

Four Years to Make It Happen

The path to an engaging and rewarding career begins with the plan. Your time at Coe College affords you a wonderful opportunity to tap into a wealth of knowledge and resources that can help you achieve and surpass your goals. We can't do it for you, though, so if you want a career rather than a job, the steps in this plan will significantly improve your ability to explore and identify strengths and values, engage with content and individuals that will help provide context to your exploration, and employ the knowledge gained to help identify a fulfilling career.

FIRST YEAR

The main priority of a first year student is to manage the transition from high school to college. The coursework is more rigorous and you'll also need to adjust to new living arrangements, various interpersonal relationships and dynamics, and a new found sense of independence. Learning how to balance academic requirements with campus activities and a social life is an extremely important skill that will be essential for you to be successful throughout your time at Coe. Here are a few activities that will help lay the foundation for a successful future.

- Get involved on and off campus. It's helpful to explore and learn more about different fields or topics to determine if it is a potential major or career choice.
- Join a student organization to engage with others who have a similar interest and gain valuable experience for inclusion on your resume for summer jobs and internships.
- Join the Alumni Mentoring Program (highly recommended) to connect with a Coe Alum to discuss transitioning into the college setting, possible majors and, career exploration.
- Service oriented? Visit Coe's Office of Engagement to see how you can become involved with community service activities and volunteer opportunities.
- Assess your personal values, interests, skills and abilities by completing the Strong Skills Interest Inventory and the O*Net Interest Profiler and discuss your results with staff in the Learning Commons or in the Center for Creativity and Careers.
- Explore your academic major options. With the assistance of academic advisors choose courses that will help you explore different majors.
- Make a list of previous jobs, volunteer experiences, and courses you've taken. Note what aspects you enjoyed in each experience and see if there are patterns that reveal your strengths and potential majors or career paths.
- Join LinkedIn and begin to build community by following companies and groups related to your interests.
- Meet with a representative from the Center for Creativity and Careers to learn how to develop and implement a personalized 4-year career plan.
- Career insight can come from many sources. Talk to academic advisors, upper-class students, faculty members and alumni about majors, classes and potential extracurricular activities.
- Bookmark the Center for Creativity and Careers website and follow/like us on Facebook and Twitter to receive the latest information on new opportunities and events.
- Plan on applying to summer jobs that will provide you with an opportunity to learn about a career field that interests you or develop transferable skills for later.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Having successfully navigated the transition from high school to college, you can begin to shift your focus from transition to progression. Sophomore year is a time when most students declare a major and begin to engage more deeply with those topics or areas that are of interest. Students should also begin the process of internship/grad school preparation including creating a resume and/or CV, completing a job shadow or informational interview and, making connections in an effort to expand your professional network.

- Attend a career related program or event, especially career fairs and networking events.
- Participate in the Coe Career Bootcamp to develop career preparedness skills including resume and cover letter development, interviewing skills, and networking.
- Meet with staff in the Center for Creativity and Careers to talk about career options, majors, summer jobs and internships.
- Continue your involvement with extracurricular activities for personal and professional development with an eye towards leadership opportunities as a Junior or Senior.
- Participate in volunteer opportunities on campus or within your community.
- Join a professional organization relevant to your major.
- Reflect on your values, interests, skills and abilities and think critically about potential career paths.
- If you're ready, declare a major and map out your remaining time at Coe with your faculty advisor to ensure you're meeting all departmental and college requirements.
- Evaluate the long term prospects for your desired career or field of study to determine viability and consider other possible options.
- Consider your Facebook or Twitter from the perspective of an employer.
- Consider adding a minor or emphasis to your academic plan or possibly studying abroad to expand your knowledge and experiences.
- Partner with the Center for Creativity and Careers to arrange for an informational interview or job shadow with someone in a possible future career.
- Continue to communicate with your Alumni Mentor or seek out a mentor if you haven't identified one already.
- Login to your GradLeaders account, Coe College's new online job board, to see what internships or jobs are available.
- Continue using LinkedIn to network with professionals in your field of interest, connect with alumni, and learn more about different organizations.
- Identify potential internships/externships and apply to ones of interest.
- Talk to the Center for Creativity and Careers or your Faculty Advisor about ways to complete your Academic Practicum requirement.

