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START YOUR JOURNEY HERE

Whether you’re a first-year student or getting ready to graduate, there are plenty of things you can be doing at every stage to accelerate your momentum as you move upward & onward.

**Getting Started**

Start your exploration here! Embark on your professional journey with the support of The Career & Professional Development Center!

Drop by the Career Studio for free on-the-spot coaching: exploration, resumes, job search, interviewing, and more!

**Making Progress**

Take steps toward your future by exploring what is out there and discovering your strengths and interests.

Check Handshake for events that will help you manifest your dream life!

**Finishing Up**

As you near the end of your educational journey, ensure your preparedness by taking advantage of the tools and resources available to you!
VISIT US IN THE

Career Studio

M, TH, F: 8am - 5pm
T, W: 10am - 7pm
SSB 350

resumes • career exploration • job search
KNOW YOUR TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

Do you feel ready to take on the journey ahead? This career guide is here to help you on the journey to your career. These icons represent the top 7 competencies that employers state they look for when hiring recent graduates. Developing these skills will help you succeed on your next adventure!

- CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING
- ORAL, WRITTEN, & DIGITAL COMMUNICATION
- TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION
- SELF-REFLECTION
- TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY
- LEADERSHIP
- PROFESSIONALISM & INTEGRITY
- CAREER DEVELOPMENT
VALUES AT WORK

What are the values you feel are most important to you and your future? Circle or highlight those values. Think about what you want in a future career. This can help you decide what career path to pursue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advancement</th>
<th>Group &amp; Team</th>
<th>Public Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>Help Others</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Help Society</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>High Earnings Anticipated</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Creativity</td>
<td>Honesty and Integrity</td>
<td>Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Problems</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change and Variety</td>
<td>Influence People</td>
<td>Steep Learning Curve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Intellectual Status</td>
<td>Structure and Predictability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Job Tranquility</td>
<td>Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Expression</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Time Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Make Decisions</td>
<td>Work Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Moral Fulfillment</td>
<td>Work on the Frontiers of Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>Work Under Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Competence</td>
<td>Physical Challenge</td>
<td>Work with Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Power and Autwority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Pace</td>
<td>Practicality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships</td>
<td>Precision Work</td>
<td>Work-Life Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun and Humor</td>
<td>Profit, Gain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BEYOND THE GUIDE

If you want to know more about values and strengths, consider taking one of our assessments in Handshake under the ‘Career Center’ tab.
What are your top 5 values?

How do your values align with your interests & strengths?

What are two ways you can incorporate your values into your work?
WHAT KIND OF A JOB SEEKER ARE YOU?

WHAT ANIMAL BEST REPRESENTS HOW YOU FEEL DURING THE JOB SEARCH?
A. Cheetah
B. Fainting Goat
C. Golden Retriever

WHAT IS #GOALS TO YOU?
A. Mercedez G-Wagon
B. Annual pass to Lagoon
C. Giving my dog the life it deserves

WHAT IS YOUR HUSTLE HASHTAG?
A. #livingmybestlife
B. #survivingnotthriving
C. #workhardplayhard

WHICH INTERVIEW OUTFIT SPEAKS TO YOU?
A. Full business suit
B. Comfort
C. Casual but cute

WHAT CELEBRITY WOULD PLAY YOU IN A JOB SEARCHING EPISODE OF ‘LET’S GET THAT BREAD’?
A. Béyonce
B. Post Malone
C. Miley Cyrus

AN EMPLOYER CALLS YOU BACK & TELLS YOU, YOU DIDN’T GET THE JOB. HOW DO YOU FEEL?
A. Salty
B. Chill
C. Low-key Shook
MOSTLY A’s
You’re full of ambition, and have the drive to get things done!
You are the kind of job seeker that won’t rest until you find the perfect position.
Handshake makes it easy to search for your next opportunity, and let employers reach out to you!

MOSTLY B’s
You go with the flow, and might not feel like you are going anywhere.
Don’t give up!
Handshake makes it easy to find the job or internship you’ll fall in love with. Go ahead, fill out your profile and let Handshake do the work to find your perfect match!

MOSTLY C’s
You’re the person everyone likes to be around. You see everything in a positive light, and try your best in everything you do!
Handshake can help you bring that light to a new opportunity, whether that’s where you live now, or somewhere across the globe!

DID YOU KNOW...
As a student at the U, you have access to Handshake through your CIS account
WHO’S IN YOUR NETWORK?

