

Four Year Calendar

Guide for Tracking Career Path Milestones

You don't have to do it this way, but college sure works better if you do!

FRESHMAN YEAR

- Take wide variety of courses to try to find your major.
- Take a foreign language (whether it's required or not).
- Find a sport you can enjoy every week for the rest of your life.
- Learn to see your professors *outside* of the classroom by stopping by during their open office hours to discuss the class, assignments, paper ideas, how best to study, who's who in the department, etc.
- Realize that you can't graduate in four years by taking a minimum load; familiarize yourself *now* with graduation requirements (distribution requirements, minimum credits, major and minor selection, departmental rules). You don't want to become a senior who has to take required freshman-level courses!
- Get by without a car; your grades will be higher.
- Live on campus; your grades will be higher.
- *Avoid the credit card trap!* Use a debit card.
- Join at least one academic club.
- Join at least one activity to make the world a better place; go to the Organization Fair held on campus for options.
- Join at least one activity just for fun.
- Learn that college is not just classes, but also guest speakers, clubs, movies, outdoor recreation, political exploration, social opportunity, etc.
- Go to the Career Development Center in the first semester to discover opportunities to launch your career before graduation.
- Try to find friends who are preparing to be successful in life, and conversely, avoid those who are squandering their opportunities.
- Find the help desk in the library, the writing center or academic support center, the counseling office, the medical clinic, and other sources of help and support.
- Do not devote more than 20 hours per week to a part-time job—focus on academics.
- If you do work, consider finding a job that complements your academic and career interests.
- Watch your grades, but don't be afraid to challenge yourself academically.
- *If and only if* you are potentially interested in a career in medicine, find the pre-medical advisor and learn how best to prepare yourself.

FIRST SUMMER

- Pursue a service opportunity or some kind of big adventure.
- Travel abroad.
- Work at a part-time or summer job in an industry or field that you would potentially like to pursue after graduation.
- Read widely!
- Catch up on the world news you didn't have time for during the school year.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Prepare in the first semester to get a summer internship.
- Test your interest in one or more majors by deepening your class load in those subjects.
- Continue to see professors outside of the classroom.
- Become involved in departmental activities, such as guest presentations, receptions, symposia, committee work open to students, and especially the informal events such as barbecues, softball Saturdays, whatever they're doing together.
- Continue with an academic club.
- Begin to think seriously about what you're going to do after college.
- Start going to career fairs and asking lots of questions.
- Attend Sophomore Majorfest to meet with professors and declare your major with the Registrar and gather information on graduate school and careers.
- If you're comfortable with your major and settled into college, consider planning to study abroad for a semester or a year.
- Learn about different professions, go on several job shadows during spring break through Career In Gear, and attend career programs.
- Get by without a car; your grades will be higher.
- Live on campus; your grades will be higher.

SECOND SUMMER

- Work at an internship or summer job in an industry or field that you would potentially like to pursue after graduation; if you discover you don't like it, you can still change direction successfully.
- Work at an academically related internship that supports your graduate school plans.
- If needed, go to summer school to improve your chances of graduating on time and/or to prepare for graduate school.

JUNIOR YEAR

This is the year that sets up success after graduation!

- Prepare in the first semester to get a summer internship.
- If you have not by now, select a major and meet with an academic advisor to plan a sequence of courses that will allow you to reach your goals.
- Consider a semester abroad.
- Continue to see professors outside of the classroom.
- Continue to be involved in departmental activities.
- Continue with an academic club.

