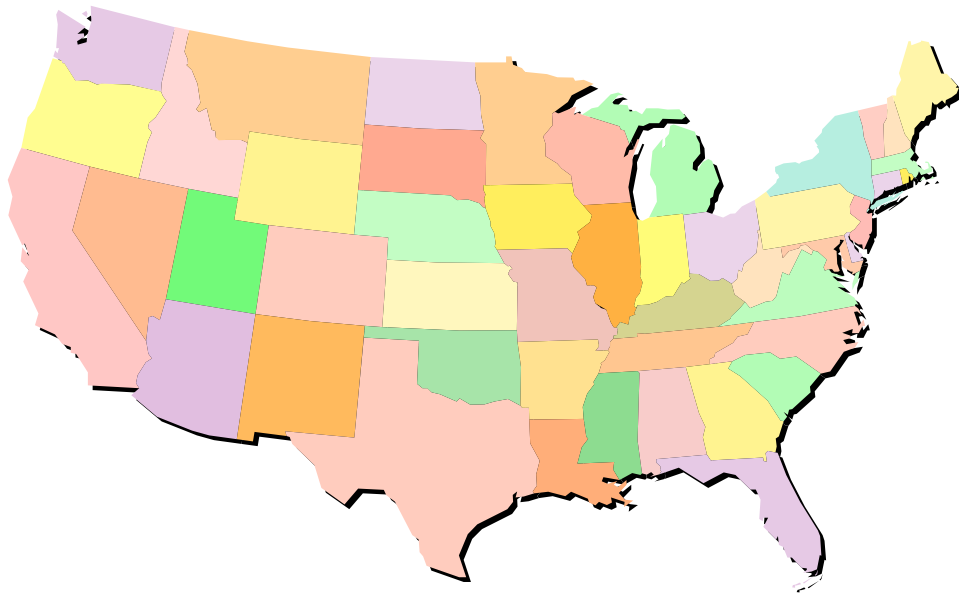


American Culture Career Chat



Office of Career Development

Vassar College

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<http://careers.vassar.edu>

Office Hours: Weekdays, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm and Wednesdays 7 – 9 pm

Steps In Choosing A Career

First Step: Self Assessment: “Know Thyself”

1. Understand and relate your personality traits to career choices
2. Define your personal values
3. Determine your economic needs
4. Explore longer-term goals
5. Understand your skill base
6. Identify your preferred skill base
7. Express a willingness to improve

Strategies for self-assessment may include meeting with a Career Counselor, taking interest inventories such as the Strong Interest Inventory or the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, or working through the exercises in any one of a number of books in the CDO library, including *What Color Is Your Parachute*.

Second Step: Research Career Options

Once you have established a base of self-knowledge, the next step is to create a knowledge base of opportunities available and begin the your interests to a career.

Strategies for researching career options include:

- Informational interviewing and networking with professionals in areas that may be of interest to you
- Talking with Vassar alumnae/i and utilizing V-NET
- Utilizing job listings through eRecruiting and in the CDO
- Surfing the Internet for career options and information—including Spotlight on Careers, CareerSearch, and Vault.com
- Participating in internships or job-shadowing experiences
- Scanning job listings for positions that sound interesting
- Joining and attending professional organizations or association meetings, conferences, and networking opportunities
- Reading trade journals

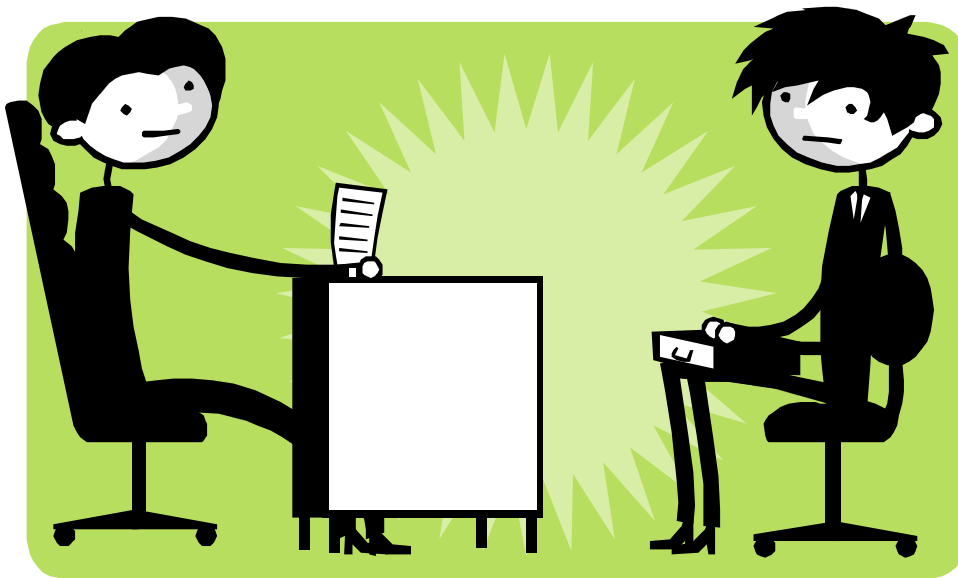
Next Step: Job Search

A job search involves:

- Creating a strong resume and cover letter
- Developing lists of contacts and target organizations
- Applying for positions
- Interviewing
- Doing follow-up

Career Counselors here at the CDO are ready and available to assist you through the entire process. The Career Development Office library and website also contain various handouts, books, articles, journals, etc. that could aid you in this process.