Networking is a crucial part of the job search. While it may sound scary, networking can happen anywhere and at any time, sometimes without you even realizing it! Every person you talk to can become part of your network. This network can help you find careers, internships, or other professional paths.

The first part of networking is identifying who’s already in your network. How might these people help you gather information, suggest other resources, and speak to your strengths? The contacts you have, and the ones you’ll make, can serve as references in your future career.

GET CONNECTED!

How do you expand your network? Get connected with professionals in your field! The following list is ideas of how you can get started building your network.

- Professional Associations
- Informational Interview or Coffee Meeting
- Volunteer
- LinkedIn

BEYOND THE GUIDE

Check out AlumniFire to connect with U Alumni in your field! You can access it through Handshake.
WHO’S IN YOUR CIRCLE?

Consider your network as a series of circles, with you in the center. Each person you meet expands your circle. Use this chart to start writing down who’s in your circles, and who might be helpful to you during your career search.
Making Progress

Develop Your Resume

The resume is your opportunity to market yourself to a prospective employer. It allows you to showcase your experiences, strengths, and core competencies. The next few pages will show you how to layout your resume & teach you how to write effective accomplishment statements.

Quick Tips

Key Words

Optimize your résumé with key words from the job description. This will help your résumé get noticed by Application Tracking Systems — software that sifts through résumé submissions to surface the most qualified candidates. Including key words from the posting will increase your likelihood of getting selected.

Formatting

Don’t add graphics or too much color. Your name should be the largest things on the resume. Choose a professional looking font.
YOUR NAME
City, ST | Phone | Email

EDUCATION

Degree: 
University Name
  - Minor/Emphasis:
  - Awards & Semester Earned:

Graduation Month, Year
GPA:

Relevant Coursework (Optional):
  - Class Name: Brief description of skills gained or projects completed
    Ex: Math 1010: Learned applied math techniques including estimation, basic financial
    mathematics, linear & exponential models of growth, & scaling.

EXPERIENCE

Server
Applebee's
  June 2018-Present
Salt Lake City, UT
• Action Verb + Details + Result/Purpose/How/Impact
• Handled daily cash & debit/credit transactions of $500+, displaying high levels of responsibility &
  building trust with colleagues.

Position: 
Organization: 
  
  
LEADERSHIP/VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Position: 
Organization: 
  
  
SKILLS (Optional)

LANGUAGES: Written & verbal fluency in...

TECHNICAL: List software programs...

CERTIFICATIONS (Optional)

List any certifications you have (ex: CPR certified)
ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

The most important part of every resume is the accomplishment statements (otherwise known as bullet points). We’ve come up with a formula to help you write these statements effectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION VERB</th>
<th>DETAILS</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Example Statements:

*Input and analyze data concerning proposed economic development and make recommendations to prevent environmental problems.*

*Co-facilitated and assessed trainings for the Utah Pride Center for high school students to create a more inclusive environment.*

---

**Action Verb**

---

**Details**

*(who/what/how many)*

---

**Outcome**

*(why/impact)*
Use a variety of different action verbs to show your range of skills and make your resume engaging to read.

- Advertised
- Adapted
- Addressed
- Administered
- Advocated
- Analyzed
- Arranged
- Applied
- Assembled
- Authored
- Budgeted
- Calculated
- Coached
- Collaborated
- Collected
- Communicated
- Conceptualized
- Conducted
- Consulted
- Coordinated
- Created
- Critiqued
- Corrected
- Debugged
- Delegated
- Demonstrated
- Designed
- Determined
- Developed
- Diagnosed
- Directed
- Educated
- Engineered
- Established
- Evaluated
- Executed
- Experimented
- Facilitated
- Financed
- Hired
- Identified
- Implemented
- Instructed
- Integrated
- Lectured
- Led
- Maintained
- Managed
- Marketed
- Measured
- Mediated
- Modeled
- Monitored
- Obtained
- Operated
- Organized
- Oversaw
- Performed
- Planned
- Prepared
- Presented
- Processed
- Proposed
- Programmed
- Promoted
- Recorded
- Repaired
- Researched
- Resolved
- Represented
- Restored
- Reviewed
- Solved
- Specialized
- Standardized
- Supervised
- Supplied
- Taught
- Trained
- Tutored
- Utilized
- Validated
- Volunteered
### Developing a CV

A CV is a comprehensive document of all your academic activity. This includes what you have studied, researched, taught, and the service leadership, and outreach you have provided. A CV is primarily written to target academic audiences (faculty, search committees, department staff).

In some cases an industry CV is required when targeting things like national laboratories, or nonacademic research entities. In this case you would create a 2-3 page CV that includes selected publications & non-academic work or service experience. It wouldn’t include presentations/posters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CV (Curriculum Vitae)</th>
<th>Resume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic, Research, &amp; Medical</td>
<td>Nonacademic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often several pages long</td>
<td>No longer than 1-2 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposefully formulaic</td>
<td>Tailored to demonstrate your fit for the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little variation between academic disciplines</td>
<td>Variation between industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes education</td>
<td>Emphasizes experience and accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No bullet points: include lists with few descriptions</td>
<td>Bullet points: explain how your experience prepares you for the job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Typical CV Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SECTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>Summarize your skills to what the particular school/department/program seeks in a candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>Degrees, Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation month/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certifications, Licenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Research Experience (include advisors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Experience (outside academia, including internships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practicum and Related Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWARDS</td>
<td>Grant Funding &amp; Scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honors &amp; Awards (including travel grants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADERSHIP &amp; SERVICE</td>
<td>Committee Work (ex: Graduate Student Advisory Committees, Academic Advisory Committees, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Outreach (related to your field - ex: guest lecturing at schools, judging science fairs, performing science demos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS</td>
<td>Indicate any active roles or initiatives you may have taken on with a professional organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLICATIONS &amp; PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Publications (all of them): highlight your name on the author list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conference Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poster Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>Primarily Academic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First impressions are everything! Use your cover letter to provide more details and context to your resume or CV. Even if the cover letter is optional, it’s a great chance to persuade the employer of your qualifications and fit.

Start by looking for the action verbs in the job description and connect those words to your qualifications. List those words here:

---

Quick Tips

**BE SPECIFIC**
Highlight relevant skills and experiences that show you are qualified for the position. Show that you understand the role you are applying for.

**STAND OUT**
Your cover letter is a great place to use your creativity and stand out from the crowd. Attract the reader’s attention with a unique story about you.

**MAKE IT PERSONAL**
Tailor your cover letter to the company. If you have a name to address the letter to, even better!
Date Here

Employer Name
Employer Title/Position
Company Name/Address

Dear ________,

**Opening Paragraph:** Lead with a “hook” to attract the reader’s interest. This should focus on your passion for the field or interest in the company. Next, you should provide a brief introduction and context for your application. Mention your degree and major, as well as the job title that you’re applying for. If you have a referral, now is the time to mention it. State your interest in the specific position and what YOU can do to contribute to the company’s goals. Last, mention specific skills/strengths you will highlight in the paragraphs below. Use the space below to write your own opening paragraph:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Body Paragraph(s):** Go into detail about each skill/strength/experience that you introduced. For each, illustrate with an example and connect it back to the company/position. Highlight transferable skills that are mentioned in the job description. Elaborate and provide context on how that experience relates to the company. Use the space below to write your own body paragraphs:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Closing Paragraph:** Thank the employer for their time and consideration. Reiterate interest in the company and position. Invite the company to follow-up or contact you regarding an interview. Use the space below to write your own paragraph:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
As mentioned earlier in the guide, networking is crucial. Once you’ve identified your current network, it’s time to start expanding it!

Create an “Elevator Pitch”

Preparing a short 30-second ‘elevator pitch’ can be helpful when approaching someone new you’ve never spoken with before. This page will help you start writing out ideas to come up with your pitch. You can use this at networking events or when emailing or sending a LinkedIn message to someone you’d like to connect with.

Introduce Yourself:

Share your educational background:

State your purpose (Why do you want them to listen to you?):

Provide relevant skills:

Let them know how they can help you:

Always remember to thank them for talking to you!

QUICK TIPS

RESEARCH
Read about their company culture, and what they do. Find out if the company has positions available.

EVENTS
Check Handshake for upcoming events or career fairs the company might be attending.

TAILOR
In every networking scenario, tailor your pitch to the company!
Hi, my name is Mark Hansen.

I am a junior at the U studying communications. I am exploring career opportunities in public relations in the Salt Lake City area. I read about your company on LinkedIn and I’m looking to expand my network of people in the field and learn more about their roles. I have recently completed an internship, and currently work part time on campus in the University Marketing Department.

I’d love the opportunity to talk for 20-30 min about your role, opportunities for growth, and potential openings in your company. Would either next Wednesday, May 7 at 11:30am or Thursday, May 8 at 3:00pm work with your schedule?