- Consider adding to your list of activities (academic, service, sports, interest); consider seeking a leadership role in one or more *especially* if you're graduate-school bound.
- Discuss your career ideas and questions with fellow students, faculty, alumni, visiting speakers, friends of the family, parents of your friends, etc.
- Visit alumni and professionals in your chosen field for a "shadowing" day, or at least an informational interview.
- If you are applying for a graduate fellowship (Rhodes, Watson, Marshall, etc.), most successful applicants start first semester of the junior year to prepare their applications; find the scholarship advisor and plan your application strategy.
- Research graduate schools by researching prominent graduate faculty in your field of interest, by searching for articles of interest to you in the academic journals for your field, and by looking in Peterson's guides and other guides to graduate schools in your field of choice. (www.petersons.com)
- Begin to correspond with faculty in graduate schools of interest.
- If grad schools on your list require the GRE, plan to take it late in the second semester, or in June of the coming summer.
- If grad schools on your list require a GRE subject test, begin looking into test dates and locations.
- If headed for medical school, register in March to take the April MCAT; you can take it again in August if you don't like your score.
- If headed for law school, register in November to take the December LSAT, or in January for the February sitting; you can take it again in June or October of the following year if you don't like your score.
- Visit/research all the graduate schools you can during the school year.
- Try to go to an academic conference in your field.
- Watch your grades! These are the last grades that will show if you plan to apply to graduate school next year.
- Get by without a car; your grades will be higher.
- Live on campus; your grades will be higher.

FINAL SUMMER

This is an important summer; don't fool around!

- Now it's critical to find an internship or summer job in an industry or field that you would potentially like to pursue after graduation. Ask for a letter of recommendation before leaving at the end of the summer.
- Work at an academically related internship that supports your graduate school plans.
- Continue to talk about your career goals with everyone you meet; continue to visit professionals in their workplaces whenever you can.
- Try to go to an academic conference in your field. Visit some grad schools if you can. Meet professors who might be mentors in grad school. Correspond with graduate faculty in your area of interest.
- Prepare for and take the GRE or LSAT in June if you still need to (you don't want to have to do this in the fall with classes and applications to graduate school underway).
- Prepare for and take the MCAT if you didn't like your first score.
- If you're headed for graduate school, consider going to summer school at one of your targeted institutions. Take classes related to your grad school plans, and watch your grades!
- If you're applying to medical school, get all your applications in at the first opportunity on the first round (usually over this summer, with some details possibly running into September and following).

SENIOR YEAR

- First week of class, explore all support available to you in the Career Development Center to make this transitional year a success; at the very least, get that final résumé polished and pursue interview training from the Career Center staff.
- Prepare in the first semester to get a career-launching job or post-graduation summer internship; plot out a year's search activities with your career counselor.
- First week of class, meet with professors about your graduate school plans; seek their advice, and identify potential authors of letters of recommendation.
- In September and October, get all your non-med graduate school applications in (deadlines will vary, but apply at least 30 to 90 days early).
- Attend Don Asher's on-campus fall workshop *Gaining Admission to Highly Competitive Programs*.
- Schedule any GRE subject tests if you still need to. If grad schools on your list require a subject GRE test, register in September or October for the November sitting.
- Continue to talk about your career goals with everyone you meet; continue to visit professionals in their workplaces.
- Use the Career Network to begin systematically identifying alumni who can give you career advice; learn how to conduct an effective informational interview. Ask the Career Center Staff for assistance.
- Build a networking list of professionals in your targeted field who can help you find a job.
- No matter what your major, participate in the on-campus interview cycle if you're interested in the industries that send recruiters to your campus.
- Get by without a car; your grades will be higher.
- Live on campus; your grades will be higher.

SUMMER AFTER COLLEGE

If you land a job before graduation:

- If headed for business school, consider taking the GMAT during this summer and applying this fall to enter business school with one year of experience, the following fall to enter with two years' experience, and so on.
- Remember, every August for the rest of your life, ask yourself: "In one year, do I want to be in grad school?" *Watch out for the extensive lead time to get into a graduate program.*

If you're admitted to graduate school, this is a "free" summer:

- Pursue a service opportunity or some kind of big adventure.
- Travel abroad.
- Take any kind of wage job and rest your mind.
- Work at an internship related to your academic interest.

If launching a career but without a job yet:

- Use the Career Development Center to run a systematic search.
- Find a post-baccalaureate internship or summer job in an industry or field that you would potentially like to pursue as a career.
- Stay in touch with your professors who many times can refer you to positions.
- Try hard to find work you're interested in, even passionate about, that requires your college degree and your accumulated skills, and try hard not to freak out and settle for any income you can find.
- Remember: "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." ~Confucius