

How Do I Plan My Career?

Career planning and decision-making are not things an individual does at one particular point during his/her college experience. It is not a procedure that is accomplished by taking one or two workshops or attending an appointment with a career counselor. Career planning and decision-making is a process, not a sudden enlightenment. It involves several steps and stages depending on the individual. The Career Services Office can assist students with these steps and help them make effective career decisions. It is important to remember that career decision-making is a life-long process, so these steps may be repeated several times during one's lifetime.



Freshman Year

Career Planning

- ◆ Start the process of self reflection by identifying your interests, abilities, and values. Your personality will have a major impact on what careers you succeed at and find rewarding. This is an often overlooked but very important part of career decision-making.
- ◆ Visit the Career Services Office to meet the staff and determine what resources, services, and programs are available to you.
- ◆ Start exploring careers and college majors through the Career Services Career Reference Library materials and through the computer-assisted career guidance program FOCUS.
- ◆ Talk to upperclassmen to learn more about careers and majors.

Experience/Extracurricular Activities

- ◆ Participate in a job shadowing experience to observe careers that you are interested in.
- ◆ Become involved in school by joining a student group or activity.

Academics

- ◆ Take the First Year Seminar class.
- ◆ Explore the wide variety of available majors and talk with an advisor to develop a tentative curriculum.
- ◆ Consider choosing introductory and elective courses that allow you to explore your academic interests and abilities.
- ◆ Learn and "fine tune" your study skills.
- ◆ Begin practicing effective time management skills.
- ◆ Learn to use the Gregg-Graniteville Library.
- ◆ Get to know faculty.



Sophomore Year

Career Planning

- ◆ Schedule an appointment with a Career Services staff member to discuss a career planning strategy.
- ◆ Continue to explore career and college major possibilities through the Career Services Career Reference Library materials and through FOCUS. Find out what occupations are actually out there and how they relate to your academic major.
- ◆ Begin to relate your interests, abilities and values with career directions you have explored.
- ◆ Attend USCA career events, sponsored by the Career Services Office, in order to identify potential careers in your area of study and the types of positions available. Ask employer representatives about specific coursework requirements and other qualifications necessary for employment, such as degree, skills, and experience.

Experience/Extracurricular Activities

- ◆ Get involved in work experiences, such as internships, part-time jobs, volunteer positions, and summer jobs, in order to "reality test" your career interests. Work experiences can help to reinforce your coursework and help you decide whether a particular field is right for you. Some work opportunities are listed in the Career Reference Library of the Career Services Office.
- ◆ Visit the Career Services Office to learn about internship and cooperative education positions. Learn the process for acquiring these types of positions.
- ◆ Participate in a job shadowing experience to observe careers that you are interested in.
- ◆ Begin to get involved in extracurricular activities in order to both expand your interests, abilities, and skills and to enhance your educational and personal development. These extracurricular activities include membership in organizations related to your career interests.
- ◆ Research newspaper and magazine articles on occupations and business trends

Academics

- ◆ Confirm your choice of a major. Select classes that will enhance your educational and personal development.
- ◆ Review academic planning with an advisor to confirm appropriate strategies.
- ◆ Continue to get to know faculty.



Junior Year

Career Planning

- ◆ Schedule an appointment with a Career Services staff member to reinforce career direction or discuss career options.
- ◆ Begin to develop your resume.
- ◆ Evaluate your chosen field. Research the job qualifications and skills you will need. Explore job trends and employment forecasts through the Career Services Career Reference Library or through other resources.
- ◆ Continue to contact professionals in your area of interest. Expand your network.
- ◆ Start identifying and researching employers that interest you. Make a list of these employers.
- ◆ Attend USCA's Career Day events, sponsored by the Career Services Office, to see if any of these employers are on your list or should be on your list. Talk with employer representatives about career opportunities and, whenever possible, visit employer sites.
- ◆ Begin to gather information on graduate schools.

Experience/Extracurricular Activities

- ◆ Continue involvement in career-related associations and seek leadership experiences.
- ◆ Actively pursue career-related ("experiential learning") opportunities, such as a cooperative education position, internship or part-time job, in order to "reality test" interests and abilities and to increase your future marketability.
- ◆ Participate in a job shadowing experience to observe careers that you are interested in.

Academics

- ◆ Determine all academic requirements needed for your selected major and degree.
- ◆ Consider doing a "graduation check" in the last term of your junior year.
- ◆ Speak with faculty about specializations and current trends in your area of interest.



Senior Year

Career Planning

- ◆ Schedule an appointment with a Career Services staff member to discuss a complete job search or graduate school plan.
- ◆ Consider what you want to do when you do graduate: travel, spend time with family, start your career, or attend graduate or professional school? Research your options.
- ◆ Research and target employers or graduate/professional schools. Make trips to employers or visit graduate/professional schools.
- ◆ Take graduate or professional school entrance exams. Apply to graduate or professional schools. Resources and assistance are available in the Career Service Office.
- ◆ Learn how to interview, get references, plan job search strategies and then actually search for a job related to your career. Assistance is available through the Career Services Office. Give yourself at least one full year before you graduate for this process.
- ◆ Continue to develop a winning resume. Utilize the Career Services Office's *Pacer Career Connections* as a starting point to distributing your resume.
- ◆ Attend USCA's career events to network with and/or set up interviews with employer representatives for any positions that interest you.

Experience/Extracurricular Activities

- ◆ Continue involvement in career-related associations and seek leadership experiences.
- ◆ Actively pursue career-related ("experiential learning") opportunities, such as a cooperative education position, internship or part-time job, in order to "reality test" interests and abilities and to increase your future marketability.
- ◆ Participate in a job shadowing experience to observe your career area of interest.

Academics

- ◆ Get a "graduation check" through your department and apply for graduation.
- ◆ Fulfill all requirements needed for your selected major and degree.
- ◆ Talk to faculty about career directions and possible employer contacts.
- ◆ Consider taking the "Senior Year Experience" course to help prepare you for the transition from college to the "real world."

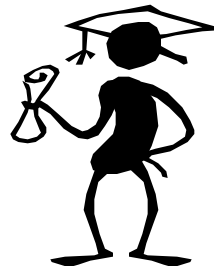
Services

The following services are available through the Career Services Office:

- ◆ Individual career counseling/advisement
- ◆ Career Reference Library
- ◆ FOCUS computer-assisted career guidance program
- ◆ Career assessment tools (MBTI, Strong Interest Inventory)
- ◆ Experiential Education Program (cooperative education, internships, job shadowing)
- ◆ Resume and cover letter assistance
- ◆ Job search and interview assistance
- ◆ Preparation for graduate & professional programs
- ◆ Resume referral service
- ◆ Career fairs and the Career Panels Program

**The timeline in this brochure
is only a guide.
For more information,
please contact:**

**Career Services
Penland Administration
Building,
Room 107,
(803) 641-3440
<http://www.usca.edu/careers/>**



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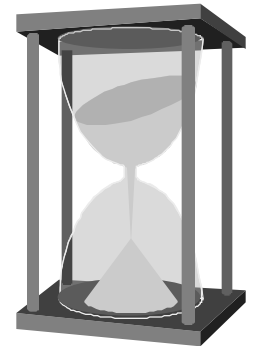


USCA CAREER SERVICES



Career Planning Model & Timeline

**FOR
USCA
STUDENTS**



**Penland
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<http://www.usca.edu/careers>**