

# Career Services Timeline: Graduate School Timeline



These guidelines are suggestions for making the most of your time at Truman and setting up a basic framework for planning your career. So even if you're a junior and haven't started, you can follow the steps outlined for first-year students and sophomores to begin the process. And at anytime, you may make an appointment with a professional staff member to talk about these steps and to plan your own strategies.

## First Year

Get to know your Career Center resources...

- Explore your interests and career options by using the resource books and computer programs.
- Make an appointment with a career counselor to discuss your interests, skills and values, possibly including the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator \(MBTI\)](#) and [Strong Interest Inventory \(SI\)](#).
- Sign up for Skills for Academic Success with your first-year advisor. Usually, 1-2 sessions focus on Career Center resources.

### Summer

- Get job experience in the form of a summer job, internship, research, and/or volunteer experience.

## Sophomore Year

Explore your career possibilities...

- Get a part-time job to help you develop basic work skills and learn more about your work preferences.
- Create a professional resume or curriculum vita; have it critiqued by a staff member.
- Attend Career Expo to explore internship options.
- Become more involved with faculty members (ask for advice, visit during office hours, participate in class, join a research team) to cultivate relationships for future letters of recommendation.
- Talk with faculty and upperclassmen majoring in the field you are considering for graduate studies.
- Attend career-related sessions where professionals share how they entered and advanced in their chosen career, discuss how to prepare resumes and curriculum vitae, give interviewing tips, and provide information about the process of searching for a graduate school.
- Investigate internships, summer jobs, and part-time opportunities at the Career Center and online.

### Summer

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## Junior Year

Test out career decisions...

- Attend workshops on résumé and curriculum vita writing, interviewing, and graduate school selection.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals working in careers of your choice.
- Seek career-related summer jobs, part-time jobs, internships, and volunteer experiences.
- Utilize the computer-aided tools available in the Career Center to assist with resume and curriculum vita preparation and graduate school.

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- Attend Career Expo each semester to inquire about internships and summer and fulltime jobs.
- Focus on increasing/maintaining your GPA.
- Investigate the differences between earning a Master's degree or a Ph.D. and determine the level of education needed for the field you intend to enter after graduation.
- Join a professional organization in your field if possible (perhaps as a student affiliate/member) and/or an honor society in your field.
- Consider becoming a grader or tutor for classes in your major.
- Become familiar with resources available to prepare for entrance tests (GRE, MCAT, LSAT, & GMAT study software).
- Investigate graduate/professional school opportunities including entrance examination requirements and application deadlines.
- Participate in research and look for opportunities to present your work.
- Attend graduate school fairs and professional conferences. (Even if you do not present your own research, the professional experience is valuable).
- Sign up for a mock interview to practice your interviewing skills.

### Summer

- Gain experience in your field through an internship, summer job, and/or volunteer opportunity.
- Begin thinking about potential candidates to write your letters of recommendation.
- Sign up for and take graduate school entrance exam required for entrance into your chosen field or graduate school.
- Narrow down your list of graduate schools to roughly 10-15.
- Contact potential faculty advisors at your schools of interest.
- Participate in research and presentation experiences.
- Write a first draft of your statement of purpose (also known as a personal statement).

## Senior Year

### September

- Meet with faculty members to discuss possible programs.
- Ask for letters of recommendations.

### October

- Make an appointment with the Career Center graduate school advisor for a critique of your statement of purpose.
- Request applications from programs.

### November

- Request transcripts.
- Ask if your records office can send a transcript including your fall term grades in time to meet deadlines of programs to which you are applying.

### December

- Type your application forms.
- Give your recommenders the forms to fill out and the addresses to which they should send their forms/letters. Provide them with copies of your statements of purpose or your response

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to specific questions asked by the programs.

### December/January

- Mail applications. (Even if deadlines are later, it is good to get the applications in early.)

### February

- Contact programs about the possibility of visiting.
- Make trips if possible.

### April

- If you are applying for need-based financial aid programs, you may have to provide a copy of your federal income tax return.

You should begin the application process the summer before your senior year of college or at least a year before you plan to start graduate school. You should study deadlines for specific programs carefully since they may vary significantly depending on the institutions to which you apply.