

Navigating Your Career Path

Finding the Right Career



This worksheet provides step-by-step guidance on discovering your ideal career path. It's designed to work through the course of **your** college career and to be built upon. We always suggest using your college career center as well!

We are here to support you through this process. So, let us know if you have questions or feel unsure of degree or career fit. Please reach out to our team at contactus@dellscholars.org.

Narrow Your Interests

Complete prior to being 50% through your college track. Generally during your sophomore year of college.

☐ Self-Assessment and Reflection (See [Worksheet](#))

When exploring career paths, it's important to reflect on what you enjoy in academia AND outside of academia. Taking this approach can assist you in finding a career that you enjoy and fits into the lifestyle you want in your life.

Most colleges' career service departments offer self-assessments to assist in finding career fit. We also have a reflection exercise we encourage you to fill out.

☐ Researching Career Options

Now that you've found a general career trajectory, it's time to do your research. Find the following information about the career you are aspiring to.

- What are the best majors for this career path?
- Are there required certificates or qualifications beyond obtaining your bachelor's degree?
- What's the job outlook? Is this career path expected to grow/shrink/maintain?
- What's the average salary?
- Does this career path have a job role hierarchy? Example, your dream job is a creative director, but post-college you'll most likely have several different roles before working to a creative director title. Are the job titles along the way of interest to you (check salary and outlook)?

- What does the day-to-day look like in this role, does it align with your workstyle preferences? Example, is this a 9–5 desk job, or does this job tend to have varying hours such as nursing?

For research, use the following sites:

- **Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS):** Occupational Outlook Handbook: Provides comprehensive information about various occupations, including job duties, education requirements, salary data, and job outlook. This is a go-to resource for reliable career information.
- **O*NET OnLine:** Offers detailed information about different careers, including required skills, tasks, and work settings. It's a valuable tool for exploring various job roles and industries.
- **CareerOneStop:** Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, this site offers career exploration tools, salary information, job market trends, and resources for job seekers.
- **Glassdoor:** Not only provides company reviews and salary information, but also offers insights into various job roles and industries. Employees often share their experiences and career trajectories.
- **LinkedIn:** This professional networking platform can help you connect with professionals in your desired field. You can also follow companies and industries to get updates on trends and job opportunities.
- **Vault:** Offers industry and company insights, as well as career advice and information about different career paths.
- **MyNextMove:** A user-friendly tool that helps you explore careers based on your interests, skills, and experience.
- **CareerExplorer:** Provides career assessments, personality tests, and detailed information about various careers to help you find a path that aligns with your strengths and interests.
- **Indeed Career Guide:** Offers career-related articles, insights, and advice on different industries and job roles.
- **Fastweb's Career Planning:** Offers career advice, articles, and resources to help you explore and plan your career journey.

☐ Networking and Informational Interviews

If you are still feeling confident in your career path, find a minimum of three individuals with the job you'd like to obtain for networking and informational interviews. You can do this through career fairs, LinkedIn, and utilizing our alumni community!

Note: Once you start this step you shouldn't stop. Continue looking for ways to network and build your understanding of your desired career path.

Take the First Steps Towards Building Your Career

Complete prior to your final year of college.

☐ Gaining Practical Experience

The benefit of gaining practical experience can't be underestimated. Look for opportunities on our campus (via clubs/organizations), in your community (volunteering), and most importantly through internships.

This will provide insight into day-to-day responsibilities, and the general work environments you're aspiring to apply to.

☐ Decision-Making and Goal Setting

Through every step you should be reflecting and evaluating whether you feel your chosen career path still fits for you. There's nothing wrong with evolving your career path or changing completely. If you are nervous about getting to this point (or a point earlier on) and needing to go back to step one, we are here for you. Reach out so we can help!

At this point, you've reflected, researched, had informational meetings, and have gotten some practical experience.

It's time to set some goals.



If Your Overarching Goal is Finding a Job

- What are a few job titles that align with your career path goal?
- What does the typical job application process look like in your field? When should you start applying (hint: it's probably before you graduate)?
- Where would you prefer to be located for your job?
- What salary will you need to sustain yourself? Research the cost of living expenses in your desired location and explore salary ranges for positions you plan to apply for to gain a general idea of what to expect.
- How many job applications do you intend to submit? Set a start date for your application process and then establish a weekly target for the number of applications you aim to complete.

Note: It's not unusual to apply for dozens of jobs, so it's best to establish clear goals early on in your job search.

Remember

It's okay for your goals to change, but it's easier to reflect and measure your goals if they're clearly written down.



If Your Overarching Goal is Continuing Education

- When do you plan to begin graduate school? Work backward from this date to determine when you need to apply to schools and when you must complete any prerequisite tests.
- What is your list of schools that you plan to apply to, and what are the specific requirements for their application processes?
- How do you intend to finance your education? Will you rely on loans, grants, scholarships, employment, or a combination of these?

What's Your Plan B?

This applies to all students, whether you are considering graduate school or seeking full-time employment.

Having a Plan B in place, whether it involves taking a gap year to further prepare for standardized tests and work part-time in a role that enhances your graduate school applications, or if you have graduated and haven't secured a full-time position yet and are considering full-time internships for the summer, having a Plan B provides peace of mind and allows you to carefully consider how to manage your timeline.

☐ Overcoming Challenges and Adapting

Take time to think of the obstacles or challenges you may face in your career path.

- Are the specific courses you are concerned about being more difficult?
- Are you unsure of how to find or apply to internships to get that practical experience?
- What's your plan b, if you don't get into your top graduate program, or land the ideal job?

It's okay for your trajectory to evolve during college. Be adaptive to your own growth. Interests may change, but planning for challenges now ensures success.

☐ Building a Strong Personal Brand

Along this journey, use the LinkedIn resources we've provided to build your online presence. Having a well-built LinkedIn profile will help you network and land internships, and in the future land your dream job!

Homestretch Preparations

Complete prior to your final year of college.

☐ Start Working on the Goals You Set

This is the time to ensure you are set up for the goals you set in bullet five. Whether it's finalizing your resume for jobs and beginning to apply or finalizing applications for graduate school. It's time to put your post-graduation plan into motion!



Need a **resume** to apply for positions?

Dell Scholars has preselected two templates optimized for resume success. Please leverage one as you build your resume.

[Download Template #1, #2](#)