

PREPARING FOR CAREER EXPLORATION

HOW TO BE

CAREER-READY

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines career readiness as, “the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.”



PROBLEM SOLVING

- » Exercises sound reasoning
- » Utilizes and interprets, knowledge, facts and data
- » Demonstrates decision-making capability



PROFESSIONALISM/ WORK ETHIC

- » Demonstrates strong work habits and personal accountability
- » Demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior
- » Able to learn from mistakes



ORAL/WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- » Clearly articulates thoughts and ideas
- » Able to express ideas to others
- » Writes effectively and clearly



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

- » Leverages existing digital technologies
- » Adapts new and emerging technologies



Applying NACE’s 8 Career-Ready Competencies



LEADERSHIP

- » Leverages the strength of others to achieve common goals
- » Uses interpersonal skills to coach and develop others
- » Organizes, prioritizes and delegates work



TEAMWORK / COLLABORATION

- » Builds collaborative relationships with colleagues and clients
- » Able to work within team structure
- » Can negotiate and manage conflict



INTERCULTURAL FLUENCY

- » Values, respects and learns from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations and religions
- » Demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understands individual differences



CAREER MANAGEMENT

- » Articulates personal skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences
- » Identifies areas necessary for professional growth
- » Takes the steps necessary to pursue opportunities



Source: Career Readiness Resources; www.nacweb.org>Career Readiness>Overview & Resources. Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges & Employers

CAREER READINESS SELF-RANKING

Score Your Preparedness

Rank yourself on a scale of “experienced” (5) to “requires substantial work” (1).
Use the space to the right to list ways in which you can work toward improvement.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Rank:

Notes:



PROFESSIONALISM / WORK ETHIC

Rank:

Notes



ORAL / WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Rank:

Notes



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Rank:

Notes



“Demonstrate strong work habits and personal accountability.”

LEADERSHIP

Rank:
Notes



TEAMWORK / COLLABORATION

Rank:
Notes



INTERCULTURAL FLUENCY

Rank:
Notes



CAREER MANAGEMENT

Rank:
Notes



FOUR-YEAR CAREER PLAN

Begin Planning Your Year

FRESHMAN

Self-Assessment

- » Attend Orientation to Career Services and learn about how we can help you with career planning.
- » Register with Career Services' Handshake at career.sdsu.edu to start using our resources.
- » Visit a career counselor. Ask about career assessments that can assist you decide on a career and/or major.
- » Visit Career Services Virtual Career Resource Library at sa.sdsu.edu/career.
- » Make a tentative selection of a major or take a course in a field of interest.
- » Visit the Academic Advising Center to learn about the required courses for General Education and prerequisites for majors.
- » Start working on your resume and bring it for review to Career Services.
- » Consider some personal development options through on-campus clubs and organizations.

SOPHOMORE

Continued Self-Assessment & Exploration

- » Continue assessment of your interests, skills and values.
- » Research careers and prospective employers at the Career Services Virtual Career Resource Library - Resources available on the website (sa.sdsu.edu/career) for your immediate review.
- » Attend employer information sessions to learn about a particular employer/industry.
- » Make a tentative career choice or finalize your major selection.
- » Pursue internships or volunteer in areas related to your career interests.
- » Attend workshops and career fairs sponsored by Career Services.
- » Update your resume and upload it to Handshake at sa.sdsu.edu/career/handshake.
- » Explore part-time, campus and summer job opportunities.
- » Continue your campus and community involvement to develop leadership experience.

“Start working on your resume and bring it for review to Career Services.”

JUNIOR

Career Direction Confirmation

- » Gain relevant experience in your field of interest.
- » Attend employer information sessions to learn about a particular employer/ industry.
- » Research careers and employers at the Career Services Virtual Career Resource Library - Resources available on the website (sa.sdsu.edu/career) for your immediate review.
- » If interested in graduate school, start preparing now. Attend our Graduate & Professional School Fair.
- » Keep your resume and profile updated in Handshake.
- » Attend career fairs and job search workshops sponsored by Career Services.
- » Start building your job search network. Tell everyone you know about your career goals.
- » Practice your interviewing skills. Sign up for a mock interview with Career Services.
- » Sign up for on campus job/internship interviews with employers via Handshake at sa.sdsu.edu/career/handshake.

