

## Getting Started: Finding Career Decision Making Resources



### Office of Career Development

Vassar College

Not sure about what you want to do with the rest of your life? Where do you even begin? By breaking the process down into small manageable pieces, you can make the task less overwhelming and more productive.

Basically, the career development process has three components:

#### **Understanding yourself.**

Through your courses, activities, work experiences, and personal relationships, you define your values and become aware of your skills, interests, preferences and strengths. This self-awareness can translate into career terms, giving you insight into what you can and want to do with your life.

**Expanding your knowledge about the world of work.** There are almost an unlimited amount of occupational choices available today, and there is any number of career fields that you might find appealing. The task at this stage is to explore careers and job functions and then determine how they fit with your interests, abilities, and values.

**Learning how to obtain employment.** This is actually the component many students think of first! It is critical to

know how to write a resume, develop a job search strategy, and interview well.

Your effectiveness as a job seeker depends on how well you understand yourself and the world of work. The more effort you can put into self-assessment and research, the better prepared you'll be for the job hunt.

#### **Resources**

*The Career Resource Library*  
The library is set up to assist you with the three basic phases of the career development process: self-awareness, career exploration, and obtaining job and internship opportunities. Self-awareness tools include books shelved under the light-blue "Career/Life Planning" sign.

For learning about career possibilities, we have an extensive collection of books, pamphlets, and periodicals. These career exploration resources are divided into nine categories: General career descriptions, Arts, Business (including travel and sports), Communications, Education, Health/Medicine, Law/Government, Public/Social Service, and Science/Technology (including Environmental Careers). The books in each category are color

coded, and pamphlets and periodicals are kept in boxes in the appropriate sections.

We also have color-coded sections of directories, graduate & professional school information, job search resources, and geographic information (domestic and international).

#### *Alumnae/i Advisors*

Talking with alumnae/i is another way to learn about careers. You can search the Vassar Career Advisory Network (V-NET) database to find alumnae/i and parents who can help you: learn more about a specific industry, occupation, or organization; get advice on how to "break into" or advance in a given industry; and/or explore graduate and professional school programs.

In order to access V-NET, you must first register online: Go to <http://aavc.vassar.edu/> and select the "Register" link in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Follow the instructions to register, choosing a user name and password when prompted.

#### *Online Resources*

You can find online help through our web site (<http://careers.vassar.edu>).

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## Career Brief: General Career Information

“Spotlight on Careers” is particularly useful for exploring a variety of career areas. We also have links to a number of other great informational sites, including a number of industry-specific and subscription-based resources.

### Employment Resources

Our website offers an extensive collection of employment links. (<http://careers.vassar.edu>) An extensive list of jobs and internships geared toward liberal arts students can be found on eRecruiting (Vassar.erecruiting.com), Vassar’s job and internship database.

Career Assistants are available during posted hours to help you with questions you may have about the library and resources on the web.

### Career Counselors

A career counselor can help you to clarify your goals, assess your interests, values, and skills, help you figure out what career areas might be good places for you to explore, help you develop a job search plan, answer technical questions you may have about the job search process, and help you find the resources you need. They are also good people to talk to if you are feeling overwhelmed or frustrated, and often they can help you come up with some strategies to make the process more manageable.

To meet with a counselor, just call or stop by the office to schedule an appointment.

### Timeline: What to do when

There is no strict schedule, because everyone's individual needs are different. However,

the earlier you begin focusing energy on career questions, the more comfortable you will be looking forward to life after Vassar.

The following four-year plan is a loose guide which may give you ideas on when to begin certain career activities. For a more detailed look at what to do when, see the Career Brief “*Four Year Timeline.*”

#### Freshman Year

- Attend first year specific programs and events
- Come into the office for assistance with choosing a major
- Learn how to locate summer jobs and internships by attending an eRecruiting Orientation and visiting the office

#### Sophomore Year

- Attend alumnae/i career programs both on and off campus
- Meet with your Faculty Advisor and a CDO staff member to discuss the relationship between your major and possible careers
- Participate in field work and/or internships for experience beyond the classroom
- Ask to take an interest inventory or personality style indicator (More about these in the Career Brief “*What Do You Want to Do?*”)

#### Junior Year

- Request references from professors and summer employers
- Explore post graduate possibilities in the U.S. and abroad

#### Junior Year, cont.

- Use the V-NET database to contact alumnae/i for informational interviews
- Look for internships and apply early for summer positions
- Discuss post-graduate options with faculty and CDO staff

#### Senior Year

- Take graduate and professional school entrance exams
- Attend a senior eRecruiting meeting and other special workshops for seniors; use eRecruiting and other resources to search for job postings
- Develop a job search strategy appropriate to your career interests
- Hone skills such as cover letter writing and interviewing
- Learn about SLAC and other recruiting events
- Use Hoover’s, Vault and similar tools to investigate companies or organizations of interest
- Participate in employer info sessions and recruiting events
- Set up a reference file

#### After Vassar

- Come in, call or email for individual consultations
- Use reference letter mailing service
- Complete follow-up surveys
- Volunteer as a V-NET advisor