

UF

Eight Semester Career Readiness Guide

Career Planning Options for your Eight Semesters at the University of Florida

Planning for life after graduation can be overwhelming and sometimes confusing, but it is also exciting to think about the possibilities. This Eight Semester Career Readiness Guide provides important action items to empower your career development. Use the following eight semester plan to guide the choices you make academically and professionally.

Remember, this list is just a place to get you started. Careers are flexible and adaptable, so you may need to make adjustments or revisit certain action items throughout your time in college.

The Career Connections Center (C3) can provide individual support through Career Planning activities including one-on-one appointments, drop-in visits and group programs. The C3 is here to help you bridge inspiration to action.

Visit career.ufl.edu for more information and to access a comprehensive library of resources.



Semester One

Access your Gator CareerLink account during your first month of classes to gain immediate access to schedule Career Planning Appointments, view the calendar of events, as well as explore job and internship options via the job board. You can access Gator CareerLink here: career.ufl.edu/gcl

Identify your points of contact for your academic and career planning. Your C3 career coaches and your college's academic advisors are happy to help you plan your classes and activities at UF so you are prepared after graduation.

If you are unsure of your major, take the online assessment tool, CHOMP (Career Help Or Major Planning) at career.ufl.edu/chomp. You can also discuss your results with a C3 career coach if you need more information, clarification or next steps.

Attend the Majors & Minors Fair and chat with faculty and representatives from a variety of academic departments to learn more about the wide range of majors and minors offered at UF.

Participate in at least one meaningful experience (e.g. part time job, volunteering, research, student organization, shadowing, internship, informational interview). This will help you begin developing your career readiness competencies. If you choose not to participate this semester - be sure to identify opportunities for future involvement.

To learn more about competencies, visit: career.ufl.edu/developprofessionally.

Attend your first Career Showcase or another Career Fair to get ideas of career options and learn what employers are looking for in a UF student. Attending recruiting events early is essential. Talk to at least one employer to practice your professional communication skills. Attend one of our C3 sessions on how to navigate career fairs prior to the fair to ensure you are prepared.

Career Readiness Competencies

Communication

Teamwork

Critical Thinking

Sense of Self

Plan early for meaningful summer activities. You can attend the Summer Experience Fair or meet with an academic advisor to discuss summer courses to get started. If you are thinking about studying abroad over the summer, attend the Study Abroad Fair or meet with a Study Abroad Advisor to discuss program options, plans and deadlines early in the semester.

Repeat this step in the following semesters:



Come visit the Career Connections Center! Our 30,000-square-foot facility located in the Reitz Union is equipped with state-of-the-art conference and interview rooms and study spaces to serve all UF students.

Semester Two

Visit the Career Communities pages on career.ufl.edu to begin exploring your career interests. On the Career Communities pages, you will find tailored resources to help you connect your academic major and college to potential options to gain experience as a student. Explore specific career options and niche job boards to get ideas of how to prepare for your career path.

Continue to participate in at least one meaningful experience (e.g. part-time job, volunteering, research, student organization, shadowing, internship, informational interview) that will help you begin developing your career readiness competencies.

→ Continue in the same experience from last semester or try something new.

If you choose to continue the same experience, consider taking on more responsibility.

To learn more about competencies, visit career.ufl.edu/developprofessionally.

Repeat this step in the following semesters:



Make an appointment or visit drop-in hours for career planning. You should do the same for academic advising within your college.

Be sure to share any challenges or adjustments that need to be made to your eight semester plan.

You may also want to discuss opportunities for credit-bearing experiences (e.g. study abroad, internships, academic research)

Repeat this step in the following semesters:



Transition your high school resume to a college resume. By the end of this semester,

all high school involvement experiences (e.g. clubs, honor societies) should be removed from your resume. Learn how to communicate your transferrable skills via bullet points through the Career Connections Center's Express Drop-In and resume labs services. Review resume handouts at career.ufl.edu/resume, develop a draft, and work together with a C3 staff member to refine your work.

Attend Career Showcase or another career fair to continue exploring organizations or employers of interest. Meet with new employers of interest and revisit employers you connected with during Semester One. Plan to attend recruiting events and information sessions to learn about the organization and network with recruiters. Even if you are not looking for an internship or job in the immediate future, employers will remember students who engage with them early in their college career.

