about research opportunities.
- Work towards a good GPA; seek assistance from Academic Support Services if needed.
- Increase your computer literacy and language skills – these are good skills for all majors.

Personal/Social Development

- Participate in a field experience, or practicum.
- Join student organizations to develop leadership skills and networking experience.
- Work on a team project in your residence hall or sorority/fraternity.
- Join an intramural sports team.
- Volunteer through the Office of Career Services/Project GIVE Program.
- Document your experiences, skills, and accomplishments.

THIRD YEAR

Experience and Reflect: Reflect on collegiate experiences in relation to occupational choices

Career Development

- Update and fine tune your resume and cover letter. Translate your strengths into marketable skills.
- Practice your interview skills with a friend, employer, or career counselor. Participate in a mock interview.
- Research the application timeline if you are thinking about graduate school.
- Attend job fairs-both on campus and in the community to search for internship sources.
- Focus on specific career possibilities.
- Gain career-related experience through an internship, co-op, research, or volunteer opportunity.
- Identify at least five position titles in career fields that interest you.
- Research 7-10 employers that offer identified positions.
- Investigate options for study abroad or international internship opportunities
- Attend employer information sessions posted in CareerLink to learn about opportunities.
- Actively develop career goals and plan next steps towards achieving your goals.
- Finalize your resume and have it critiqued by the Career Development Services.
- Start building your professional wardrobe.

Academic Development

- Talk to professors about graduate school options and requirements.
- Contact alumni in your field of interest.
- Begin to develop a list of professional & academic references.
- Select 3 - 5 work or academic references that can highlight your accomplishments.
- Consider a double major, minor or concentration in another field to expand your career options.

Personal/Social Development

- Become active in student organizations to develop leadership and teamwork skills.
- Document your experiences, skills, and accomplishments.

FOURTH YEAR

Enhance and Implement: Search for your dream job.

Career Development

- Update and fine tune your resume and cover letter.
- Update your CAREERLink account and maximize your use of the system.
- Discuss your job search strategies with a career advisor.
- Applying to grad school? Follow individual program guidelines and deadlines.
- Schedule GRE and other admissions exams.
- Practice your interview skills with a friend, employer, or career counselor. Participate in a Mock Interview.
- Plan your job search campaign.
- Get organized; create a spreadsheet or file to track your job search activity.
- Speak with faculty about career interests and plans.
- Examine your career-related values.
- Apply to employers that you have carefully researched.
- Participate in On-Campus Interviews! Sign up, show up!
- Attend college career fair to search for job.
- Confirm 3-5 individuals who will serve as references and write letters of recommendation.
- Review job offers.
- Accept job that offers “best fit”.
- Translate strengths results into marketable skills.

Academic Development

- Identify top strengths, skills, and interests from past academic and work experiences
- Enroll in electives that will further your career and personal goals
- Finalize course selections and be sure you meet graduation requirements.
- Complete an internship or research experience (if you have not already done so).

Personal/Social Development

- Network with friends, family, alumni, faculty, and acquaintances.
- Evaluate your lifestyle interests and values to determine your post-graduation plans.
- Be aware of changing relationships with parents, siblings, friends, and significant others.
- Develop a budget and evaluate financial responsibilities.

GRADUATE SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

Fall or Spring: Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months Prior to Beginning a Graduate Program

- Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs.
- Talk to advisors about application requirements.
- Attend Career Expo.
- Investigate national scholarships.
- Begin identifying your references.

Summer: Fifteen Months Prior to Beginning a Graduate Program

- Determine if you will be required to take a graduate school admission test.
- Common Exams: GRE (general test), LSAT (for law school), MCAT (for medical school), GMAT (for business school).
- Take required graduate admissions tests. If done early, there will be time to retake.
- Write to the colleges/universities of interest asking for information about the program and application materials.
- If possible, visit schools of interest.
- Write your application essay.
- Adhere to all application deadlines.
- Note that you may need to register with the national application or data assembly service. For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school.

Fall: Twelve Months Prior to Beginning a Graduate Program

- Obtain 3-5 letters of recommendation. Ask primary faculty members and/or other appropriate people if they would be willing to write you a letter of reference for graduate school admission. Please remember to give each recommender a copy of your current resume to use as a guide when writing your letter of recommendation.
- Take graduate tests if you have not done so.
- Send in completed applications. Complete the applications and be certain to follow the instructions exactly.
- Register for financial aid.
- Make a list of all the graduate schools in the country that offer your program.
- Attend the Career Expo.
- Narrow your choices down to three or four. Keep in mind that the average graduate school application fee is \$50, usually non-refundable.
- Some graduate schools require applicants to write a personal statement as part of the application process, start preparing one now.

Spring: Six to Nine Months Prior to Beginning a Graduate Program

- Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure that your file is complete.
- Visit institutions that accept you.
- Send a deposit to your school of choice.
- Notify other institutions that accepted you of your decision as soon as possible to allow for others to be admitted.
- Send thank-you notes to all references and others that may have assisted in your process.
- It is always a good idea to have “Plan B”, so also begin exploring the world or work.