Job-hunting takes time and energy! This varies, of course, depending on the field, preparation, and dedication of the job seeker. Geographic flexibility also significantly impacts one's job search. Many occupations today require a college-educated individual who can write and speak well, solve problems, learn new information quickly and work well with others on a team. This means that college graduates use their education in a wide variety of fields, and your future career may relate more to your personal career interests, work values, and transferable skills than any specific academic major.



What About Graduate School?

<http://careers.vassar.edu/advice-graduate-school/>

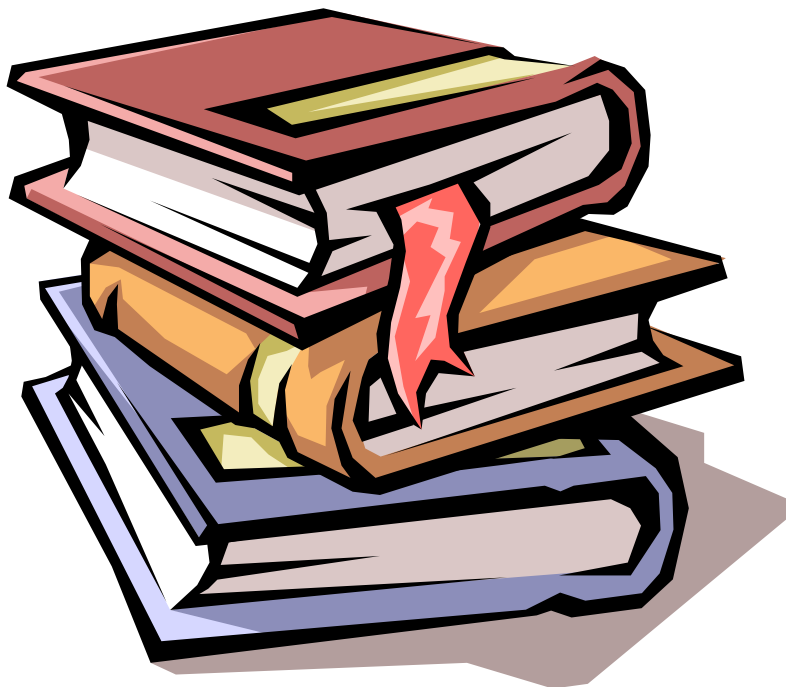
The reasons for continuing one's education in graduate school can be as varied and unique as the individual. Many continue their studies at an advanced level because they simply find it difficult to end the educational process. They love what they are learning; they want to learn more and continue their academic preparation. Others go on to graduate school for purely a practical reason: their area of interest requires an advanced degree.

It is important to carefully consider your reasons for going to graduate school. Graduate school involves additional time away from the employment market, a high degree of critical evaluation, significant autonomy as you pursue your studies, and a considerable financial expenditure. For some students in doctoral programs, there may be additional life choice issues, such as relationships, marriage, and parenthood that may present real challenges while in a program of study.

Think about the following questions when making this decision:

- Are you postponing tough decisions by going to school?
- Have you done some “hands-on” reality testing?
- Do you need an advanced degree to work in your field?
- Have you compared your expectations of what graduate school will do for you with what it has done for alumni of the program you are considering?
- Have you talked with people in your field to explore what you might be doing after graduate school?
- Are you excited by the idea of studying in the field you have in mind?

Graduate school is NOT a career choice—it is a tool to reach or advance your career goals. Be sure to ask yourself why you are going to graduate school and what you want to do with the degree.



American Culture Alumni Career Choices

Here is a sampling of the many career paths Vassar alumnae/i have pursued with their undergraduate degree in American Culture (may have pursued further education). Some of these career choices are closely related to their major, while others are not. If you would like to talk to alumnae/i and ask them questions about their careers, feel free to use the V-NET database through the AAVC website at <http://www.aavc.vassar.edu>.

Landscape Design/Horticulture, Landscape Gardener, self-employed, Class of 1976

Legal Association/Foundation, Attorney/Counsel, Class of 1989

Health Association/Foundation, Analyst for the National Human Genome Inst., Class of 1988

Social Change/Human Rights, Executive Director of the OPAL Community Land Trust, Class of 1984

Museums, Curator of Education & Public Programs at the Litchfield Historical Society, Class of 2001

Journalism (print), News Assistant in the Editorial Department of the New York Times Co., Class of 1994

Education/Publishing, Editor/Director of Student Surveys for the Princeton Review, Class of 2003

Education – College/University, Professor and Academic Tutor at Parsons New School for Design, Class of 1990

Federal Legislative Government, Chief Federal Lobbyist for Governor Tim Kaine, Class of 1992

CDO Library Resources for American Culture Majors

The following books and many more can be found in the CDO Library:

Advertising Career Directory by Bradley J. Morgan, ed., 1995.

