

College Road Map

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The first essential step in taking personal responsibility as you pursue a college degree requires that you begin to create a plan for the next two-four years. As you think about the next two to four years, the following checklist will prove helpful to you in terms of planning the key activities you may want to do each year to prepare for your life after college. This document is designed to work as a guide toward your college success. Feel free to add additional items that may pertain to your individual college journey.

First-Year (College Freshman): Acclimating Yourself to College Life

- Set goals for the year.
- Get to know yourself and how you fit into college life.
- Explore your academic and extracurricular interests.
- Locate and visit important campus resources and offices (financial aid, student life, academic/tutoring services, registration, disability services, campus security, computer lab, health center).
- Adjust to your new environment and the freedom/responsibility that goes along with it.
- Assess your study skills and habits; improve them if they need work.
- Figure out the differences in the academic demands from your previous school and find resources that will contribute to your success.
- Explore clubs and organizations that interest you.
- Talk to other students for advice about their majors, classes, and professors.
- Start to become aware of people in roles who are doing work that is interesting to you.
- Consider a job, an internship or a volunteer experience in an area that interests you.
- Begin researching career and major possibilities. Establish a strong relationship with career services and find out what insights they provide on career direction.
- Decide on your degree program/determine your major. Create your academic plan for the time you are at Central Piedmont, including the courses you will take each semester.
 - If transferring, begin researching prospective four-year colleges and admissions information. Meet with your advisor to explore requirements for transfer to a university and your course schedule for next semester.
 - If applying to an AAS program that has an application process, research the program requirements and application deadlines.

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Second/Third Year: Preparing for Careers/Networking

- Set goals for the year related to internships, volunteering, shadowing, or summer jobs.
- Learn how to network and cultivate mentors. Start attending networking events. Create a tracking system for your contacts. Attend career fairs and workshops and start making contacts.
- Conduct informational interviews with people working in career fields that interest you.
- Get more invested in leadership opportunities and extracurricular activities. Find out what organizations related to your career or major exist. Consider running for an executive position within an organization.
- Start exploring service learning and volunteer opportunities. Get hands-on experience by using your breaks and vacations to volunteer and intern.
- Keep a journal of your experiences and the skills you are gaining while in college.
- Meet with your faculty advisor to make sure you are on schedule to graduate, and you have met all degree requirements.
- Apply for graduation at Central Piedmont.
- If transferring:
 - Conduct campus visits for top college transfer choices.
 - Decide on the transfer colleges you will apply to.
 - Consider a minor if that will assist in your career.
 - Plan living arrangements for next year.
- Prioritize your interests and begin creating your career marketing plan. Build a portfolio.
- Continue to conduct career research. Target and research potential employers or companies and areas in which you wish to pursue your career.
- Talk to prospective employers about jobs and internships and be willing to accept non-paying positions.
- Improve your job search skills and techniques (communication, interpersonal, research, networking, interviewing).
 - Start working closely with career services to create a solid resume and get it out there.
 - Practice and improve your interviewing skills. Start working on your interview attire.
 - Update resume to reflect current experiences.
- Increase your networking skills.
- Start connecting with alumni in your field of interest.

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- Reassess your extracurricular activities. Look for more challenging opportunities.
- Plan your final semester and create a to-do checklist. This will help to minimize stress during your last term.

Final Year/Final Semester: Transitioning to Life After College

- Network and make the most of your college's career fairs, forums, and employment readiness workshops.
- Research potential employers. Identify relevant websites and professional associations. Read up on current trends in your specialty area. Develop a job search strategy.
- Visit career services to practice your interviewing skills and refine your resume.
- Polish up your interviewing attire. Visit the Clothing Closet for assistance if needed.
- Clean up your online image. Make sure you Google yourself and check your Facebook, Instagram, and other online profiles.
- Apply to graduate school if you are planning to go.
- Contact your references, get permission to use their names and obtain the correct contact information for them.
- Plan to make your transition to life after college. Where will you live? How will you get to work? What if the job you really want does not work out? What is your backup plan?
- Take your finals and graduate!