CAREER PREPARATION STARTS HERE

The need to differentiate yourself in a competitive job market is always important, and becomes critical when economic conditions are such that employers can be highly selective in hiring just the right talent. To ensure you can successfully demonstrate your job readiness, I encourage you to engage early and take ownership of your career preparation. Finding a job, or more importantly, starting a career, does not begin at graduation or in your senior year. Success comes from early engagement and commitment. Sounds difficult, but don't worry...you have a partner.

The VCU Business Career Services team views career development as a part of your overall educational experience, and will partner with you in your career development and planning efforts. We provide a broad range of services and resources to help you develop and showcase your skills and experience. We also cultivate opportunities for you to interact with employers, and to gain practical experience.

To help guide your journey, we're pleased to present the Career Preparation Life Cycle. This roadmap will help you understand the natural cycle of preparing for your career--from beginning to end and everything in between. This GPS will give you insights into where your efforts should be focused depending on where you are in your career preparation. Recommended activities are provided to help move you along in your development, and a wide variety of tools, resources and references are included to support your efforts.

We encourage you to utilize all the resources available to you so you can make the most of your educational experience, including your career planning and preparation. My team and I look forward to our partnership with you and wish you the very best in your career journey.

Mike Eisenman
Have you ever found yourself driving along, suddenly realizing that you’re not sure where you’re going? And then realizing you have just a few minutes to get there? If this scenario is familiar, you know the feelings of anxiety don’t go away until you realize you’re not lost, but just took a wrong turn which can be easily corrected.

If you’re feeling such anxiety with your job search, or want to avoid that bad feeling, take some time to understand the cycle of career preparation. The more you understand it, the better you’ll be able to navigate your journey into the workforce. You’ll find that the process is much like any another cycle. There are certain things you should do, certain ways to do them and sometimes a certain sequence in which to do them. We’ve captured this process in the Career Preparation Life Cycle, a new section on our web pages.

In addition to helping you understand the phases of the Life Cycle, you’ll understand where your efforts should be focused. Recommended activities are defined, along with new and expanded tools and resources. We encourage you to utilize the Career Preparation Life Cycle to maximize your career success…with as little anxiety as possible. Read on for a preview of what you’ll find on the web…
UNDERSTAND THE CAREER PREPARATION LIFE CYCLE TO MAXIMIZE OUTCOMES

Phase I—The Developing Professional

“Your career path journey will be a progression through a series of differing stages of development, with each stage having a different goal or focus. During the Developing Professional phase, the goal is to basically get to know yourself—what you like, what you are good (or not so good) at, what is important to you, etc. To accomplish this, efforts during the Developing Professional phase will be focused on awareness, discovery, exploration and preparation…”

As you read on about the activities that support the Developing Professional’s focus areas, you’ll find an array of tools and resources. For example, the section on Self Assessment will provide an explanation of some of the different types of assessments, along with examples. And the Explore Options section will help you understand how to take the results from your assessment(s) and research occupations and industries that may align with your interests.

The Developing Professional phase can be an enlightening and exciting time as you discover yourself and explore different options. 

Phase II—The Emerging Professional

“The Emerging Professional phase builds on the awareness and discovery you created in the Developing Professional phase. Efforts will center around personal brand development, establishing connections and gaining practical experience through internships…”

Recommended activities during this phase include: Developing Your Personal Brand, Continuing to Execute your Career Preparation Plan, Expanding Your Toolkit, Marketing Yourself and Gaining Practical Experience…”

Hopefully your efforts from Phase I resulted in insightful discoveries or perhaps confirmed your interests and potential occupations. The Emerging Professional phase is loaded with activities to help you build upon your Phase I outcomes. You’ll produce tangible results like your resume, and you’ll develop a 30 second introduction of yourself that you can use during an interview, when you meet a recruiter at a career fair, or even on a brief elevator ride when you encounter the CEO from your dream employer.
UNDERSTAND THE CAREER PREPARATION LIFE CYCLE TO MAXIMIZE OUTCOMES

Phase III—The Professional

“Congratulations, Professional. You set your sights on a position with a company you respect, and successfully demonstrated the value you can add. Your employer also recognizes your potential contributions, so during this phase of your career, maximize your opportunities for personal and professional growth…”

By now, you understand that the phases of the Career Preparation Life Cycle are not necessarily linear. And by the time you reach Phase III, you’ll also understand that the cycle never ends. We hope this guide and the associated tools are helpful in your current and future career development efforts.

The VCU Business Career Services team wishes you well on your journey of exploration, development and success.

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

New Job and Internship Reporting Tool

Now that you’ve gotten that job or internship, we want to hear about it! Here are some of the reasons why:

- Current and future students can follow your lead and enjoy similar placement success.
- Current and future employers will understand that VCU Business provides an ongoing, reliable pipeline of talent ready to make a difference in the workplace.
- The entire VCU Business community can proudly say that another student secured a placement. This can go a long way in communicating the value that all current and future stakeholders can expect from the School.

In 5 minutes or less, you can share your success and positively impact current and future stakeholders. Just fill out the new Job and Internship Reporting Form. It’s one of the new tools you’ll find on the VCU Business Career Services web pages.

Oh, and one more reason—we want to be one of the first to tell you Congratulations!
CAREER PREPARATION TOOLS AND RESOURCES
What’s New, What’s Updated

Don’t worry. The tools and resources you’ve come to rely on—RamsRecruiting, Darlene’s Business Blog—they’re still here and as valuable as ever. Several tools have been updated and/or expanded, while we’ve added others. Here’s a sampling of what you’ll find on the web pages of the Career Preparation Life Cycle.

- **New Self Assessment tools.** Of particular note of the various self assessments mentioned in the Developing Professional phase is the O*NET Interest Profiler. Special instructions are provided on how to complete and use the results from the short version of this beneficial tool. Don’t let “short version” give the wrong impression. The time investment is short but not the results.

- **New Occupational Research resources.** Also in the Developing Professional phase, the Occupational Research section provides links to several resources and an explanation of what each resource provides.

- **The Company Research section** in Phase I includes expanded recommendations on where to look for details about the companies you’re researching.

- **Interviewing Reference Guide**—This extensive guide has been updated and expanded even further to include tips and sample scenarios on how to follow-up if you haven’t heard from your interviewer, and how to ask for feedback if you learn you’re not the selected candidate. Also added is the Candidate Match Profile—a 3 step tool to assess and demonstrate the match between the job and your skills.

- **Workplace Etiquette**—This new section will help you understand some of the things you should and shouldn’t do in your new work environment. Watch for future additions to this section.

- **Job Offer Evaluation and Negotiation Tools** have been updated and expanded. Includes a new Job Evaluation and Comparison Tool.

- Finally, three brand new resources include: **Understanding a Salary Offer, Deciphering and Understanding Benefits** and **Transitioning from the Campus to the Workplace.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

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