

Your LCAD Guide to Getting from College to Career

This guide will help you to prepare for your college years and your career beyond the campus.

For more tips visit the Career Services portal on my.lcad.edu and find LCAD favored sites for your job search, career development, and creative lifestyle!

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You are Your Brand

Resume

The transition from high school to college to the workforce is a big one. At every stage, you want to put your best foot forward. Your resume tells a story about who you are - it's important to document every milestone, from the dean's list award to the community service you did your freshman or sophomore year. These experiences contribute to your perceived success beyond your college years.

Tell your story

Paint a picture. You want employers to get a sense of who you are and what you've accomplished thus far. Have you made it into an honor society or dean's list? Go ahead and list those accomplishments; they will contribute to the bigger picture.

Be consistent

Make sure your resume stays clean and consistent throughout your college years. Keep it simple and pay close attention to things like spacing, indentation, bolding, font type, and size.

Highlight who you are

You are just at the beginning of really establishing who you are creatively. Make sure you keep a running list of all your skills, experience, and accomplishments. Your resume will be a direct reflection of who you are as a creative and individual. Consider how you want your brand to look and feel, then ensure that your resume reflects that as you continue to grow as a creative.

Portfolio

Whether you're applying for your first internship or a job after graduation, you need to start thinking about building a proper portfolio. The point of your portfolio is to show the employer your work, your resume and your personal brand. As you create your first portfolio, you should consider: Does it begin to highlight your best work, and does it represent your full potential as a creative?

Freshman Year

Start stepping out of your comfort zone - personally and professionally.

Freshman Year Timeline

1. Move-in
2. Orientation
3. Make friends
4. Visit your department advisor
5. Transition into college academics
6. Explore different minors
7. Form a study routine
8. Set personal and academic goals
9. Join a club/ industry affiliation
10. Learn about yourself
11. Create a resume
12. Practice Netiquette

Your Goals: Transition from high school to college

Leaving the comfort of home can be a scary yet exhilarating experience. It's important to make yourself comfortable with your new surroundings before you dive into the school year.

Your Concerns: Independence

Gaining that much-craved independence seems less glamorous when you realize you're officially in charge of your own survival. You're at a new school in a new town, and your first order of business is to make new friends! Feeling like you are part of a tight-knit community will be one of the most rewarding aspects of your college career, so getting out there and meeting new people should be a priority at this stage.

Your Challenges: Putting yourself out there

Starting college is daunting: you may not know anyone, you're in unfamiliar surroundings, and you're really on your own for the first time! Channel that fear of the unknown and challenge yourself to talk to a classmate or join a club around a topic that interests you.

Your Main Values: Taking advantage of it all

College exposes you to so much: freedom, new people, ideas, learnings, and experiences. Freshman year is your opportunity to soak in as much variety as you can - over time you'll narrow down your interests and start developing your major, minor, and eventually, career!

Your Wants: Find a community

A community is more than just a group of people living in a particular area. A community is a group of people we lean on when times are tough; our friends, family, and neighbors who are there for us when we need love, support and encouragement. Besides attending classes, see if there are any volunteer opportunities, school clubs or local meet-ups nearby to start meeting people who enjoy the same things you do.

1) Moving Day

Follow these tips to help you prepare for your day:

- Dorm essentials
- Stock up on cleaning supplies
- Use storage bins
- Check your school website for move-in policies
- Pack light
- Have a business-casual outfit on hand - you'll need it
- Get in-touch with your future roommate
- Decide who is bringing what in terms of shareable items
- Coordinate what times you will be moving in

2) Orientation

Orientation may sound like an obligation, but it's actually a great opportunity to learn almost everything you need to know before starting classes, and a great way to make new friends. As obnoxious as name tags are, and as uncomfortable as ice-breakers can get, orientation is a must-go.

3) Make Friends

This is your opportunity to make new friends. Go into college with a friendly and open mind. Be nice to everyone you meet and be as inclusive as possible.

4) Visit Your Advisor

Take advantage of your department academic advisor! They assist students in class planning, major and minor selections, and career and internship opportunities.

5) Transition Into College Academics

College teaching styles and academic demands are much different than high school. Many freshman courses move at a fast pace and are taught in lecture-style classes. Make sure you don't get left behind.

6) Explore Different Minors

In college, you can finally take classes simply for the sake of learning. Engage yourself with new material, follow your instincts, and use this opportunity to soak up as much knowledge as you can. Perhaps you're a graphic design major interested in working in fashion, or you're studying fine art and want to work with animation. Taking coursework in a specialized area will enhance your ability to obtain work in a particular field and advance your career goals.

7) Form A Study Routine

Self-discipline is a must in college. Many college students aren't as successful as they could be because they get distracted from what's most important - academics. You'll need to develop a study habit, so figure out what works best for you and stick with it. There is plenty of time for fun and new experiences, when your study time is scheduled.

8) Set Personal & Academic Goals

A key skill in achieving success at any age is learning how to set goals. Identify your short- and long-term goals and put them into writing. Think about what you'd like to accomplish, skills you'd like to hone-in on, and what connections you'd like to make during your college career.

9) Join a Club

Students who get involved in college will generally meet others with the same interests, find their niche on campus, and become more well-rounded.

10) Learn About Yourself

College is a time for finding yourself. It throws you into a whole new world, with new people, new responsibilities, and new opportunities. Embrace it and discover who you are and who you want to be.

11) Create A Resume

Though you may not have much experience yet, now is the time to start building your professional resume. You can start creating your resume by contacting the Career Services Office for an easy-to-follow template for filling in your professional, academic and volunteer experiences. You can also find how-to resources for structuring on my.lcad.edu under the Career Services section.

12) Practice Netiquette

Internet + etiquette = netiquette. Respect other people's time and bandwidth. Make yourself look good online - Spelling and grammar count! Always write thoughtful posts and keep your language clean.

Sophomore Year

Step out of your comfort zone - personally and professionally.

Sophomore Year Timeline

1. Branch out
2. Maintain friendships
3. Keep up with extracurricular activities
4. Attend Industry related events
5. Develop good communication skills
6. Explore study abroad opportunities
7. Research internship + job shadowing opportunities
8. Get a professional or academic mentor
9. Update your resume
10. Set up informational interviews
11. Reflect
12. Create a cover letter and portfolio site for applying to an internship

Your Goals: Step outside your comfort zone

Now that you've become more acquainted with your college or university, it's time to begin exploring what else it offers. Join new clubs, try some classes that may not have been on your radar, and begin looking further to settle upon a major by the end of the year.

Your Concerns: Avoid the sophomore slump

Although it may not seem imminent, it's important to keep in mind that you should be finding internships, looking into study-abroad and taking the right classes towards your major. All while maintaining your GPA and social life - so there's certainly no time for a slump!

Your Friends: Start your network

The friends you're with and the company you keep builds not only your social life, but your interactions through your classes and extracurricular activities as well. It helps to know and trust the community you are a part of, thereby developing connections to look back on in the future.

Your Wants: Feel accepted by your peers

Your sophomore year determines a large portion of your stability, which will be the foundation for the years to come. Feeling accepted will be one of the most important steps.

Your Challenges: Expanding your horizons

It's difficult to break out of your comfort zone, but in doing so you'll be able to find new inspirations and ways to prepare yourself, all while growing your personal network.

Your Main Values: Maintain your community.

1) Branch Out

This could mean looking into clubs you have never considered, taking classes that don't necessarily pertain to your major, and expanding your community and connections.

2) Maintain Friendships

You've just spent your first year meeting people and making friends; now the important part is maintaining those relationships with professors, mentors and upperclassmen. Going out of your way to dedicate time to your friendships, both at school and from back home, will be a test of time-management, but will ultimately be worth all the effort.

3) Keep Up With Extracurricular Activities

LCAD has club events that take place at the beginning of each semester. Exploring the fairs, asking questions, and finding out about groups at your school that spark your interest could inspire you to pursue new activities and hobbies. It's a good idea to look in to several extracurriculars before settling on one or two.

4) Attend Industry Related Events

As someone who is looking into an artistic or creative career, finding your foothold in creative experiences is key. This could mean talking to your teachers and advisors for advice or researching and attending career related events to build your network. Industry clubs and organizations help you get acquainted with creative professionals whose work is receiving recognition so you can get a sense of which skills you'd be developing during your education.

5) Develop Strong Communication Skills

This could mean communication with your peers, friends, professors, advisors and the people you anticipate talking to at events and interviews. The first impression leaves quite a mark, and honing that skill is the first step in developing communication skills. What will help you excel and move to the next level is your ability to sell yourself and your work. In other words, you should start early on being able to market yourself to people effectively.