SENIOR

Job Search

- » Conduct informational interviews with people in your field.
- » Sign up for on campus job/internship interviews with employers via Handshake.
- » Practice your interviewing skills. Sign up for a mock interview with Career Services.
- » Prepare and write targeted cover letters. Career Services has available resources.
- » Attend career fairs and workshops sponsored by Career Services.
- » Keep your resume and profile updated in Handshake.
- » Attend employer information sessions to learn about a particular employer/ industry.
- » Obtain employment references from previous employers and professors.
- » Continue to view our job listings but include off-campus job searches.
- » Prepare to evaluate and negotiate potential job offers.

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

From Internship to Dream Job

“A recent study found internships were more important than grades or technical skills in landing jobs ... interns are increasingly well-paid and given challenging assignments as employers try to lure the best students into job commitments before graduation.”
(USA Today)

WHERE TO GET STARTED

It's important to gain clarity around what positions will align with your interests, values or personality. If you're unclear about which positions fit you, we recommend scheduling a career counseling appointment or taking career assessments, such as TypeFocus. More on TypeFocus can be found in your Handshake account.

WHEN TO APPLY

Learn about when certain industries are hiring for internships or full-time entry-level jobs. (See the “Jobs” tab in Handshake or contact a career counselor). We recommend that you use the “saved search” feature so you can be alerted about new opportunities. Other helpful sites include: Indeed, LinkedIn & Idealist.

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR CHANCES

Establish a strong virtual brand by creating a LinkedIn account, and update other platforms by removing all unprofessional content. In addition, be sure to network with recruiters and potential employers so that you may receive referrals.

WHY NETWORKING IS THE FOUNDATION

The phrase “it's not what you know, but who you know” is most definitely true. More than 80% of career opportunities are filled through networking. We highly recommend that you attend the following Career Services recruiting events: career fairs, career counseling and workshops, and on-campus interviews. In addition, be sure to create a LinkedIn or Handshake account.

Transitioning from Internship to a Full-time Job

Getting your foot in the door by landing an internship is only half of the challenge to turn your career dreams into a reality. The more vital half is to build a reputation during this career experience that will culminate in receiving a full-time job offer. These suggestions will help you build a respectable reputation.

TIPS

Demonstrate a Can-Do Attitude – Make sure that your attitude is one of your greatest assets. Take on any task assigned – no matter how small – with enthusiasm. Take the initiative to acquire new skills. Accept criticism graciously and maintain a sense of humor.

Learn the Unwritten Rules – Get to know your co-workers early in your internship. They will help you figure out quickly the culture in which you will be working. Watch closely how things get done. Ask questions and pay attention to how people interact with each other.

Take Your Assignments Seriously – Build a reputation for being dependable. Be diligent and accurate in your work. Seek direction when in doubt and do whatever it takes to get the job done. Learn from your errors and move on to your next task. From there, your responsibilities and the expectations of others are likely to grow.

Meet Deadlines – Always assume the responsibility to ask when an assignment is due. This will help you to understand your supervisor's priorities and to manage your time accordingly. Alert your boss in advance if you will be unable to meet expectations. This will show respect and professional maturity.

Set Realistic Goals and Expectations – Invest in a learning agenda, which you set up with your supervisor at the beginning of the assignment. This agenda should target specific skills and competencies that you wish to acquire and demonstrate. Maintain a journal of your activities and accomplishments in order to monitor your progress. Seek regular reviews from your supervisor to assess your performance and reinforce the fact that you mean business.

Communicate Respectfully – Don't be afraid to present useful ideas that may save time, money or solve problems. Make sure, however, that your style does not come across as cocky. Employers value assertiveness but not aggressiveness. Find out the proper way to address individuals and maintain a pleasant and respectful demeanor with every person, regardless of his or her rank, gender or ethnicity.

Be Flexible – Accept a wide variety of tasks, even those that may not relate directly to your assignments or those that may seem like grunt work. Your willingness to go the extra mile, especially during "crunch time," will help you carve the way to assuming greater responsibilities.

Be a Team Player – Learn how your assignment fits into the grand scheme of things and keep a keen eye on getting the job done. In today's work environment, success is often defined along the lines of your ability to get along with and interact with others. You're a winner only if your team wins.

Get a Mentor – Identify at least one individual to serve as your mentor. This person should be willing to take a personal interest in your career development and success. If you are a junior, senior or graduate student you can easily get connected to a mentor through the Aztec Mentor Program: amp.sdsu.edu.

Have Fun! – Finally, enjoy learning, sharpening your skills and developing professionally and personally. Participate in work-related social functions and become an active member in your work community. Make your Internship work for you. It can be the first link in the chain of your long career.