Book of U.S. Government Jobs, The by Dennis V. Damp, 2002.

Career Opportunities in Politics, Government, & Activism by Joan Axelrod-Contrada, 2003.

Discover America Directory by Henry A. Rose & Stanley Alperin, 1997.

Film and Video Career Directory by Bradley J. Morgan, Joseph M. Palmisano, 1994.

Government Job Finder, by Daniel Lauber, Deborah Verlench, 2000.

Guide to Homeland Security Careers Donald B. Hutton & Anna Mydlarz, 2003.

Hoover's Handbook of American Business by Nancy Regent, 2003.

Marketing and Sales Career Directory by Bradley J. Morgan, ed., 1992.

Politics in America by Jackie Koszczuk & Amy H. Stern, 2005.

Radio and Television Career Directory by Bradley J. Morgan, 1993.

American Culture Related Websites

Vassar College Department of American Culture: <http://americanculture.vassar.edu/>

General

American Studies Association:

<http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/asainfo.html>

American Studies Electronic Crossroads: <http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/>

American Studies Network:

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/eas/centres/miller/asnetwork.shtml>

British Association for American Studies:

<http://www.baas.ac.uk/resources/asib/asibdets.asp?ordernum=8069&head=8068>

Guide to American Studies Resources: <http://asa.press.jhu.edu/gasr/nlist.html>

U.S. Department of Justice: www.usdoj.gov/

Vassar Library Resources:

<http://library.vassar.edu/research/guides/readingrooms/americanculture.html>

Law

American Bar Association: <http://www.abanet.org>

Association for Legal Career Professionals: <http://www.nalp.org/>

Law School Admission Council: <http://www.lsac.org/>

National Federation of Paralegal Associations: <http://www.paralegals.org/>

Occupational Outlook – Lawyers: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos053.htm>

Occupational Outlook – Paralegals and Legal Assistants:

<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos114.htm>

Public Administration

American Association of Political Consultants: <http://www.theaapc.org/>

American Federation of Government Employees: <http://www.afge.org/>

American Foreign Service Association: <http://www.afsa.org/>

American Political Science Association: <http://apsanet.org/>

American Society for Public Administration: www.aspanet.org/

Federal Jobs.Net: <http://www.federaljobs.net/federal.htm>

International City/County Management Association: <http://www.icma.org/>

Jobs from FedWorld: <http://www.fedworld.gov/jobs/jobsearch.html>

National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration:

<http://www.naspaa.org/students/students.asp>

*Opportunities in Public Affairs:

<http://www.brubach.com/opawebversion3/opa.htm>

Partnership for Public Service:

<http://www.ourpublicservice.org/workforusa/workforusa.htm>

Public Policy Job Links: <http://www.movingideas.org/>

United States Office of Personnel Management: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

CDO Resources: <http://careers.vassar.edu/resources/>

*Please refer to the updated CDO password sheet to access the site.

Graduate School Information

CDO Graduate School Career Briefs: <http://careers.vassar.edu/downloadable-handouts/>

CDO Website for Graduate Schools: <http://careers.vassar.edu/advice-graduate-school/>

GradProfiles: <http://www.gradprofiles.com/>

Gradschools.com: <http://gradschools.com/>

Peterson Guides to Graduate and Professional Schools: <http://www.petersons.com/>

PhD Info.org: <http://www.phdinfofind.org/>

*Foundation Center Grants To Individuals: <http://gtonline.fdncenter.org/>

Internships

eRecruiting: <http://vassar.erecruiting.com/er/security/login.jsp>

You must attend an eRecruiting orientation with the CDO before you can access the site.

*National Internships.com: <http://internships.com/accessPremium.cfm>

*Internships USA: <http://www.internships-usa.com>

General Career Websites

*Career Search: <http://www.careersearch.net/vassar/>

eRecruiting: <http://vassar.erecruiting.com/er/security/login.jsp>

You must attend an eRecruiting orientation with the CDO before you can access the site.

*Going Global: <http://online.goingglobal.com>

*LACN (Liberal Arts Career NetWORK) Job/Internship Database:

<http://www.lacn-group.org/>

*MonsterTrak: <http://www.monstertrak.monster.com/>

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

Princeton Review's Guide To Your Career: <http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/>

Riley Guide: <http://www.rileyguide.com/>

*Spotlight On Careers: <http://www.spotlightoncareers.org/>

Vassar College Career Development Office: <http://careers.vassar.edu/>

*Vault.com: http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp?parrefer=397

Venture: http://www.theventureconsortium.org/public_interest/exploring.php

Wetfeet: <http://www.wetfeet.com/>

*Please refer to the updated CDO password sheet to access the site.