



# FIRST YEAR: ADAPTING

*GOALS: Get To Know Yourself, Including Academic And Extracurricular Interests And Future Goals.*

## THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

- Adjust to the responsibility of your new environment. Assess your study skills and habits – improve them if they need work. Check with your Dean, Faculty Advisor, RA or GA for resources.
- Seek diversity in your courses to identify your areas of interest.
- Explore clubs and organizations that interest you. Join at least one extracurricular activity.
- Start a JOURNAL to record your thoughts on careers, majors and future goals. Create a section to record college experiences and accomplishments including classes taken, extracurricular and volunteer activities, honors and awards, externships, internships, jobs, etc. Update as necessary throughout your college career.
- Explore UCS resources — browse the website at [www.virginia.edu/~career](http://www.virginia.edu/~career); take an orientation tour; notice what career events take place at UVA; read UCS handouts that interest you.
- Talk with 3rd and 4th year students about their majors, their favorite classes and professors, their career-related experiences, and their plans beyond UVA. Update your Journal with your findings.
- When you meet people whose work interests you — ask how and why they selected their occupations. How are they like you? How are they different? Keep notes in your Journal.
- Consider a summer job or volunteer experience in an area that interests you. Check with UCS for ideas.
- Keep those grades up! GPA is considered for many job and internship opportunities.
- Use your Journal to create a resume! You may need it for a summer job or internship search. Before you head home for the summer, visit UCS for handouts and advice on writing resumes.



# SECOND YEAR: *EXPLORING*

*Goals: Explore Occupations That Interest You. Research & Network To Uncover Career Possibilities.*

## **THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:**

- Update your career Journal with your academic, work, and extra-curricular accomplishments; regularly review your findings on career areas of interest.
- Read a career-planning book and do the exercises.
- Check out UCS's resources for determining your interests and preferences – take the Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator, the Strong Interest Inventory, or the computer-based FOCUS II career exploration instrument. Save the results in your Journal. What insights do they provide on career direction?
- Learn how to network and cultivate mentors. Ask UCS for help. Conduct informational interviews to obtain viewpoints from people in career fields that interest you. Record your notes in your Journal. Keep track of contacts using a file for business cards, a contact manager software package or your own system.
- Discuss majors and career options with Directors of Undergraduate Programs, Faculty Advisors, UCS Counselors, friends, students and alumni with majors that interest you. Pick up any written resources for prospective majors in departmental offices of majors that interest you.
- Identify 4-7 career field options of interest and research how the majors that interest you would complement them.
- Browse UCS's website regularly for career related news. Meet with an UCS counselor or read UCS handouts on careers and majors, career guidance, UCS career resources, work preferences, externship and internship opportunities, informational interviewing, and other topics.
- Attend the Internship Fair, Minority Career Day and other career-related events. Remember ALL students are welcome at the Commerce and SEAS Career Fairs.
- Explore new horizons: do an externship and/or internship to get more data on career fields of interest.
- Act on your interests! Take an active role in current extra-curricular activities and explore new ones — Don't limit your success to the classroom!
- Select your major!
- Update your resume, or create one if you haven't already, for your summer job or internship search. It's also a great way to reflect on how far you've come and how far you need to go before your fourth-year job or graduate school search. Help is available at UCS.



# THIRD YEAR: EXPERIENCING

*GOALS: Get Experience by Externing, Interning And Summer Jobs! Prioritize Your Interests And Draft Your Job Search or Graduate School Strategy.*

## **THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:**

- Select electives that enhance your learning and career goals.
- Just as high school junior year grades were critical to the college admissions process, your **THIRD YEAR** is critical in your preparation for life after UVA. Block time in your calendar on a regular basis to update your Journal, conduct career research, hone your job search skills, and attend career-related events
- Get career information while you practice **NETWORKING** at career-related fairs, forums and presentations.
- Get workplace **EXPERIENCE!** Talk to prospective employers about possible jobs and/or internships. Contact alumni to discuss career, job, and internship options. Use UCS resources to identify specific possibilities and deadlines. Use breaks and vacations to get hands-on experience.
- Use your Journal to keep track of your contacts. This should include a means to keep business cards, notes about conversations, and possible follow-up steps.
- Visit UCS's website regularly for internship information. Read the following handouts: Internships/Externships, Considering Graduate School, Writing Cover Letters, Informational Interviewing, and others that apply.