JUNIOR YEAR

Your Junior year may be one of the most important in terms of career/graduate school planning and preparation. By this point, most of your coursework is related to your major and your academic performance may be a significant factor if you are considering graduate or pre-professional programs. This will be the last summer while in college to complete an internship and you should be fully prepared with a resume, cover letter, and interviewing skills to quickly apply to internships and feel confident about your skills and abilities to perform admirably once in a professional setting. If you haven't engaged with activities or groups, this is a crucial time to be able to add those things to your resume.

- Seek leadership positions in co-curricular activities.
- Attend on and off campus career fairs and networking events (especially in the Fall when many companies advertise summer internships).
- Schedule a practice interview to develop your professional communication skills.
- Obtain an internship in your chosen field. Check out listings on GradLeaders and through links on the Center for Creativity and Careers website.
- If you haven't already done so, take on a leadership position within a student organization.
- Select elective courses that will round out your academic experience and develop different skill sets.
- Schedule an appointment with the Center for Creativity and Careers to prepare for interviews and gain helpful tips on what to wear, how to answer specific questions, and how to research your interviewer.
- Schedule an appointment with the Center for Creativity and Careers to assess your goals and evaluate if you are still on track for your career development plan. Re-assess your interests, values, and skills as necessary. Meet with your Faculty Advisor and/or a representative from the Center for Creativity and Careers to plan your final year.
- Meet with a Center for Creativity and Careers staff member to formulate your job or graduate school search timeline and plans.
- Focus and set career goals. At this time, all the experience and information you have gathered should be crystallizing into solid career goals and plans.
- Review your First Year and Sophomore activities and update your resume as necessary
- Contact graduate schools for specific admission requirements and prepare for entrance exams (GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, etc).
- Update your resume and create a cover letter (avoid on-line templates for resumes and cover letters as it can make future edits difficult).
- Join and engage in career-related student professional associations and discussions
- Utilize your network to secure an internship, research experience or other opportunity related to your goal.
- Expand your use of LinkedIn to build your network, contribute to discussions in fields of interest and become active in groups to enhance your reach.
- Get to know alumni and actively network with professionals in your area of interest.
- Continue to connect with your mentor if you are participating in the Alumni Mentoring Program or identify a mentor closer to your intended career path.
- Join student chapters of professional organizations to gain career information and to start networking.

SENIOR YEAR

As a Senior, your focus should be on putting the finishing touches on what should have been an amazing experience. Just like First Year students, you will find this to be a time of transitions as you begin to seek out and finalize post-graduation plans. It is important to finish strong and make sure that all academic requirements have been met.

- Research companies/organizations and the career opportunities they offer.
- Revise and update your resume and draft a cover letter.
- Prepare for job interviews or graduate school with a mock interview.
- If you are starting your job search, consider making your Facebook and Twitter profiles private and consider how you are presenting yourself online.
- Consider relocation possibilities and research potential cities/states that you may want to live/work.

- Start utilizing those networks to gain employment.
- Use various resources for job searching—Grad Leaders, professional organizations, websites, networks.
- Practice your interviewing skills in mock interviews.
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- Continue to assess personal and professional post-graduation goals.
- Organize job search strategies for obtaining fulltime employment.
- Research organizations as part of your interview preparation process.
- Plan your job search strategy or complete grad school applications.
- Confirm with your academic advisor that your requirements for graduation are met
- Complete all necessary graduation documentation.
- Complete forms, request and send all necessary graduate school information, such as transcripts, financial aid, graduate assistant and scholarship applications.
- Have your personal statement critiqued, meet required deadlines for graduate school, and create a back-up plan.
- Formulate an alternative or “Plan B” in case you need to make last minute changes to your post-graduation plans.
- Use LinkedIn to connect with individuals, companies, or alumni who are employed by the organizations you are applying to.
- Request letters of recommendation from faculty, staff, and/or employers.
- Join professional organizations in your field and attend meetings & conferences.
- Continue to establish and maintain relationships on campus and in the community.
- Maintain a good relationship with past employers and professors who are serving as references.
- Complete the first-destination survey to share your success!