

Career Action Plan

Freshman Year: Explore Self, Majors, & Careers

Your first year at Sterling College is filled with excitement, a whole lot of new information and experiences, and maybe even a little apprehension about the unknown. While you're acclimating to college life, you should:

- Take general education and core major courses to explore potential majors.
- Meet the Director of Career Services and learn what services the office offers.
- Discuss potential majors and careers with family members, academic advisor, professors, and Career Services.



- Prepare a 4-year academic plan, realizing that changes can be made each year. Share with, and get feedback from, your academic advisor.
- Create a first draft of your resume capturing your experiences to-date and establishing overall formatting for professional appearance.
- Use internet resources to get answers to: "What can I do with a degree in...". Make a list of 10 job titles that are frequently obtained by students with the major(s) you are considering.
- Take assessment(s) to better understand your interests, values, and/or personality.



- Get a professional-looking email address/account.
- Create your LinkedIn Profile (Photo, Headline, Summary, Education, Skills, and Connections).



- Join a student organization, residence hall group, or a ministry and get involved.
- Seek and obtain a summer job that helps you explore and develop your career interests and skills.
- Review your first year. What sparked an interest? What did you learn about potential majors and careers?



Prepared for the students of Sterling College by the Career Services Office.

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Sophomore Year: Confirm Major & Expand Career Interests

As you start your second year, you have a better sense of what college life is like and what you need to do to be successful at Sterling. Now is the time to really begin exploring your potential career interests. To do that:



- Finalize your choice of major (and minor) and revise your 4-year academic plan as needed.
- Enroll in classes according to your 4-year plan.
- Research potential career interests. Discuss your thoughts with family members, professors, academic advisor, and Career Services.

- Identify, research, and list employers that hire graduates with your major.
- Remember to focus on your classes...your GPA will follow you for a long time.
- Make contact with and get to know your Professors.
- Update your resume to include work and volunteer activities from your freshman year.
- Update the Education, Experience, and Skills section of your LinkedIn Profile. Continue to add Connections. Ask Connections to endorse your skills.
- Find ways to stay in touch with your LinkedIn Connections (share information on topics/companies of mutual interest, make endorsements, comment on job changes, offer congratulations on work anniversaries, etc.).



- Talk to professionals doing work of interest to you.
- Increase your involvement in a campus organization by seeking a leadership role.
- Seek out volunteer opportunities.
- Keep a log of accomplishments to later add to resume.



- Attend Career Services Workshops.
- Get an internship in a position or company you're interested in. Build relationships. Reflect on what you liked and didn't like at the completion of the internship.



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Junior Year: Develop Skills & Gain Relevant Experience

As your schooling continues, it is important to purposely continue developing the attributes that will drive your success at school and in your career—attributes like a strong work ethic, desire for excellence, collaboration and relationship building, multi-tasking, and time management. Now is the time to begin narrowing your focus to a few careers you're seriously considering. To do that, you should:



- Meet with your academic advisor to review your progress and make sure you are completing all required coursework on time.
- Maintain a competitive GPA, especially in your major.
- Find an internship that lets you see what it is really like in a field you're interested in (realize some summer internships have fall deadlines).
- Research employers in your field.

- Narrow your research about careers to a few job areas.



- Contact alumni who work in your field of interest and/or graduated with your major.
- Read newspapers, company and industry websites, blogs, LinkedIn posts, and business publications to increase your industry knowledge.



- Update your LinkedIn Profile. Get endorsements & add Connections. Stay in touch with existing Connections.
- Develop your resume into a form suitable for employers and graduate schools. Have it critiqued by Career Services.
- Make a list of potential references.
- Clean-up all your social media sites so you'd be OK with potential employers seeing what you have posted.
- Capture stories & examples you can use during interviews.



- Prepare and be able to deliver a 30-second Elevator Pitch or "commercial" highlighting what you want a contact to remember about you. Practice until it feels comfortable and natural.
- Research graduate school options.
- Take required graduate school entrance tests such as the GRE, GMAT, or LSAT.

- Enhance your job search, resume writing, and interviewing skills by attending Workshops offered by Career Services.



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Senior Year: Finish School Strong & Land the Job

Finally! You can now apply all of the career development activities you engaged in the first three years to your job search to land the job you want. Whether you are planning on starting your career or continuing your education, start the process early in the year and:

- Meet with your faculty advisor to confirm completion of academic requirements for graduation.
- Finish strong! Remember: your GPA will follow you.
- Attend Workshops offered by Career Services. Networking Night, held each February, is a key one to practice professional interactions and build your personal network.



- Review and update your resume to ensure it targets your career interests. Ask for feedback from Career Services.
- Generate a list of target employers. Reach out to them.
- Develop thoughtful questions that show your interest in and knowledge of the employer.



- Revise and practice your 30-second Elevator Pitch or “commercial”. It needs to be natural and convincing...so practice!
- Look for opportunities to practice your interviewing skills during mock interviews.
- Make sure your LinkedIn Profile is ready. Ask Career Services to critique. Add connections.
- Check the job postings on the Career Services website.
- Seek job openings related to your career interests. Use on-line job sites and leverage your network!
- Take required entrance tests for graduate school, such as the GRE, GMAT, or LSAT.
- Apply for jobs or graduate school.
- Evaluate and compare job offers carefully.
- Accept a job or graduate school.
- Inform Career Services when you accept a job or are accepted to a graduate program.



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