

CAREER FOUR YEAR PLAN

Start early and stay focused! The following are recommendations for staying on track and avoiding senior year stress. Questions? Contact Christie Andersen, Career Development Specialist at ceandersen@colum.edu.

Freshman Year- Know Yourself and Gather Information

- Visit Career Initiatives, in person and online at colum.edu/careers, to learn about resources relevant to your interests.
- Browse online portfolios in your major through the Web Agent: Search (www.portfolio.colum.edu). Save any examples you like- this will be you in four years!
- Schedule an informational meeting with one of your instructors to learn about their career path and industry experiences.
- Log on to ColumbiaWorks to start exploring job, internship, and volunteer opportunities.
- Save all of your work in a secure location- physically and online!
- Choose a part-time job that will help you develop important skills relevant to careers you might eventually pursue.
- Start a master copy of your resume so you can track your jobs and accomplishments.
- Sign up for a Web Agent website and start creating an online presence.
- Reflect on what you like and dislike about your major. Begin exploring specific career options related to your classes.

Notes and Next Steps:

Sophomore Year- Explore and Research Your Options

- ❑ Reflect on your body of work and coursework so far. Consider what you are learning about yourself and your work.
- ❑ Start listing possible career paths available to someone with your major.
- ❑ Consider meeting with the Career Development Specialist if you have any doubts about your path.
- ❑ Ask your college advisor how to choose classes that correspond to your career goals.
- ❑ Keep updating your resume. How would you feel about sending it out for your dream job? Think about what you need to build on in your remaining time at Columbia.
- ❑ Sign up for the Career Newsletter (in The Loop) to stay up to date on career information and events.
- ❑ Start looking for opportunities to display or publish your work.
- ❑ Plan to complete at least one internship in the next two years. Decide which semester it will fit with your commitments, and leave enough time available to work 10 – 20 (or more) hours a week.
- ❑ Continue checking ColumbiaWorks- now focusing on internship options for the next two years.
- ❑ Sign up with the Portfolio Center to receive updates on upcoming events. Attend presentations by industry professionals to learn more about how to prepare for a career after Columbia.

Notes and Next Steps:

Junior Year- Get Involved and Gain Experience

- ❑ Narrow down your list of career options to more specific industries and job functions.
- ❑ Look for career presentations sponsored by Career Initiatives or your department.
- ❑ Check ColumbiaWorks for internships, and start reading the full-time job postings to see the experience they require. There is still time to beef up your resume and portfolio!
- ❑ Start applying for internships if you have not already done so. Contact your department Internship Coordinator and plan well in advance- at least a semester beforehand.
- ❑ Conduct at least one informational interview per semester to explore your options and to build your network.
- ❑ Start polishing your body of work by pursuing portfolio reviews.
- ❑ Research professional organizations in your career of interest and consider joining.
- ❑ Stay connected to a faculty mentor to learn about career-focused events within your department.
- ❑ Read trade/industry publications, available in the library, to learn the language and current events in your interest area.
- ❑ Consider graduate school and explore whether programs will help you be better prepared for your desired career.
- ❑ Have your resume reviewed by supervisors, by professors, and/or the Career Development Specialist... the more views the better.

Notes and Next Steps:

Senior Year- Build Job Search Skills and Pursue Employment
(Also- see our more detailed job search checklist for seniors)

- ❑ Revisit your body of work once again. You should be developing a clear vision of yourself as an artist, writer, performer, etc..
- ❑ Meet early with the Career Development Specialist or a mentor to create a job search plan.
- ❑ Polish your web portfolio by focusing on your best work.
- ❑ Do at least one mock interview/portfolio review so you get feedback on how you present yourself and your work.
- ❑ Keep updating your resume and be sure that it is ready to go out to employers. Have your resume reviewed by at least three professionals.
- ❑ Create your 30 second “elevator speech” for networking.
- ❑ Continue to build your professional network- remember that this is the best way to get a job, especially in competitive fields.
- ❑ Take advantage of opportunities to connect with employers at Columbia- including Show Offs and Information Sessions.
- ❑ Research companies in the city you intend to work and generate a list of those of interest.
- ❑ Plan to attend Industry Night, a spring event that allows you to network with professionals in your field of interest.
- ❑ Compile and polish your portfolio, reel, etc. Utilize production services offered through the Portfolio Center.
- ❑ Attend Show Off portfolio reviews, sponsored by the Portfolio Center, which allow you to meet with a variety of industry professionals to get feedback on your work.
- ❑ Start searching for jobs three to six months before you graduate. Apply immediately to anything that interests you!

Notes and Next Steps:
