

How to Build Career Success into Your College Plan

First Year: Build a strong foundation.

- ✓ Build a strong foundation for college and career success by learning how to balance classes, homework, a social life, and activities.
- ✓ Get a strong start on academics: study more than you did in high school. If you're having trouble with classes, go to your instructor for help early.
- ✓ Get to know your classmates: study groups are a great way to accomplish two goals simultaneously. Participate in residence hall activities.
- ✓ Make an effort to learn about your major (and at least one other option).
- ✓ Check out one or two campus organizations. Department clubs, professional societies, and engineering project teams can help you learn about your major and careers. Campus activities are a great way to meet students with similar interests and develop organizational and leadership skills.
- ✓ Get to know your academic advisor—this person is an excellent resource.
- ✓ Attend career fairs in October and February to learn about some of the many employers who hire engineering and computer science majors. *
- ✓ After your second quarter, you'll have a better idea of your academic strengths and interests. *Focus*, career exploration software, might help you evaluate potential majors and careers. (Available from Engineering Career Services in 199 Hitchcock.)
- ✓ If you're eager to get experience, you can become a registered job seeker with the Engineering Co-op & Internship Program as early as your third full-time quarter!

Visit a career fair—even if you're not yet looking for a job.

- ✓ Career fairs are exciting events! The Engineering EXPO in October typically attracts about 150 employers; the February engineering career fair usually brings in more than 75 employers. More than two thousand students attend each event, so they are lively, crowded, and fun!
- ✓ **What to expect/what to do:**
- ✓ Buy your program booklet (in Hitchcock 122) a few days before the event.
- ✓ The program booklet will tell you the majors each employer hires. You won't have time to visit every booth, so highlight the map in the program to more easily find the employers who hire your major.
- ✓ The booths will be staffed by recruiters (engineers and managers who hire college students and graduates) and friendly alumni, who enjoy talking about their companies.
- ✓ Smile, shake hands, and introduce yourself: "Hi, I'm Scarlett Anne Gray. This is my first year, and I'm planning to major in mechanical engineering. I'll be looking for a co-op job next year, and I'd like to find out more about your company."
- ✓ Ask questions like: "What does your company look for in new hires?" or "What kinds of jobs would [my major] do in this company?"
- ✓ Thank the representative for his/her time; ask for a business card and company information.
- ✓ If you're interested, you'll be able to follow up after the fair with a resume and letter, once you have a GPA. (Or you could wait until you've joined the co-op and intern program.) If you're not interested—well, you learned something and had a good time doing it!

Sophomore Year: Explore your options and build your skills.

- ✓ Register with the Engineering Co-op and Internship Program (ECIP) no later than the Friday of the first week of fall or winter quarter so you can begin to search for co-ops or internships—even if you want to start working in spring or summer.

- ✓ Learn how to use the job search resources (on-campus interviews, referrals, job postings) that are available in Engineering Career Services (199 Hitchcock Hall). An ECIP advisor will help you write a good resume and cover letter. Attend interview training to learn how to interview.
- ✓ If you're unsure about your major, talk with your academic advisor or an ECIP advisor. Consider *Focus* career exploration software, if you haven't yet tried it.
- ✓ Even if you're not certain which major you'll pursue, select a *potential* major and actively pursue co-op, internship, or skill-building part-time opportunities.
- ✓ Be sure to attend the campus career fairs in autumn and winter quarters. Don't be surprised if you see some of the same recruiters and alumni you talked to last year!
- ✓ Become an active member (help with a committee or project) of a student group related to your major—or another interest.
- ✓ Continue to balance campus involvement with good grades.

Junior Year: Enhance your skills. Are you on the right track?

- ✓ Ideally you will have at least one work assignment this year. Continue to develop your technical skills in your co-op position or reactivate your account with ECIP to seek another internship.
- ✓ Update your resume after each work assignment while the details are fresh in your mind.
- ✓ Take on more responsibility within your campus organizations. Chair a committee, run for an office, or take responsibility for a portion of a design project.
- ✓ Concentrate on your major coursework, keeping your major GPA as high as possible. Take electives to expand your technical and communications skills.
- ✓ Attend workshops offered by Engineering Career Services to prepare for next year's full-time job search and reduce some of the pressure in your senior year.
- ✓ Begin to do in-depth research into your career options. Continue attending career fairs.
- ✓ If you are thinking about medical school, law school, or graduate school, find out if your grades are competitive and what else you need to do to prepare. Attend the fall quarter Graduate & Professional School Expo on campus.

Senior Year/Fifth Year: Fine-tune technical and job search skills. Conduct your career job search.

- ✓ Be ready to start your full-time job search in autumn quarter. Approximately 65% of all full-time job recruiting is conducted by companies in autumn alone. Activate (or reactivate) your account with ECS *no later than* the Friday of the first week of classes.
- ✓ Update your resume, then schedule an appointment with career services to review your resume and job search letters and discuss your job search.
- ✓ Polish your interviewing skills. Employers expect more of you now—be prepared to present yourself professionally. Take full advantage of the help available from ECS.
- ✓ Attend the Engineering Expo in October. Over 100 employers will be on campus looking for you! Searching for career employment is different from searching for a co-op or internship. Make an appointment with career services for help developing a successful strategy.
- ✓ Treat your job search as you would a class. If you want a “Grade A” job after graduation, you will need to put forth “Grade A” time and effort.