

DEVELOPING YOUR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES:

***Becoming well-prepared
to enter professional life***

by Margaret Krantz



HANOVER COLLEGE
CAREER CENTER

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INTRODUCTION

Your college years focus on your development in a range of ways, intellectual, personal, interpersonal, even physical. This booklet is specific to one aspect of that development: your preparation to enter professional life after Hanover. No matter what path you choose to pursue, no matter what your major, no matter how clearly that major matches your career interests, no matter if you opt to go to grad school first, **you will be far better prepared to seek work if you have mastered the competencies outlined here.**

It is never too late to get started gaining these skills; however, some of them, most notably intellectual skills and marketable qualifications, are built gradually. Begin chipping away at these early in college and you will be well-prepared to embark on your professional life.

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DEVELOPING YOUR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

GETTING STARTED

This resource provides you with an introduction to each professional competency and tips for getting started. It also gives a summary of what you are aiming for in building each so you will be able to judge when you have mastered it. This will familiarize you with what the work world and, to some extent, graduate school expects of you. To get started developing these competencies, follow the advice below. When you are ready to check your progress on any or all of them, refer to the companion booklet, *Evaluating your Professional Competencies*.

Every Year:

- Do your best in your classes. Building your intellectual skills is why you're at Hanover.
- No matter what you are doing, whether classes or activities, practice your professionalism.
- Review this booklet to see what lies ahead so that you can allow time to master each competency.

Remember, the Career Center can help at any stage!

First Years: Focus on this one thing.

- *Try. Stuff. Out.* The most important thing you can do now is to get to know yourself and what you enjoy and find rewarding. This means that you need to watch how you respond to the things you do. Why do you enjoy them? Or why not?

By following this simple advice, you will begin working on several competencies: sense of purpose, marketable qualifications, résumé, cover letter, and networking. Do tasks well and you'll be building your professionalism.

Sophomores: Start to build your qualifications and credentials.

- Work on gaining marketable qualifications and on exploring your interests: join clubs, find a job, explore your major, be active, but do it *intentionally*, focusing on what you know you enjoy.
- Work on your résumé, highlighting the tasks and activities you most hope to do in your eventual job.
- Practice interviewing.

Juniors: Assess your competencies and focus on areas that are still developing.

- If you haven't yet done so, identify 1 - 5 possible career goals (see p. 5). Come to the Career Center if you need assistance.
- Focus on building your qualifications toward a specific field that matches your interests, and tailor your résumé and cover letter accordingly.
- Practice your search and interviewing skills while seeking an internship.
- Using the Career Center's booklet *Evaluating your Professional Competencies*, work through the competency assessment tools to identify your current strengths and growth areas.

Seniors: Assess your competencies and gain mastery in each.

- Use each competency's assessment tool in *Evaluating your Professional Competencies* to see where your gaps lie. If you haven't been building qualifications, come to the Career Center for strategies.
- Attend career workshops to jump start your résumé, cover letter, job search and networking understanding, or to help with grad school applications.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY: INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

Intellectual Skills: The ability to think critically, to communicate effectively in oral and written form, to conduct sound research and analysis, and to use technology effectively; and the ability to clearly describe or demonstrate your mastery of these skills to recruiters.

You are developing your intellectual skills in the classroom and, though less intentionally, through your extracurricular activities. In contrast with the other professional competencies in this booklet, you receive regular and ongoing feedback about your intellectual development from your faculty. Therefore, the purpose of this section is not to help you to *develop* your intellectual skills, but to encourage you to become aware of them and to practice them so that, when seeking work, you can describe them effectively to potential employers.

TIPS TO BUILD (AND TO LEARN TO DESCRIBE) YOUR INTELLECTUAL SKILLS:

- Study! Prepare for your classes; don't wait for deadlines. Take classes you have an interest in.
- Take advantage of office hours to discuss any academic questions or problems with your professors.
- Practice: write multiple drafts, practice speeches, ask for comments and feedback.
- Model your behaviors after people whose intellectual skills you respect and admire.
- Schedule ongoing meetings with a Learning Center tutor; note ways your skills are improving.
- Work with your academic advisor to identify the ways in which you are developing intellectual skills.
- Record your progress on your co-curricular portfolio under intellectual growth.