Repeat this step in the following semesters:



Semester Three

Conduct an informational interview with someone who is working in a job that interests you. Ask about their day-to-day responsibilities to see if that career sounds appealing to you. Informational interviews are a more personal way to learn about career options and begin building professional connections. The Career Connections Center can help you identify professionals who may be helpful to talk to, as well as help you prepare insightful questions to further your career exploration and networking.

Repeat this step in the following semesters:



Assess your personality, values, skills and interests through CHOMP. Reflect on whether these traits align with your academic and career plans. Talk to a career coach or a mentor to discuss these in further detail - they may provide additional insights for you!

Attend a C3 Career Conversation to learn more about career topics from your peers and Career Connections Center staff. Career Conversations are informal, small group conversations facilitated by a C3 staff member. The purpose is to discuss a variety of career planning topics and is a space for students with similar goals to learn from each other.

Attend Career Showcase or another Career Fair to meet with new employers of interest and revisit employers you connected with during previous semesters. Meet with new employers of interest and revisit employers you connected with during previous semesters. Plan to attend recruiting events and information sessions to learn about the organization and network with recruiters. At this point you have many skills and experiences that could be applied to potential internships and summer opportunities.

Repeat this step in the following semesters:



Complete the Career Readiness Check-In during Advanced Registration. The Career Readiness Check-In is a way for you to add to your customized plan for your time at UF and graduation plans. Here, you will also be introduced to additional tools and resources to help you feel prepared for life after graduation. You will receive emails regarding this process from the university.

Semester Four

Shadow a professional in your field(s) of interest to experience the work firsthand. Shadowing can provide you with an example of what your potential career path might look like. Shadowing also allows you to continue developing relationships and professional connections.

Take Gator Professional Series Online (GPS) to reflect on your professional identity, ideas for career paths and to learn about the steps to apply for meaningful experience like an internship.

You can find GPS here: career.ufl.edu/gps

Build your LinkedIn profile and assess your digital brand. LinkedIn is a great tool for researching different organizations of interest and connecting with other students and professionals with similar career interests.

Maintain relationships with the professionals you've met through career fairs or informational interviews. Ask your network to help you connect with other professionals and conduct an informational interview (in-person, via phone, or video-conferencing) with them. Consider connecting with UF Alumni through LinkedIn or visiting the C3 to find out more about building your network.

Log into Gator CareerLink



Identify your point of contact



Participate in a meaningful experience



Explore career options



Attend Career Showcase



Shadow a professional



Identify options for life after graduation



Search and apply for full-time jobs



Prepare for the interview process



Celebrate your accomplishments!



Semester Five

Revisit your professional documents (i.e. resumes, cover letters) and customize them for positions of interest. Connect your past experiences to the transferable skills needed to be a competitive applicant. Visit C3 Express Drop-In where coaches can help you market your past experiences to future positions.

Repeat this step in the following semesters:

6 7 8

Use LinkedIn to strategically establish relationships with others in your fields of interest. Update your professional connections about your progress at UF and your future plans. Add any projects or experiences from your coursework that relate to your career interests. You may also use LinkedIn to search for internships and job postings, or search for other UF alumni in roles you find interesting.

Repeat this step in the following semesters:

6 7 8

Search and apply for experiences related to potential career paths including internships, research, volunteering, shadowing or other work experiences. Remember, there are many ways to look for experience including Gator CareerLink, job boards, LinkedIn, recruiting events, networking opportunities, and asking your professional connections. Leverage several methods for finding experience. Learn more at career.ufl.edu/nextsteps.

Prepare for application and interview processes. Visit the C3 to practice mock interviews to learn to talk about the experiences you've gained while attending the University of Florida through transferrable skills and competencies. Importantly, practice talking about how each experience and your academic classes have prepared you.

Repeat this step in the following semesters:

6 7 8

Semester Six

Finalize your internship or experience search for the summer including accepting and declining offers. Career Connections Center staff can assist with your decision-making process. Remember, once you've accepted an offer for the summer, you should immediately withdraw from all other application processes and interviews.

Reflect on your experiences so far:

→ Choose to continue in the same experience from last semester or try something new that will help you enhance a different competency.

→ How is this experience preparing you for the work (or other experiences) you would like to pursue after graduation?

