

SPS Post-baccalaureate Career Checklist

Post-baccalaureate students are at a variety of career stages, and have diverse professional goals. Wherever you stand in this spectrum, your post-baccalaureate academic program is an ideal time to reflect on who you are and where you want your Northwestern experience to take you. Furthermore, you should maximize your NU experience by exploring all the resources available to you.

The following lists contain things to think about, resources, and action steps that are useful to all SPS students. Work with your adviser to determine where you stand in your career trajectory, and which of these items are most appropriate to your situation.

Students in shorter term programs (4-5 courses, 2-3 quarters) should talk with their adviser at least once regarding their career development. Those in longer programs (6-12 courses, up to 8 or more quarters), can maintain an ongoing dialogue with their adviser throughout their program.

Professional Development

- Meet with your SPS adviser to learn about career services and resources
- Discuss your career plans with your SPS adviser. If you are currently employed, decide if you will remain with your current employer or if you will pursue other options.
- Develop or refine your resume and cover letter. Access SPS resume writing webinars to get you started
- Access CareerCat, Northwestern Career Advancement's (NCA) online career management resource, so you can learn how to use it and upload your resume
<http://www.northwestern.edu/careers/job-intern-prep/resources/careercat/index.html>
- Create your LinkedIn profile. Identify and join relevant NU & SPS LinkedIn groups

Explore Career Options

- Identify professional opportunities aligned with your interests, skills, values, and personality
- Research careers, industries, and employers using resources like Career Insider, Wet Feet, Vault, Hoover's, and company websites
- Decide if you want to attend graduate/professional school. If applicable, complete and submit graduate/professional school application materials at least one month prior to deadline (personal statement, transcripts, entrance exam scores, recommendations)

Build Your Network

- Have conversations with professors, personal contacts, and employers regarding your career next steps. Use informational interviewing as a way to gather more industry or employer information
- Develop a method for tracking your networking conversations (Excel is a great option)
- Learn strategies for identifying contacts who work for specific employers (such as using the LinkedIn alumni tool)
- Access SPS webinar on Networking Skills
- Identify mentors who support your career goals and professional development

The Job Search Process

- ___ Learn about recruiting strategies for employers from your industry of interest
- ___ Craft a sustainable job search routine that you can manage with your busy schedule, including checking websites, researching new employers, networking with new and old contacts, and actively sending out resumes/cover letters
- ___ Tailor your resumes and cover letters to each job opportunity and employer
- ___ Identify potential references and obtain permission to use their information in your applications for full-time employment or graduate programs
- ___ Apply for full-time positions as early as possible
- ___ Access SPS Webinar to learn strategies on negotiating a job offer