WHAT YOU ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING FOR:

The ability to clearly describe or demonstrate your mastery of the following skills to potential employers:

- **Writing Skills:** The ability to express thoughts clearly and effectively in written form using correct grammar and structure. Developed in class through term papers, senior thesis, essay tests, lab reports, article summaries, journals, creative writing, case reports, internship essays, literature reviews, etc.
- **Speaking Skills:** The ability to express thoughts clearly and persuasively in oral form using examples effectively. Developed in class through in-class presentations and reports, classes that base grades on participation or that encourage participation in class discussions, speeches, group projects, study groups, etc.
- **Creative and Integrative Thinking Skills:** The ability to draw connections and to find new and innovative perspectives or approaches to a situation or task. Developed in class through assignments or discussions that allow room for imagination or alternative approaches.
- **Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills:** The ability to work systematically and objectively to break complex problems down into manageable steps in order to identify, assess, and solve problems. Developed in class through essay exams, research papers, in-class discussions, analytical papers, creative arts, art or literature critiques, critiques of arguments during class, etc.
- **Research Skills:** The ability to seek information systematically in order to discover new facts and to gain new knowledge. Developed in class through research papers, field studies, senior thesis, independent grant research, independent laboratory research, internship essays, literature reviews, case studies, etc.
- **Quantitative Skills:** The ability to apply mathematical concepts to real-world problems. Developed in class through lab reports, Abstract and Formal Reasoning LADR, data interpretation, statistics, etc.
- **Computer Skills:** The ability to use technology to solve problems or accomplish tasks. Practiced in class through research, lab reports, electronic portfolios, class projects, presentations, etc.

TIMEFRAME: Throughout college.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY: SENSE OF PURPOSE

Sense of Purpose: The ability to articulate your life goals and direction and how these might be expressed through an occupation.

In knowing yourself well enough to identify your career interests, you are not attempting to name a dream job that is the only one in the world that would make you happy. Most people *never* settle on a single perfect job to the exclusion of all others, generally because they have broad interests that don't fall neatly into a single job title. For most, a sense of purpose is evolving, more a spectrum than a black/white, before/after. Since the work world is always changing, even those who think they have found an ideal fit may discover that the realities of the job don't perfectly match their dreams for their entire career. And that's fine. Enjoying noodles and marinara doesn't mean lasagna is the only pasta dish you will ever want to eat.

Rather than trying to name one perfect job, it's actually more fruitful to find the *ingredients* you need in a satisfying job, using clues drawn from your past, your previous choices, and responses to experiences you have taken part in. (That's why it is very valuable to try things out!) Then, instead of trying to narrow your goal to a single job title, try to identify a small number of possible career fields that you think you would enjoy because they have the ingredients you want. You will find meaningful, rewarding work and will be more flexible as the work world and your interests evolve.

TIPS TO GET STARTED IN CLARIFYING YOUR INTERESTS:

- Try things out. Be active. Pay attention to how you respond to experiences. For example, what do you know you *don't* want to do? Why not?
- Look for insight through the choices you've made: How do you spend your free time when you feel the time is well-spent? What attracted you to your major? When have you become absorbed by an activity because it was deeply rewarding, fun, or challenging?
- Sift through your past activities for ideas. Make a list of the jobs, volunteer activities, and leadership positions that you've had. For each, list 1) the aspects you enjoyed most about it and 2) the things you wish had been true about it (for example, if the hours were bad, note that you like flexible or predictable hours). Using these lists, choose the 5 traits you most desire in a future job.
- Using O*Net (www.onetonline.org), run a search using traits from the previous bullet point, a word you would like to be a part of your work, (writing, sports, analyzing, helping, etc.), or a job that you are considering, then look at the related jobs that O*Net suggests. Explore those suggestions, and the jobs related to them, until you have found a handful that you would enjoy.
- Come to the Career Center for career guidance and perhaps to take an interest inventory.
- Record your progress on your co-curricular portfolio under personal development.

WHAT YOU ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING FOR:

The ability to name 1 - 5 possible career goals that you would find satisfying, in fields that reflect your sense of purpose and that would allow you to use your skills and abilities.

TIMEFRAME:

Every day brings the opportunity to learn more about yourself. Start paying attention to your responses to activities now and continue to refine your sense of purpose by reflecting on these responses throughout your life.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY: MARKETABLE QUALIFICATIONS

Marketable Qualifications: The development of transferable work skills and knowledge through academics, work experience, internships, and extracurricular activities.