Thank you in advance for your time and I look forward to connecting with you!

Best,

Mark Hansen
INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

An informational interview is an informal conversation that you can have with someone who’s working in a job, career, industry, or company that interests you. It is not a job interview, and the objective is not to find a job—but it’s a great way to better understand different career paths and opportunities.

**Step 1: Potential Contacts**
Think about any family, friends, mentors, or professors you know who would be able to answer career questions and offer advice.

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**Step 2: Introduce yourself**
Prepare a brief introduction of yourself and your goals for the meeting.

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Step 3: Questions
Come up with 4-5 questions you want to ask. A few standard questions are listed below to help you get started.

» How did you begin your career?
» How would you describe a typical day or week in your role?
» What skills & training are needed to be successful in your position?
» What are some rewards & challenges with this career?
» What advice would you give someone considering this job/career?
Step 4: Set Up the Interview
Now you’re ready to set up the interview! Use this space to draft out what you are going to say. You can request an information interview by phone or email.

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Step 5: Conduct the Interview
Conduct the interview either in person, or by phone or email. Be prepared, professional, and on time!

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Step 6: Follow-up
Follow up and thank the person for their time. While the informational interview isn’t an actual interview, the interaction could lead to a real interview or networking opportunities down the line. Make sure to leave a great impression.
Step 7: Check in with yourself
Use this space to reflect on what you learned, and what your next steps are.

What did you learn (positive or negative)?

How did their career fit in with your interests, skills, or values?

What do you still need to know?

What will your next steps be?
INTERVIEWING TIPS & TRICKS

Interviewing is a two-way street that allows employers to assess your fit for a position and the organization as a whole, and allows you to assess the position and the company's fit to your values, interests, and professional goals. Regardless of the format (phone, video, or in-person), use these preparation resources to help you succeed in the interview process.

The Interview

Before

» Research
» Prepare questions to ask the interviewer
» Practice! Practice! Practice!
» Dress Professionally

During

» Arrive early
» Bring copies of your resume in a padfolio
» Don’t bring up salary or benefits
» Write down the names of the interviewers or get business cards to follow-up

After

» Send a thank you note within 24 hours
» Inquire about the next steps of the process
» When offered a job, ask for time to consider the offer fully
» Clarify compensation package & get it in writing
» Explore salary negotiation options

BEYOND THE GUIDE

To practice your interviewing skills, consider using our interview tool Stand Out which can be found in Handshake.
Using The PART Method

Being able to talk about your transferable skills is important in an interview. Be sure to utilize the PART structure in formulating responses. Tell the interviewer a story (with a beginning, middle, and an end) about how you used a practical skill. The examples of behavioral questions listed above are a great time to use this method.

**Problem:** What is the problem or situation?

**Action:** What actions did you take to address the situation?

»

»

»

**Result:** What was the outcome? If negative, what the learning experience and what would you do differently next time?

**Transferability:** How can the skills you applied transfer to the job you are interviewing for?

### BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIBE A TIME...</th>
<th>TELL ME ABOUT...</th>
<th>GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.</td>
<td>a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.</td>
<td>of a time when you used good judgment and logic to solve a problem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WHAT’S NEGOTIABLE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>Position-Related</th>
<th>Logistics/Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>» Salary</td>
<td>» Job title</td>
<td>» Start date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Signing Bonus</td>
<td>» Reporting structure</td>
<td>» Performance review timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Performance Bonus</td>
<td>» Type of assignments</td>
<td>» Promotion timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Stock shares/options</td>
<td>» Supervisory responsibility</td>
<td>» Flexible work schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Equity interest</td>
<td>» Budget ownership</td>
<td>» Work-from-home option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Tuition reimbursement</td>
<td></td>
<td>» Vesting schedule/time in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Training attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td>position designation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Relocation reimbursement</td>
<td></td>
<td>» Bridging service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Vacation/PTO time</td>
<td></td>
<td>» Waiting period for employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Expense reimbursement</td>
<td></td>
<td>benefits to start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mobile phone or internet)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organization:

Position Title:

Target Salary Range:

Considerations/Negotiables:

What are your top 3 selling points for this position?

1. 
2. 
3.
Practice Your Negotiation

“Thanks again for interviewing for the _____________ position with our organization! We are excited to offer you the job at a starting salary of ____________. We also have a generous benefits package that includes ten days of paid vacation each year, 10 sick days, and a retirement plan. We are excited to have you join us. Do you have any questions?”

Prepare Your Response

1. Be sure to plan your negotiation in person or over the phone

2. Express gratitude for the offer and reiterate your interest in the job

3. Avoid demands such as “I expect...”, “I must have...”, or “I need...” instead say “Based on my skills and experience, as well as what I know about the job responsibilities, could you get closer to...”,

4. Focus on your top selling points and the value you will add to the organization

5. Be sure to get all of your questions answered about the total compensation package

6. If you decline the offer, be gracious and keep the door open to future opportunities
BEYOND UNDERGRAD

Graduate school is a great opportunity for some students, but before you commit, work through these questions to determine if graduate school is the right next step for you.

Is Grad School Right for You?

Do you have a career/life goal?

NO - See a career coach

YES - Consider 4 key areas: skills, strengths, values, and network - to determine if grad school is the right next step for you.

- Do you know what skills your goal requires?
  
  YES - Write down those skills:
  
  ______________________
  ______________________
  ______________________
  ______________________
  ______________________

  NO - See a career coach

- Do you already have those skills?
  
  NO - Will a grad program train you in those skills?
  
  I DON'T KNOW - See a career coach

  YES - Then why are you going to grad school?

  NO - See a career coach

- Does your goal fulfill your values?
  
  YES - Write down your values:
  
  ______________________
  ______________________
  ______________________
  ______________________
  ______________________

  NO - See a career coach

- Then why are you going to grad school?
  
  NO - See a career coach

  YES - Write down how:
  
  ______________________
  ______________________

  WHAT ARE TRUE VALUES?
  See a career coach
No - Grad school might be unrewarding. See a career coach.

Yes - List which strengths and how you think they’ll help:

__________
__________
__________
__________
__________
__________

No - See a career coach.

What are strengths? See a career coach.

Can you leverage your strengths to achieve this goal?

No - Do you have a plan to expand your network on your own?

Yes - Write down exactly how:

__________
__________
__________
__________
__________

No - Will the program expand your network?

Yes - Can they help you get started in the field without getting another degree?

No - Have you talked to them about how careers in the field work?

No - See a career coach.

Yes - Did they say grad school was worth it?

No - Then why are you applying to grad school?

Yes - They why are you applying to grad school? See a career coach.

Yes - Do you need a graduate program then? See a career coach.

Yes - Can they help you get started in the field without getting another degree?

Yes - Write down specific programs they recommend & what skills the field needs:

__________
__________
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__________

Yes - See a career coach.

Finish Up | 31
When getting ready to write a personal statement, self-reflection is the first step. Ask yourself, “What am I looking for?” and “What do I want to do?”, and think about your answers in ideal terms. “What is the connection between my academic work and my interests outside of classes?” Personal essays addressing such open-ended questions are almost invariably required in graduate school applications. In essence, you present a selective life history and life plan. It is hard work, but it can also be a rewarding and intensely satisfying process. So, ask yourself, what makes you stand out? Talk about personal issues, life-changing events, your family, goals, interests, and expectations. The bottom line is that you want your personal statement to be outstanding and linger in the readers’ minds.

1. **Make it specific.** Always review the requirements of the program, & read the questions that need to be addressed in your statement. Each program’s requirements will be slightly different.

2. **Write first, edit later.** Personal statements often have a word limit. Use your first draft to get out all your thoughts, then go back and edit it down. It might take a couple trys before you get it right!

3. **Make it stand out.** This is an opportunity to introduce yourself and how you are qualified. Tell a compelling story, share an experience, make it unique and different!

4. **Give yourself time.** Plan ahead so you have enough time to edit and perfect your work.

**QUICK TIPS**

**OPENING PARAGRAPH**

Concentrate on the opening paragraph. This will capture the reader’s attention, and become the framework for the rest of your personal statement.

**RESEARCH**

Do some research to find out what sets your choice apart from other universities or programs. If the school setting would provide an important geographical or cultural change for you, this might be a fact to mention. It is also helpful to mention the faculty and research being conducted at that program regarding why you are interested.
Brainstorm

**Step 1: Introduction**
Who are you? What are the life or career goals that you hope graduate school will help you achieve? Why this program?

**Step 2: Body Paragraphs**
Provide evidence to back up the claims you made in the introduction. How do you know the program will advance you toward your goals? What steps have you already made?

**Step 3: Conclusion**
Summarize your points without adding any new arguments. You want to reinforce what you presented in the introduction (goals, attributes, etc.).
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