→ If you choose to continue the same experience, consider taking on more responsibility or assuming a leadership role. Think about the transferrable skills you will develop in each experience that could relate to your post-graduation plans. To learn more about competencies, visit career.ufl.edu/developprofessionally.

→ If you choose to pivot to different involvement - how will this experience prepare you for or help you define your post-graduation plans?

Make an appointment or visit drop-in hours for academic advising and career planning. Be sure to verify that you are on track for timely graduation. Discuss your successes and challenges. Your academic advisor and career coach can offer resources and tools specific to your situation.

Identify several options for your life after graduation to plan for your final year at UF. Check in with your career values and reflect on your past experiences to decide what paths make most sense for you.

If you are considering graduate or professional school, **research application deadlines for programs of interest.**

Many programs will require you to take specific examinations and obtain letters of recommendation before submitting your application. Think about who you will ask to write letters of reference on your behalf. Choose professional and academic contacts who know you well, can speak to your skillset, and give you a strong endorsement. As a courtesy allow at least three to four weeks for them to prepare the letters and be sure to thank them after.

Explore professional development opportunities including professional associations, webinars, conferences and/or leadership development programs. These programs can offer great insight into your industry of choice and connect you to other current and future professionals.

Semester Seven

Reflect on your experiences so far.

Is there anything you would want to do differently? Are there changes you would like to make to your plan of action? Continue to come up with multiple options for life after graduation. Check-in with your career coach to talk more in-depth about your action plan and goals for after graduation.

Actively build and maintain your academic and professional relationships.

Connect with your career coach, academic advisor and faculty members. It is also important to check in with your other contacts including past supervisors, instructors, student organization advisors, and other professional connections. Inform them of your progress at UF and about your plans for the future. You may want to ask some of your connections for letters of recommendation. Choose professional and academic contacts who know you well, can speak to your skillset, and give you a strong endorsement. As a courtesy allow at least three to four weeks for them to prepare the letters and be sure to thank them after.

Search and apply for full-time jobs.

Remember, there are many ways to look for experience including Gator CareerLink, job boards, LinkedIn, recruiting events, networking opportunities, and asking your professional connections. Try to leverage several methods for finding experience- both passive and active approaches are important. Many employers make offers in the Fall semester for positions that begin the following summer. Learn more at career.ufl.edu/jobsearchguide.

If you receive a job offer, learn about accepting and declining offers.

Career Connections Center staff can assist with your decision making process. Remember, once you've accepted an offer, you should immediately withdraw from all other application processes and interviews.

Explore the logistics of what life will look like after graduation.

Attend the Adulting 101 workshop series to learn about relocation, budgeting, salary negotiation and your first 30 days on the job.

Semester Eight

Apply for graduation through One.UF.

Check-in with your academic advisor and career coach to finalize your action plan for graduation.

Finalize your job search. If you are still searching for full-time employment, continue to actively search for experiences. Attend Career Showcase or another Career Fair to actively meet with organizations or employers that have internship and job opportunities. Meet with new employers of interest and revisit employers you connected with in the past. Plan to attend recruiting events and information sessions to learn about the organization and network with recruiters. Ask about opportunities including how you can continue to prepare yourself for these opportunities in your last semester.

Consider your offers and options for after graduation.

Accept the offer that best aligns with your goals! If you receive a job offer, learn about accepting and declining offers. Career Connections Center staff can assist with your decision-making process. Remember, once you've accepted an offer, you should immediately withdraw from all other application processes and interviews.

Strategize your "exit strategy" from UF.

What will the first couple months after graduation look like?

Reflect on your experience and reassess any changes that need to be made to your personal career action plan.

Evaluate your personal network. Continue building and maintaining academic and professional relationships- connect with your career coach, academic advisor and faculty members. It is also important to check in with your other contacts including past supervisors, instructors, student organization advisors, and other professional connections. Inform them of your progress at UF and about your plans for the future.

If you choose to pursue graduate or professional education, complete all applications before the designated due dates.

The application process will likely require you to submit standardized exam scores, multiple letters of recommendation, a resume/CV, and a personal statement. Remember, the Career Connections Center can review your resume, CV, and personal statement to ensure that your application materials adequately present your experiences.

Consider joining the UF alumni association to continue to build your network in your new community.

Celebrate and reflect on your accomplishments and what's to come!

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