A critical part of preparing to enter the professional world is acquiring experience. Through this, you become a better leader and team member, and you practice your interpersonal skills. You also develop related or “transferable” skills, gain self-understanding, and clarify your interests. Experience also provides you material to draw on as you attempt to describe the relevance of your background to a potential employer or grad school through your résumé, cover letter or statement of purpose, and interview.

Having a possible career goal, even a broad one, helps you to identify skills that are important in your preferred field so that you can then create opportunities to start developing and practicing them. Note that, while all experiences have value, **typically you get more benefit from putting in longer hours and from doing tasks that are related to your goal.**

TIPS TO BUILD YOUR MARKETABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

- Try to develop skills each summer. Create opportunities: volunteer if you can't find a paid job, or volunteer at work to do extra tasks that you find interesting if you don't like your main job. Anything can teach you about yourself and many learning experiences become good stories in interviews.
- Find one or more internships during college. Visit the Office of Experiential Learning or the BSP to get help with your search.
- Use the Career Center's brochure *Tips for Finding Student Employment and Local Jobs*.
- Work to clarify your sense of what your preferred field requires by requesting an informational interview with an alumnus/a in the profession. Ask them for strategies to gain related skills. For help, see the Career Center's *Informational Interviewing* brochure.
- Use O*Net (www.onetonline.org) to identify skills employers are seeking.
- Search for people in the field on LinkedIn and note the types of skills they list in their profile as well as the settings in which they gained those skills.
- Off-campus experiences are a great way to get to know yourself and to build skills. Make plans to study abroad or to participate in a City Semester program.
- Keep a list of everything you do on your co-curricular portfolio under interpersonal development.

WHAT YOU ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING FOR:

Enough related or “transferable” skills to enable you to convince a potential employer that you are a good risk in hiring. Typically, that means that you are able to prove the ability to perform 80% or more of the job description.

TIMEFRAME:

It takes time to build up your transferable skills, so being active and involved in activities you enjoy is important throughout college.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY: STRONG RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER

Strong Résumé and Cover Letter: The ability to research the demands of the targeted field and to develop documents that demonstrate related and valued strengths.

Writing a strong, effective résumé (or C.V. for grad school) is one of the most demanding parts of preparing for a search. Don't underestimate the effort required for this task. A great document requires background research and numerous drafts. Cover letters, or letters of self-introduction, accompany any résumé that you don't actually hand to an employer. While a tailored résumé outlines *details* of your experience and accomplishments for a particular field, an effective cover letter provides an *overview* of why you are a fit for a particular employer based on the job ad, showcasing the most well-developed of your transferable skills, ideally those that best meet the employer's needs.

TIPS FOR WRITING A STRONG RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER:

- Use O*Net (www.onetonline.org) to identify the tasks employers hope you will be able to undertake and for help in wording tasks for the jobs you have already had.
- Keep track of the times that you have been recognized for your efforts through positive evaluations, awards, promotions, etc., and the times that you have been notably successful by surpassing your goals, creating new initiatives, or otherwise leaving a positive mark. Include at least three such accomplishments on your résumé.
- Look for ways to build up additional accomplishments in future activities.
- Use the Career Center's *Résumé Guide* and *Cover Letter Guide*, which provide worksheets, sample résumés and cover letters, and many tips to help you begin writing effective documents.
- Request a critique at the Career Center and attend a résumé and cover letter workshop.
- Request feedback about your résumé from someone in the field you are seeking to enter. You can get alumni names from the Career Center.

WHAT YOU ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING FOR:

The ability to write targeted résumés and cover letters that are persuasive, professional, typo-free, and showcase your qualifications effectively.

TIMEFRAME:

It is wise always to keep your résumé current for several reasons; for example, an opportunity may arise for which you need to submit a résumé quickly or you may get in a conversation with someone who offers to pass your résumé on. Additionally, you will have a much clearer sense of gaps in your current qualifications if you have an up-to-date document. In contrast, cover letters are written for specific openings, on an "as needed" basis.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY: EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW SKILLS

Effective Interview Skills: The ability to clearly describe your skills and background relative to the targeted job or graduate school program to a representative of the organization.

Hanover alumni in human resources (HR) tell us that some characteristics are particularly important in interviews. For example, they look for candidates who understand and are clearly interested in the opening they hope to fill. They expect candidates to be able to describe the key ways in which their skills, traits and experience make them qualified for the position. These HR professionals also emphasize the importance of a good first impression and proper grammar. Effective interviewing depends greatly on preparation, which boils down to two factors: practice and research.

