

Career Planning Timetable

FRESHMAN YEAR – CAREER EXPLORATION

- Begin the process of self-assessment and discovery. Identify your interests, skills, abilities, personality temperament, and values. Career Services provides FREE assessment inventories and self-awareness exercises, as well as career counseling to assist you in your self-assessment journey. Meet with the Career Services staff to discuss your career and educational options and to begin establishing your career goals.
- Establish relationships with faculty members, administrators, alumni, employers, and Career Services staff who can assist you with the career planning process. Visit Career Services in the Pathways Center and become familiar with the services and resources.
- Attend Career Services workshops and career-related programs to learn about your career options and the career decision-making process.
- Participate in extracurricular activities. Join at least one student organization or club in an area of interest and attend meetings regularly. These opportunities enable you to develop leadership, teamwork, and other career-related skills that employers value.
- Begin to develop and improve your communication skills. Strong writing and speaking skills are important to employers. Utilize the Reading / Writing / Speaking Lab, take communication courses, and participate in activities to help strengthen these skills.
- Develop good work habits and skills via part-time work, student employment, internships, or summer jobs.

Academic Planning

- Explore academic interests through a variety of courses. Talk to your adviser on a regular basis regarding your goals and interests.
- Focus on improving your time management and study skills. Your grades are important for both graduate school and future employment.

SOPHOMORE YEAR – CAREER PLANNING

- Continue the process of self-assessment and discovery. Identify your interests, skills, abilities, personality temperament, and values. Remember that this takes time and effort. Visit Career Services for help along the way.
- Explore careers that match your skills, interests, goals, and values. Utilize career information books located in the resource library as well as online career information resources. Begin to develop a tentative plan for a future occupation/career area.
- Actively obtain general information about the job market and the world of work (corporate culture, etc.)

- Gain career-related work experience through activities, class projects, internships, work or volunteer experience. Ask faculty about opportunities to work with them on research projects. Obtain part-time and summer employment related to your tentative career goals.
- Become more actively involved in student or community organizations of interest to gain leadership and career-related skills sought by employers.

Academic Planning

- Focus on achieving a high GPA. This is important to you and potential graduate schools and employers.
- Consider study abroad programs. Multinational, multilanguage, and multicultural skills are marketable assets for many career choices.

JUNIOR YEAR – CAREER PLANNING

- Start to narrow your career choices to those of most interest to you. Conduct informational interviews to gain specific information about your choices. Utilize the Resource Library and Internet sites to research specific jobs and graduate programs related to your career interests.
- Assess your career plans--are they realistic? Are you acquiring the necessary skills, academic background, and work experience to enter your chosen career field?
- Explore internship possibilities related to your career interests. Meet with Career Services for individualized assistance with your internship search process. Your goal should be to obtain a minimum of one internship or career-related work experience prior to graduation.
- Begin networking with alumni and other professionals in your career field of interest.
- Attend all Career Services workshops.
- Participate in on-campus recruitment and information sessions. Attend local career fairs to gather information about entry-level professional positions.
- Increase your leadership and organizational skills through active participation in student or community organizations. Become an officer or be responsible for a specific project, event, or program.

Academic Planning

- Enhance your qualifications by taking elective courses to complement your major and career goals.
- Work closely with your faculty adviser to take courses related to your career goals and to ensure that you are meeting all major and graduation requirements.
- Finalize your graduation plan.
- If you are considering graduate school, explore your program options and gather information about admissions requirements and the application process. You can begin

your exploration/research process by using graduate school directories, accessing various Internet sites, or by attending graduate school fairs at local universities.

SENIOR YEAR – CAREER PLANNING

- Schedule an appointment with a member of the Career Services staff to discuss career options and to develop your career goals.
- Discuss career opportunities with faculty, friends, family, and network contacts.
- Make your decision on which occupation/career area to pursue.
- If you plan to seek full-time employment upon graduation, attend Resume, Interview and Job Search Workshops and schedule individual appointments with Career Services staff to learn as much as possible about the job search process. Have your resume and cover letter(s) critiqued.
- Identify the types of position(s) that fit your career goals. Identify and research companies or organizations that typically hire individuals in your chosen position(s).
- Network, network, network! Develop additional contacts in your chosen career area by conducting informational interviews and by joining professional associations or interest groups.
- Develop a job search plan. Identify job search strategies that will land you interviews for positions of interest.
- Contact potential employers, be persistent and follow through on all job leads.
- Participate in on-campus recruitment information sessions and interviews. Attend local career/job fairs.
- Prepare for your interviews. Participate in Mock/Practice Interviews offered through Career Services.
- Carefully evaluate your job offers. Accept the job that best fits your career and professional needs.
- If you plan to apply to graduate school, review with your faculty adviser your graduation school program options and your application process.
- Take any required Graduate School Entrance Exams. Have scores mailed to the schools where you are applying.
- Obtain admissions and financial aid applications (Ideally, this should be done during the summer prior to your senior year.)
- Request letters of recommendation.
- Write your personal statement (if required) and have it critiqued by your faculty adviser or member of the Career Services staff.

- Complete your applications and submit before the deadlines. Typically, individuals need to apply to graduate school at least 6 - 9 months prior to graduation.
- Prepare for graduate school admissions interviews (if applicable).
While waiting to receive notification of your acceptance/rejection, develop a back-up plan. Meet with a member of Career Services staff to discuss other post-graduation options.
- Prepare for the transition to work or graduate school.
- Notify Career Services of your future plans. Remember, you are encouraged to continue utilizing Wartburg College Career Services during the summer following graduation and as an alumnus.

Academic Planning

- Complete a final review of your graduation plan with your faculty adviser to ensure that you will complete all requirements. Take any courses that would be helpful preparation for graduate school or that would increase your marketability for your chosen career field.