Taken prior to 2020.

JOB AND INTERNSHIP SEARCH STRATEGIES

Use Effective Strategies to Pinpoint Career Opportunities

BUILD AN ACTION PLAN

Develop S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Time-bound) goals to track your search progress. For example: “Complete two interview practice sessions with a career counselor before entering your senior year.” Below are additional recommendations you can adopt for your action plan:

- » Create a specific list of companies to contact.
- » Set S.M.A.R.T. goals to successfully complete job applications and correspondence with contacts.
- » Identify self-care activities, such as exercise, additional rest or time with family.
- » Review the effectiveness of strategies and update as needed. Remember, our career counselors are available to support you at any time in your process, whether you are just starting to consider career options or are already deep into an application!

SUGGESTIONS FOR AN EFFICIENT SEARCH

- » Each job and internship search takes courage, patience and time. Most successful job searches involve resilience and determination, but that still does not mean you won't hear "no."
- » Double-check and make sure all your documents are polished. Complicated formatting or simple grammar errors can exclude you from reaching an interview.
- » Customize each document to speak to the targeted company. Using the same generic resume or curriculum vitae (CV) for every position may result in a missed opportunity. Identify the required experience for each position, and use your resume/CV to pull the best examples of your skills sets when put into action. A customized resume/CV will always be more successful than a generalized resume/CV.
- » More than 80% of jobs are found by way of networking and not simply submitting resumes online. Become proactive in attending networking events, information sessions and industry panels. Strive to meet as many key professionals as possible and inform as many relevant people you know that you're job searching. Reach out to SDSU alumni and use electronic resources like Handshake and LinkedIn to make connections.
- » Refine your interview skills by practicing prior to accepting real interviews. Unfortunately, too many students scramble to prepare after securing an interview slot. Practice with a career counselor or a seasoned professional.

SMART GOAL PRACTICE

Identify a goal you would like to hold yourself accountable to achieve.

- S.** Specific - I will do...
- M.** Measurable - I will track my progress using...
- A.** Actionable - I expect to see...
- R.** Realistic - The results should be...
- T.** Time-bound - My deadline is...

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

From Classroom to Workplace

TRUST YOUR EXPERIENCES

If you're wondering what skills you have that would interest a potential employer, you are not alone. Many college seniors feel that four (or more) years of college does not sufficiently prepare them to begin work after graduation. Take a step back, breathe and remember that you've been acquiring skills since childhood. Whether learning the value of teamwork through playing sports, conducting rare experiments in the lab or developing editing skills by working on your school's newspaper, each of your experiences has laid the groundwork for building additional skills.

1. What are Transferable Skills?

A transferable skill is a "portable skill" that can be utilized in different career experiences. Such skills can be acquired through:

- » **Classrooms** (e.g., an English major who is taught technical writing).
- » **Co-Curricular Experiences** (e.g., a student government representative who develops strong organizational leadership skills).

2. How to Identify Transferable Skills?

While very closely related (and with some overlap), transferable skills can be divided into three subsets:

- » **Working with people** (e.g., selling, advising, teaching, supervising and entertaining to name a few).
- » **Working with things** (e.g., operating machinery, constructing, designing, repairing, drafting and surveying).
- » **Working with information and data** (e.g., researching, analyzing, accounting, budgeting, computing).

3. Easy Steps to Identify Your Transferable Skills

Step 1 - Make a list of every job title you've held, including volunteer, sports and other affiliations since being in college. Be sure to record officer positions and other leadership roles.

Step 2 - Using your transcript, list the classes in your major field of study that are related to your employment interests.

Step 3 - For each job title and class listed, write a sentence that highlights the underlying action taken to be successful. Avoid simply stating that you've learned or gained experience. Employers prefer to see what direct actions were applied.

- » **Strong example** - "As a member of Black Students Association, I developed and coordinated the marketing of club events."
- » **Weak example** - "While working for Adams Engineering, I gained experience in 3D modeling and drafting."

Step 4 - Make a list of skills and experiences you've identified for future reference during the job search.

4. Using Transferable Skills in the Job Search

Finding the right opportunity depends on your ability to showcase your talents and skills for the position and demonstrating how you can apply such skills at an employer's place of business. Consult our staff at Career Services to help you further identify relevant transferable skills and incorporate them on your resume and during the interviews.

Take a step back, breathe and remember that you've been acquiring skills since childhood.