# THE FOUR YEAR PLAN

## Freshman Year: Explore

### STEP 1: CONNECT WITH THE CAREER CENTER

- Get acquainted with us as you plan your next four years at Washington University in St. Louis.
- Begin by meeting a Career Advisor. You’ll look at programs, other on- or off-campus activities or investigate a range of career options.
- Explore CAREERlink, the Career Center online job, internship and co-op database. Use this site to RSVP for workshops and learn about career fairs.

### GETTING AHEAD

- Go to Career Center career exploration events, such as Work Groups and FRESHstart to learn about the world of work from alumni and professionals.
- Get involved with student groups.

### STEP 2: CONSIDER YOUR INTERESTS

- Take some time to reflect on your interests.
- Meet once a semester with a Career Peer or Career Advisor to talk about your interests, especially as they relate to exploring majors and summer plans.
- The Career Center provides assessment tools to help you learn more about your career preferences.

### STEP 3: DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL RESUME

- A college resume is very different from what you used in high school. Come to Quick Questions drop-in hours for assistance with your first “professional” resume.

### STEP 4: INVESTIGATE YOUR SUMMER OPTIONS

- It is never too soon to gain experience during the summer! The summer following your freshman year is a great time to volunteer, find a summer job, intern, and/or shadow a professional.
- Talk with family, friends, or alumni about the world of work. Learn more about internships by checking out Success Stories at: careercenter.wustl.edu/success.

## Sophomore Year: Choose direction

### STEP 1: REFLECT & EVALUATE

- Identify your core interests and strengths.
- Select a major, build on campus involvement and begin to consider career paths.
- Look for patterns in your skills and interests as you update your co-curricular portfolio.
- Attend a Major Minor Decisions workshop if needed.

### STEP 2: INVITE OTHERS IN

- Meet with a Career Advisor in the fall to discuss your academic and career interests and how to explore them. This is a great time to discuss all your options – even if you don’t know what you want to do after graduation.
- Get to know at least one professor and/or staff person who shares your intellectual and social interests.

### GETTING AHEAD

- Attend Sophomore GPS in the fall.
- Expand your wardrobe to include a professional suit.
- Sign up for the Internship Success & Stipend Class or a Work Group.
- Participate in the ACE program.

### STEP 3: GET READY TO EXPLORE OPTIONS

- Sophomore summer is a great time for finding an internship or research experience.
- Update your CAREERlink profile so you receive interest-specific e-mails.
- Polish your resume so you are ready to apply for summer opportunities.
- Arrange informational interviews with professionals who work in fields of interest to you. Reach out to WUSTL alumni to expand your network.
- Attend one of the career fairs and SLAMs to meet with employers.

### STEP 4: FOCUS ON A MEANINGFUL SUMMER

- Fall (sometimes spring, depending on the industry) is the time to actively seek out and apply for summer opportunities.
- Check-in with your Career Advisor for support on your search.
- Visit the internship page at careercenter.wustl.edu/internships to learn about the requirements to get academic credit.
### Junior Year: Draft a Plan

**STEP 1: CONNECT WITH THE CAREER CENTER**

Junior year is the ideal time to actively start planning for life after college.

- Review your resume and transcript to determine what skills, knowledge, and experiences you need to gain to pursue your fields of interest.
- Research different graduate, health, or law programs. Review program descriptions, read faculty biographies, and make note of their entering criteria.

**STEP 2: DEVELOP YOUR POST-GRADUATION PLAN**

Once you reevaluate your options, you need to make a plan to reach your end goal. This is especially important if you are studying abroad this year, or hoping to apply to graduate school or a competitive fellowship.

- Update your profile in CAREERlink to keep you up-to-date on the latest internships, co-ops, and events.
- Target specific extracurricular and leadership activities, internships or research opportunities that will grow the skills, knowledge, and experiences you need to reach your goals.
- Attend relevant Career Center panels, employer information sessions, Road Shows, and events.
- Visit office hours to speak with professors about your shared intellectual interests and talk with current graduate, law, or medical students about their experiences and research.

**STEP 3: PREPARING FOR A MEANINGFUL SUMMER**

The summer after junior year is an especially important time to gain experience through an internship or research opportunity.

- Brush up your resume; integrate study abroad and summer experiences.
- Prepare for and take relevant entrance exams for graduate or law school.
- Find out the recruiting timelines for your fields of interest.

**STEP 4: LEAN ON US!**

Keep in mind that you have a team of people to help.

- Make an appointment with your Career Advisor at least once a semester to coach you on your future plans and how to connect with individuals who share your interests.
- Have your resume and cover letter reviewed at the Career Center during Quick Questions drop-in hours.

### Senior Year: Take Action

**STEP 1: PREPARE FOR THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

The application processes for job opportunities and graduate school can be very time consuming. Develop an action plan to chart and monitor your progress.

- Early in the fall semester, develop strategies for identifying and researching organizations, create a target list of employers, transitional programs, and graduate schools that interest you.
- Meet with a Career Advisor on a regular basis to talk about your target list, polish your resume, learn search skills, strengthen your interviewing techniques, and discuss graduate school options.

**GETTING AHEAD**

- Get a head start by attending Career Camp in August.
- Participate in a Road Show to meet with employers in major U.S. cities.
- Join a Work Group to keep your search on track.
- Use LinkedIn to expand your list of professional contacts.
- Read trade journals and business press to gain industry knowledge.

**STEP 2: ACTIVATE YOUR SEARCH**

The most important thing about your search is to carve out time on a regular basis to work on the process.

- Monitor CAREERlink daily for new job postings, employer info sessions, and events. To receive alerts about new opportunities, you can set up auto search agents.
- Reach out to people in your network to access the “hidden job market.”
- Meet with your Career Advisor regularly.
- Attend the Fall & Spring Career Fairs and SLAMs throughout the year.
- Complete applications for graduate programs.
- Consider several options. It’s good to have a ‘plan b’ if something changes.

**STEP 3: KEEP GOING**

Be patient and persistent. The average job search takes about six months.

- Stay in touch with your Career Advisor to get ongoing support.
- Reach out to new contacts in organizations of interest.
- Attend information sessions and other events to meet new employers who are looking for entry-level talent.

**STEP 4: TRANSITION: THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.**

Graduation is close! Prepare yourself for the next chapter of your life.

- Tell us your plans! Go to careercenter.wustl.edu/plans.
- We’re here for you even after graduation — chat with us face to face, by telephone or on Skype!

Career Center | Washington University in St. Louis

careercenter.wustl.edu

(314) 935-5930