



CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR UNDERGRADS

Career Development Center

California State University, Los Angeles

www.calstatela.edu/careercenter

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Here is a guide that will help you map out a career development plan for your time at Cal State L.A. The earlier you start, the more likely you will be ready for the next step in your career journey.

FIRST YEAR - Awareness

- Make an appointment with a career counselor to learn about Career Development Center (CDC) services and to discuss career plans.
- Get to know faculty, counselors, administrators and campus leaders. Start building relationships.
- If you have not decided upon a major, have a counselor assist you with your decision-making process.
- Become familiar with the assessment and research programs on the Career Center's CareerExpress page that will help you with that process.
- Start collecting information on careers that interest you.
- Improve your verbal communication skills. Make the most of your communications classes, and if you are not a native English speaker, consider taking part in the Conversation Group through the Writing Center.
- Grades are important! Become familiar with the University Tutorial Center and the University Writing Center, and don't hesitate to visit these offices if you need their assistance.
- Join university clubs of interest.
- Register with Handshake, the Career Center's online database featuring on and off-campus jobs and internships.
- Investigate part-time jobs, summer jobs or volunteer experiences to begin to build a résumé.

SECOND YEAR - Exploration

- Research three job options within your academic major.
- Attend a career/job fair to talk to employers about jobs and internships they offer that are related to your field.
- Volunteer for an organization that provides relevant experience.
- Arrange an informational interview and/or job shadow someone working in a career of interest to you.
- Begin to read trade publications, blogs and industry reports to learn about new developments and emerging trends in your areas of interest.
- Participate in a résumé writing workshop and write your first résumé or, if you already have a résumé, get a career counselor to critique your résumé.

- Be aware that Cal State LA offers free computer workshops as well as video tutorials through the ITS Training Program. Your expertise with particular software programs may be highly desired by employers.
- Consider studying abroad: contact the Study Abroad Office in the Golden Eagle Building.
- Investigate internship opportunities and apply for positions for your third year.
- Find a summer job related to your targeted area.

THIRD YEAR - *Decision-Making*

- See a career counselor to discuss career planning activities for the upcoming year. If the career plans include further education directly after graduation, begin researching graduate schools and take part in their open house events.
- Set up a profile on LinkedIn. Check out alumni to find people to act as mentors.
- Attend an interview skills workshop.
- Practice selling your skills in a mock interview session, or make use of Perfect Interview and/or Interview Stream 360, which are available on the Career Center website via CareerExpress.
- Continue to attend career/job fairs, as well as employer information sessions of interest.
- Research potential employers in the CDC Library, the JFK Library and online.
- Update your résumé and learn how to write a powerful and targeted cover letter.
- Take leadership positions in clubs and student organizations.
- Participate in leadership programs offered through the University-Student Union.
- Begin to build your professional wardrobe.
- Apply for and get hired for an internship experience.
- If you are interested in pursuing further education after your bachelor's degree, take the appropriate entrance exam (GRE, LSAT, MCAT, GMAT).

FOURTH YEAR - *Implementation*

- This is your last chance to stretch your abilities in a leadership role in student government, clubs or campus organizations.
- If you intend to apply to graduate school, obtain strong letters of recommendation and give yourself plenty of time to work on your personal statements.
- Learn strategies to work a job fair, including perfecting your elevator pitch.
- Register for the On-Campus Interview (OCI) Program and begin to interview.
- Continue to expand your professional network, including your contacts on LinkedIn.
- Research employers of interest.
- Attend a job search strategies workshop.
- Gather information on realistic salary expectations.
- Attend career/job fairs dressed professionally and ready to promote yourself.
- Continue practicing interviews.
- Keep a record of all job search and interview activities.
- Follow up all interviews with thank you letters.