## **FALL SEMESTER:**

- Assume a leadership role in extra-curricular activities that support your future goals.
- Get experience with web-based job/internship services: post your resume on MonsterTRAK.
- Arrange for a mock interview at UCS to practice and improve your interview skills.
- Shop for business suits so you can dress for success in your interviews.

## **SPRING SEMESTER:**

- Refine your resume; ask UCS for advice and critique. Read UCS's library resources. Consider developing a portfolio to support your resume/interview participation.
- Prioritize your career field choices. Use your journal entries on goals, values, skills, and preferences. Read UCS books and handouts on job search techniques. Draft a job search or graduate school strategy, targeting and researching potential employers/schools. Review it with an UCS counselor. Continually refine your strategy as more information becomes available.

## **SUMMER AFTER THIRD YEAR:**

- Use this time to strategically beef up your resume! Volunteer, intern, extern, go abroad, or work at a job related to your career or job targets. Make resume revisions based on your goals and summer experience.
- Review the checklist for fourth year and find ways to get a head start. (For example, graduate school personal statements or industry or company research.) Fourth year is a very busy time and anything you can do prior to returning in the fall will make your fourth year a little less stressful!

# FOURTH YEAR: *TRANSITIONING*

*GOALS: Develop The Skills You Need To Accomplish Your Goals And Thrive In Life After UVA*

## **THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:**

- **NETWORK!** Most jobs are found through networking. Make the most of all UCS career-related fairs, forums, and orientations. Consider volunteering to help at events as a way to meet potentially helpful contacts. Check with alumni and other contacts for specific job search advice.
- Research potential fields, industries and employers. Identify relevant periodicals and trade journals and read them to understand the current issues. UCS maintains employer information on paper and via website links. Having this insight really makes a difference in interviews!
- Develop a search strategy for each prospective industry and/or employer. Execute it by approaching employers directly and/or via On-Grounds recruiting. Consider targeting your job search geographically, since, in most cases, traveling for interviews will be at your own expense unless your initial contact is through On-Grounds recruiting.
- Revise your resume for each job or type of opportunity you are considering. Create compelling cover letters. Consult UCS counselor for review and critique. Update your MonsterTRAK listing through UCS's website.
- Prepare for interviews: **PRACTICE!** Conduct mock interviews at UCS. Dress appropriately. Brush up on your business protocol.
- Divide your job search strategy into a month-by-month plan. UCS counselors can help you make it realistic and workable, helping you determine when to do what.
- Attend an orientation for On-Grounds Interviewing to determine if this service supports your job search strategy. If so, incorporate it into your job search strategy for relevant industries and employers.
- If you plan to attend graduate school, obtain all required application forms. Prepare your personal statement and submit all required paperwork. Check with UCS for help on researching schools and preparing winning personal statements.
- Open a recommendation file if you plan to attend a graduate or professional school or seek academic employment. Take required admissions tests.
- Identify at least three references and get their permission to use their names. Make sure they are clear on your strengths, accomplishments and goals by giving them a copy of your resume; obtain written references if needed.
- If conducting an Off-Grounds search, plan ahead and schedule interviews over Spring Break with employers in your area of geographic preference.

## **SPRING SEMESTER AND BEYOND:**

- Start thinking about the practicalities of life after UVA. Attend workshops or read up on managing your finances, work/life balance, managing stress, office politics, and more. Check with UCS for resources.
- Analyze job offers based on your goals and values documented in your journal. Read the "Evaluating A Job Offer" handout or ask UCS Counselor for assistance in evaluating your options. Stay calm!
- Continue to check the UCS website for new information before and after graduation. Don't forget to let UCS know when you accept a position!
- Complete your studies and enjoy graduation! Congratulations!
- Planning to wait a while before you search for a job? Get your plan down on paper so you don't lose momentum. Research your target industries and jobs to assess the impact, if any, of waiting to conduct a job search until after graduation.
- Remember how helpful alumni were to you during your job search. Return the favor by sharing your career experiences with your major department and UCS by becoming part of the Alumni UCAN network.