TIPS FOR PREPARING TO INTERVIEW:

- Practice responding meaningfully to the request, “Tell me about yourself.” (See the Career Center’s *Job Search Guide* for tips.)
- Have a mock interview at the Career Center to gain practice tailored to the industry and position you are seeking.
- Ask your employer to give you a mock interview for additional practice.
- Aim to have at least four practice interviews in order to gain a good sense of what to expect, to learn how to prepare for professional interviews, and to develop comfort in talking about yourself and your strengths.
- Refer to the Career Center’s *The Art of Interviewing* guide for specific strategies, sample questions, and tips on how to research positions and organizations.

WHAT YOU ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING FOR:

The confidence and ability to perform well in an interview. This is drawn from the fact that you have so thoroughly practiced describing key aspects of your background and so thoroughly researched the organization and the position that you know you are well-prepared to offer a convincing case for your suitedness for the position.

TIMEFRAME:

Every chance you get, build your general comfort level with talking about yourself, especially through formal interviews for leadership positions, campus jobs, etc.

Typically a one-week interval between a mock and an actual interview is ideal, when possible, as mock interviews for specific openings are like warm ups before an athletic competition: you don’t want to prepare too far in advance or you’ll lose your edge.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY: EFFECTIVE NETWORKING SKILLS

Networking Skills: The ability to interact and connect with other people to exchange information, develop contacts, and find career or graduate school opportunities.

Experts in the job search process estimate that at least 75% of jobs are filled through the “hidden job market,” or networking. While that might sound daunting, it need not be a barrier for you: networking is more about developing specific interactive skills than it is about having, say, high-powered family friends. If you are reluctant to network, it might help you to realize that your contacts will find it satisfying, even rewarding, to help you, if you follow proper etiquette with them.

TIPS FOR STRENGTHENING YOUR NETWORKING SKILLS:

- Refer to the Career Center’s *Job Search Guide* for a worksheet to help you identify and interact with your network. Attend a networking workshop.
- Learn to find points of mutual interest with your contact to make conversation easier. Do you share an acquaintance? Do you have an activity at Hanover in common? Do any of your contact’s groups on LinkedIn interest you? Jot down notes as you prepare.
- Practice talking about your interests with faculty, coaches, bosses, etc.
- Prepare an elevator pitch. Refer to the Career Center’s *Job Search Guide* for tips.
- See the Career Center’s *Informational Interviewing* brochure for tips on quick conversations you can have with alumni and others who can answer many of your job-related questions and provide you advice to get started.
- Write down what you hope will come of the conversation, including questions you would like to have answered. Remember never to ask for a job or internship.
- Come to Student-Alumni Networking Day (SAND) and practice talking about yourself with alumni.

WHAT YOU ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING FOR:

The ability to request assistance from people who can provide (or point you toward) insiders’ knowledge of job information, possible employment leads, and openings information.

TIMEFRAME:

Relationship building is ongoing. Contacting people for information and leads is on an “as needed” basis during an internship or job search.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY: STRATEGIC SEARCH SKILLS

Strategic Search Skills: The ability to plan and conduct an effective, sustained search for employment or graduate school admission.

Running a search for a satisfying position involves far more work than you might initially imagine, but the rewards of a good fit at work or in graduate school are well worth the effort. An effective search is proactive and targeted, and is built on many of the competencies this booklet has already introduced, including a sense of purpose, marketable qualifications (transferable skills), a strong résumé and cover letter, and interviewing and networking skills.

Not only is your search likely to conclude more satisfyingly, but it is also ultimately likely to take less time if you approach it strategically rather than simply surfing the web for openings, which students in today's world often see as the default option. Below are tips to help you to develop strategic search skills.

TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR STRATEGIC SEARCH SKILLS:

- Tell family and friends what you're looking for as clearly as possible so that they can help keep an eye out for you.
- Put those great research skills to work and find organizations you'd love to be a part of. Look them up on LinkedIn to see profiles of people they hire. Join our LinkedIn group, Hanover Career Alumni Network, over 1,000 Hanover alumni professionals who want to help you.
- Refer to the Career Center's *Job Search Guide* for step-by-step information about the job search process and for tips in approaching each aspect.
- Activate your NACElink account.
- Attend the Career Center's Job Search and Networking workshop.
- Visit the Career Center's website (<http://careercenter.hanover.edu>) for links to a wide variety of job openings and search engines.
- Refer also to Sense of Purpose on page 5 and Strong Résumé, page 7.
- Seniors may request an alumni mentor to provide ongoing advice and insight about the job search process in their chosen field.

WHAT YOU ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING FOR:

- Knowledge of what you want to do and specific locations where such opportunities exist,
- Understanding of the traits of people who are successful in that field,
- A strategy for the ways that you can demonstrate related skills, and
- Endurance to carry out a search for as long as it takes.

TIMEFRAME:

As needed for internship, job, or grad school search. Note that this competency is partly comprised of others, as it assumes a strong résumé and cover letter as well as networking and interview skills.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY: PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICS

Professionalism and Ethics in the Workplace:
An understanding of and the ability to meet the work world's behavioral expectations.

A vital part of being a successful employee is demonstrating the following behaviors, which are very likely to be expected at your workplace. If you wish to keep your job once you have it, you will need to have mastered them.

TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICS:

- Ask your employers for feedback about these traits and how well you exhibit them. Internship supervisors, volunteer coordinators, student worker supervisors, team leaders and faculty members can all give you insight into these factors.
- Bring the list below to work with you to remind yourself of the behaviors that employers expect you to exhibit.
- Practice these skills in class projects, clubs, email messages, on the job, and when volunteering.

WHAT YOU ARE ULTIMATELY AIMING FOR:

- **Enthusiasm:** You demonstrate enthusiasm by looking for ways to contribute to the overall goal of the office through your tasks, putting thought, energy, and interest into your work.
- **Punctuality/dependability:** You arrive punctually every day, stay on task, and complete work as promised and on time.
- **Ethics:** You behave with integrity at all times, and you follow ethical guidelines given by your employer. As a part of this, you avoid taking office supplies, making personal copies, etc., without paying for them.
- **Courtesy:** You show respect to co-workers, supervisors, and clients or customers. You avoid using profanity.
- **Appropriate grooming:** You avoid allowing your appearance to distract from your work quality. You wear clothes that fit in with the environment, are attentive to personal hygiene, and avoid wearing scents.
- **Initiative:** When appropriate, you suggest ways to improve the process by making it more efficient or effective and offer ways that you can use your skills to support the mission of the office.
- **Time management:** You work at a steady pace, completing your work in a timely manner.
- **Learning:** You learn quickly, ask questions as needed rather than later having to undo your previous efforts, and find the level of questioning vs. independence your supervisor prefers.
- **Leaving personal matters at home:** You avoid spending work time doing personal business, including texting, taking personal phone calls, answering personal email messages, or doing personal web searches. You keep your cell phone off or on silent to avoid being disruptive, and you never look at it during meetings with others.
- **Breaks:** You limit your breaks to those approved by your employer.
- **Meetings:** You learn what is expected of you when attending meetings and arrive prepared.
- **Social media:** You avoid criticizing a current or former employer through social media sites and show good judgment in your photographs and posts.

TIMEFRAME: Ongoing. Start now.

SAMPLE FOUR- YEAR PLAN

For First Years and Sophomores:

Begin to build your Professional Competencies

It's not too early!

Be kind to your future self: begin preparing for your career during your first two years, so that you will be well on your way to developing the characteristics you need to enter professional life. The steps spelled out here are straightforward and many are easy to accomplish.

In most cases, the Career Center offers a variety of services to help you along the way. Let us know if you need assistance: email careercenter@hanover.edu.

FIRST YEAR: ORIENTATION

Developing your Intellectual Skills:

- Study. Keep up with your reading.
- Seek help from your professors and get to know them.
- Explore your academic interests through your LADRs and intro courses.
- Choose your major based on your academic interests; for help, attend the Career Center's "Thinking about Your Major" workshop.

Developing your Sense of Purpose:

- Try out various clubs and activities; experiment to discover your interests.
- Begin to consider or clarify possible career goals through career counseling and interest inventories at the Career Center.
- Learn about study abroad and City Semester program options.

Developing your Marketable Qualifications:

- Find a campus job or part-time local job.
- Locate a summer job; ask your supervisor for chances to develop marketable skills over and above your assigned tasks.
- Volunteer for a cause or with a group you care about.

Developing your Résumé and Cover Letter:

- Drop your template format and start fleshing out a résumé that is targeted to a specific field. Difficult? Come to the Career Center for help.
- Pick up a *Résumé Guide* and *Cover Letter Guide* from the Career Center.
- Attend a Résumé workshop.

Developing your Interview Skills:

- Apply for campus jobs and extracurricular positions; seek opportunities to get interview practice.
- Attend an interviewing workshop.

Developing your Networking Skills:

- Attend Student-Alumni Networking Day (SAND) and the Graduate and Professional School Fair to begin talking with alumni professionals and/or grad school recruiters about their fields.

Developing your Strategic Search Skills:

- Access your profile on NACELink (<https://hanover-csm.symplicity.com/students>) and search for jobs on the system. If you don't find what you are seeking, contact the Career Center to help you target your field.
- Visit the Office of Experiential Learning about running a summer job search.

Developing your Professionalism and Ethics:

- Through your clubs, class projects, and jobs, develop a strong work ethic and pride in everything you undertake, no matter how mundane it may seem.

SOPHOMORE YEAR: EXPLORATION

Expanding your Intellectual Skills:

- Study! Grad schools note improvement in GPA over time.
- Work hard to develop long-term academic skills in writing, public speaking, analysis, and research.
- Discuss possible majors with your advisor.
- Make plans to study abroad; visit the Study Abroad Office.

Expanding your Sense of Purpose:

- Actively participate in clubs that interest you; reflect on your feelings about them.
- Are you unclear about potential career paths that match you? Take advantage of career counseling and interest inventories at the Career Center.
- Learn from alumni through SAND and career panels; attend recruiter presentations.

Expanding your Marketable Qualifications:

- Identify and join activities that allow you to develop skills related to your career goals.
- Are you interested in a City Semester Program in Philadelphia, Washington or Chicago during your junior year? Start your application in the fall.
- Try to find a campus job that allows you to gain skills related to your career field.
- Find a related summer job or internship. Volunteer.

Expanding your Résumé and Cover Letter:

- Keep track of everything you are involved in on a “core” résumé; it’s easier to update as you go and will help you remember your skills and experience later.
- Learn about the skills employers are seeking through O*Net (onetonline.org) to start developing a résumé tailored to your goal or interests.

Expanding your Interview Skills:

- Practice responding to: “Tell me about yourself,” making your comments related to your interests.
- Learn to prepare for interviews using the *Art of Interviewing Guide* available from the Career Center; attend an interviewing workshop.

Expanding your Networking Skills:

- The Career Center can connect you with over 8,000 alumni professionals who can answer your questions about their fields and give you tips to prepare to enter them.
- Participate in SAND; attend the Graduate and Professional School Fair.

Expanding your Strategic Search Skills:

- Search for internships on NACElink (<https://hanover-csm.symplicity.com/students>).
- Visit the Office of Experiential Learning for tips and strategies in finding an internship in your interest area and location.

Expanding your Professionalism and Ethics:

- Practice professional communication in all emails to faculty and staff, replying promptly, following instructions, and using proper grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

SAMPLE FOUR- YEAR PLAN

For Juniors and Seniors:

Continue to build your Professional Competencies

It's not too late!

By graduation, your goal should be to have acquired the competencies outlined here, which are characteristics you need to enter professional life. The steps spelled out here are straightforward and many are easy to accomplish.

In most cases, the Career Center offers a variety of services to help you along the way. Let us know if you need assistance: email careercenter@hanover.edu.

JUNIOR YEAR: REFINEMENT

Broadening your Intellectual Skills:

- Study! Grad schools note improvement in GPA over time.
- Continue taking major courses and electives to support your goal, as appropriate.
- Gain a fresh perspective through off-campus study.

Deepening your Sense of Purpose:

- Make tentative career decisions: ask for career guidance.
- Contact alumni in your chosen field for informational interviews, job shadowing or an externship.

Further Expanding your Marketable Qualifications:

- Continue to develop job skills through campus and community work.
- Find a related internship.
- Identify and try to build the skills needed in the field you plan to enter.
- Exchange quantity of extracurriculars for quality; join the leadership.

Targeting your Résumé and Cover Letter:

- Attend a résumé writing workshop.
- Proofread your job search documents carefully and bring them to the Career Center for review.

Practicing your Effective Interview Skills:

- Apply for campus jobs and extracurricular positions; seek opportunities to get interview practice.
- Attend an interviewing workshop.

Improving your Networking Skills:

- Attend the LinkedIn workshop and a Networking workshop.
- Network; earn a good reference.
- Find a mentor through your internship.
- Attend SAND in March and seek out alumni mentors.

Enhancing your Strategic Search Skills:

- Investigate graduate schools; attend the Grad School Fair; review admissions materials, websites, etc.; visit schools over summer; attend a Career Center workshop on GRE prep.
- Access and update your NACELink account (<https://hanover-csm.symplicity.com/students>).
- Attend a career fair: sign up in the Career Center.

Practicing your Professionalism and Ethics:

- Practice professional communication in all emails to faculty and staff, replying promptly, following instructions, using proper grammar, etc.
- Be a contributing and enthusiastic partner in group projects and encourage the same from your team members.

SENIOR YEAR: CULMINATION

Practicing your Intellectual Skills:

- Don't let "senioritis" impact your grades. Push through to finish your academic career on a strong note.
- While studying for comps, appreciate the intellectual skills you've developed and recognize your mastery of them in order to help you to communicate them to potential employers.

Continuing to Clarify and Test your Sense of Purpose:

- If you are unsure about your career choice, contact the Career Center for career guidance and support.

Further Expanding your Marketable Qualifications:

- Train others to take your clubs' leadership roles.
- Continue to build the skills needed in the field you plan to enter.

Polishing your Strong Résumé and Cover Letter:

- Attend a Writing Résumés and Cover Letters workshop.
- Pick up a Résumé Guide; update your résumé, get it critiqued at the Career Center, and upload it to NACELink (<https://hanover-csm.symplicity.com/students>).

Continuing to Practice your Effective Interview Skills:

- Attend an interviewing workshop.
- Review the *Art of Interviewing* guide and request a mock interview from the Career Center.
- Participate in on-campus interviews.

Expanding your Networking Skills:

- Attend the Job Search and Networking Strategies workshop.
- Attend SAND in March.
- Find an alumni mentor through the Career Center to plan job search strategies.
- Participate in on-campus recruiting events.

Implementing your Strategic Search Skills:

- Attend the Graduate/Professional School Fair and Career Center workshops.
- Take your grad school entrance exam – the scores last for 5 years.
- Start job and grad school applications early; they're time-consuming!
- Participate in on-campus recruiting and attend related career fairs; research employers.
- Log in to your NACELink profile and update your profile.
- "Flip your search:" identify where you want to work and plan a strategy to do so.

Practicing your Professionalism and Ethics:

- Make positive, professional behaviors a daily habit.
- Practice professionalism in your group projects and presentations; show initiative and accept responsibility, owning mistakes and working toward a solution.

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

Intellectual Skills: The ability to think critically, to communicate effectively in oral and written form, to conduct sound research and analysis, and to use technology effectively; and the ability to clearly describe or demonstrate your mastery of these skills to recruiters.

Sense of Purpose: The ability to articulate your life goals and direction and how these might be expressed through an occupation.

Marketable Qualifications: The development of transferable work skills and knowledge through academics, work experience, internships, and extracurricular activities.

Strong Résumé and Cover Letter: The ability to research the demands of the targeted field and to develop documents that demonstrate related and valued strengths.

Effective Interview Skills: The ability to clearly describe your skills and background relative to the targeted job or graduate school program to a representative of the organization.

Networking Skills: The ability to interact and connect with other people to exchange information, develop contacts, and find career or graduate school opportunities.

Strategic Search Skills: The ability to plan and conduct an effective, sustained search for employment or graduate school admission.

Professionalism and Ethics in the Workplace: An understanding of and the ability to meet the work world's behavioral expectations.

CAREER CENTER SERVICES

Career Guidance

Interest and personality inventories

Assistance in choosing a major

Résumé and cover letter critiques

Grad school assistance and test prep

Job search strategy assistance

Career and grad-school workshops

Four annual career fairs

Career-related guides

On-campus recruitment

City Semester Programs

Annual grad school fair

Student-Alumni Networking Day

Alumni networking leads

Alumni mentoring (for seniors)

Career Center website

NACELink job board

Career Currents e-newsletter

HANOVER COLLEGE CAREER CENTER

Lynn Hall, on left in first floor lobby • Open Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM • 812-866-7127
careercenter@hanover.edu • <http://careercenter.hanover.edu>