



# Crash Course in Career Development

A4

For students who get a late start in the career development process, having a job search plan and setting job search goals is critical because of the abbreviated amount of time before graduation. The suggestions provided in this resource have been organized into a two-year, semester-by-semester plan with each semester building upon the previous one's activities. As you will see by following this plan, time management skills and personal commitment are the essentials to success for students needing to cram for their career.

## From the Beginning

- Develop good time management, goal setting and study habits. Strive to reach your G.P.A. potential.
- Think about what you love to learn and things you like to do in your spare time. Link these interests to your major and your choice for a future career.

**HOT TIP:** You can seek the jobs that are the most popular or that offer the most financially, but often times you won't be satisfied with that career and will wish you had pursued a career in what interested you.

- Assess your career interests, personality style, motivators, strengths and skills. Clarify your values.
- Identify campus resources and get to know the OSU community. Establish relationships with faculty members, academic advisors, peers, your career development coordinator, deans, staff and administrators.
- Research career fields that interest you through informational interviews, books, journals, etc. Determine the training needed, growth rate, expected salary range and possible locations for each of these career options.

**HOT TIP:** Read magazines from your field of interest and contact a professional who was profiled for an informational interview. Mention that you read the article and were very interested and impressed. This is nice flattery and will likely increase the professional's willingness to help you.

- Select elective courses that will broaden your academic foundation and expand your employment opportunities.
- Continually strive to build skills in the areas of importance to employers, including oral and written communication, interpersonal relations, teamwork, leadership, analytical thinking, problem solving and computer skills.

**HOT TIP:** Regardless of your major and other qualifications, if you can't write a business letter, develop a spreadsheet, make a presentation, or answer the phone professionally, nobody needs you.

## Year 1: Fall Semester

- Write a résumé. Determine areas where you need further development within your résumé.

**HOT TIP:** Prepare your résumé using a computer word processing program. It will be much easier to edit and to create different versions of your résumé if you have it saved to disk.

- Begin a portfolio of your writing samples, accomplishments and projects.
- Obtain relevant work experiences through volunteering, part-time jobs, etc.
- Further develop and enhance your skills through involvement in student organizations. Identify student organizations or volunteer activities that will enable you to explore interests and build skills. Take advantage of club field trips.
- Take self-assessment inventories offered by the University Counseling Services, 308 Student Union, 744-5472.
- Become familiar with the services provided by the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) Career Services and by OSU Career Services. Meet with your career development coordinator to discuss your career goals and job search strategies.
- Discuss career ideas with your academic advisor. Learn where recent graduates are working.
- Register with CASNR Career Services to become eligible to interview for internships publicized through the on-campus interview program.
- Attend career development workshops to learn more about career planning, résumé and cover letter writing, and interviewing, as well as other job search skills.
- Attend presentations and lectures about careers of interest sponsored by CASNR Career Services, OSU Career Services and different student organizations.

- Make contact and develop relationships with faculty and professionals in your areas of career interest to build your network and develop references.

**HOT TIP:** Amazingly, networking research indicates that you are only six contacts away from a personal link to anyone in the world.

- Participate in mock interviews through CASNR Career Services and/or OSU Career Services.
- Attend CASNR Career Fair and other career fairs to become familiar with the companies recruiting on campus and their expectations.
- Shadow someone for a day who works in a career field you are considering.
- Seek an internship, part-time or summer position that will enable you to gain more experience in a field you wish to pursue.

### **Year 1: Spring Semester**

- Continue fall career development activities.
- Hold a leadership position in a campus organization and serve on committees.

✓ **HOT TIP:** If you haven't been actively involved in an organization, don't put it on your résumé. The test of active involvement is if you have attended at least one function and/or know what was in the last newsletter. You don't want to risk the chance of a prospective employer asking you for specifics about your participation in the organization when you really have nothing to tell.

- Attend professional meetings and conferences.
- Continue collecting material for your portfolio.

- Upon accepting an internship position, complete a brief internship acceptance survey at the CASNR Career Services office, 136 Ag Hall, and withdraw from further internship interviews.

### **Summer Goals**

- Continue fall and spring career development activities.
- Obtain information on graduate or professional schools and entry requirements. Prepare for and take required exams (GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT).
- Increase your networking efforts with faculty, professionals and alumni in your field to discover job search techniques and career opportunities.
- Update your résumé and cover letter, and polish your interview skills.

**HOT TIP:** Obtain a written job description detailing your internship and save it. Points from that job description can be used to describe the internship experience on your résumé.

### **Year 2: Fall Semester**

- Continue fall, spring and summer career development activities.
- Assume responsibility for making all decisions about your life's work and have realistic alternative career plans.
- Invest a little time each day in conducting your job search. Realize that it usually takes three to nine months to find a position.
- Invest in an interview suit and leather folder.
- Update registration form and résumé with CASNR Career Services to become eligible to interview for full-time positions through the on-campus interview program.

- Hold a leadership position in a campus organization and serve on committees.
- Attend more career development workshops to learn the most effective job search techniques.
- Attend additional professional meetings and conferences.
- Continue collecting material for your portfolio.
- Thoroughly research the occupations and organizations or companies you are considering. Determine the application procedures, qualifications needed, opportunities for industry and personal growth, expected salary ranges, possible locations, and other critical information about these career options.
- If considering graduate or professional school, take appropriate entrance exams and complete required admissions applications.
- Continue to make new contacts and develop new relationships with faculty, alumni, and professionals in your areas of career interest to expand your network, develop references, and to learn about job search techniques and opportunities.
- Use the Internet in your job search.

**HOT TIP:** Professional associations often have Web sites with industry news, professional development opportunities, available internships, and full-time career positions of interest to members.

- Identify skills you have to offer prospective employers and research companies before you apply and interview with them.
- Meet with your advisor and career development coordinator on a regular basis to discuss your career goals, assess

your job search strategies and to have your résumés and cover letters critiqued.

- Write letters of inquiry, send follow-up letters and make phone calls.
- Participate in more mock interviews through CASNR Career Services and OSU Career Services.
- Attend CASNR Career Fair and other career fairs and participate in appropriate campus interviews.
- Use your school breaks to conduct prospective plant tours and company visits.

**HOT TIP:** Always send your follow-up letter to an interviewer immediately after the interview. You never know how quickly an organization will be making a decision about who will fill their opening.

### **Year 2: Spring Semester**

- Continue previous career development activities.
- Continue to meet with your advisor and career development coordinator on a regular basis to discuss your career goals, assess your job search strategies and to have your résumés and cover letters critiqued.
- Upon accepting a position, report employment to the College Career Services Office, 136 Ag Hall, and withdraw from further interviews.

### **Ten Tips For Success**

Respect and believe in yourself

Get involved

Set goals

Be organized

Follow through

Don't procrastinate

Practice assertiveness

Follow the golden rule

Learn from your mistakes

Celebrate all successes