6) Explore Study Abroad Opportunities

There are many study abroad programs, and you should find the one that would best serve your major while providing you with an amazing experience. It's a good idea to talk not only with your mentor/advisor, but also with students who have experienced study abroad first-hand.

7) Research Internships + Job Shadowing Opportunities

It's never too soon to start thinking about internships and job shadowing opportunities as you continue to maintain your schoolwork. Utilizing your resources could be the way to start: Look into your school's recommended programs and connections. Through internships and job-shadowing programs, you can begin to gain real-world knowledge and build experience.

8) Get A Professional or Academic Mentor

Finding your footing, making life decisions, and taking steps for your future career is more than difficult, but not something that must be done alone. Finding a mentor or someone to confide in that knows about your area of interest is a good idea.

9) Update Your Resume

Throughout the excitement of the year, it can be easy to leave responsibilities on the backburner. It's important to maintain your resume and keep adding to and editing its content. This way, if you need to send it out to jobs, internships, or job shadowing programs, it will be easily accessible.

10) Set Up Informational Interviews

Setting up personal interviews with people in professions you want to learn more about will build experience in the working world and expand your personal network. This is a gradual process, so it's good to get an early start in your sophomore year.

11) Reflect

As you exit your sophomore year, it's time to reflect on your first two years of college and how they will ultimately shape your junior and senior years. You need to start thinking about classes that will round out your experience, show off your talents, and have marketability that will be appropriate for future employment.

12) Create a Cover Letter and Portfolio Site

These essential career tools accompany your resume as part of a job application providing further detail on how your skill set aligns with the role, what you can bring to the team and why you want the position. Both allow recruiters and hiring managers to develop a better understanding of your suitability for a position.

Junior Year

Plan for those amazing internship and post-graduation opportunities

Junior Year Timeline

1. Reassess goals
2. Attend career fairs and industry conferences
3. Apply for internships
4. Focus on time management
5. Go to networking events
6. Learn how to craft a professional email
7. Maintain relationship with your mentor
8. Take the right classes for your major
9. Update your resume
10. Reflect
11. Enter competitions/ exhibitions
12. Update online portfolio
13. Create an artist statement/bio

Your Goals: Get some experience under your belt

Consider how your college work experience might support your larger career goals, now is the time to start. Speak to your career advisors, start researching internship opportunities, or find a summer job that can help you gain useful real-world skills.

Your Concerns: Getting the job you want

Make sure you're the right candidate for the job by getting your resume and portfolio in order. Spend a considerable amount of time building your network, making new connections that can lead to potential career opportunities, and considering how you want to position yourself post-grad.

Your Main Values: Balance

Tackling the real world doesn't mean you should put your academic calendar or your social life on the backburner. Excelling in your classes should remain top of mind, while your work and professional obligations should come second. Use your free time to maintain friendships.

Your Wants: Making it to the finish line

You've probably spent a lot of time thinking about your dream career. And while that vision may change as you progress through life, taking the right steps now will ensure you land the career that's right for you.

Your Challenges: Time management

It's not easy to balance school, work, and social obligations. At this stage of your college experience, mastering prioritization techniques is critical to your well-being.

1) Reassess Goals

Now is a good time to determine whether the goals you set for yourself early on in your college career still apply. Speak with a career advisor or get advice from a mentor.

2) Attend Career Fairs + Art Business Conferences

Check out a few career fairs or creative industry conferences in your area. Career fairs are an excellent place to discover new organizations or companies that might be working in your field. Career fairs also provide the opportunity to polish your interviewing skills.

3) Apply to Internships

Internships are an invaluable opportunity to gain real-world experience. While there are a variety of opportunities within the creative fields, some of the world's most progressive companies offer accredited internship programs that look pretty good on a resume. Check out the internship programs offered by Blizzard, Disney, Facebook, and more.

4) Focus on Time Management

Staying on top of your game while remaining creatively stimulated isn't always easy. To make sure you're staying focused, establish some time-management procedures.

- Plan to work during your peak productivity hours
- Use online tools or apps to manage tasks
- Make sure you stay healthy with regular exercise and healthy eating

5) Go to Networking Events

While going to a networking event may make you feel a bit nervous, it's a great way to meet decision-makers and colleagues in your field. To prepare yourself, identify some useful talking points and questions to ask people you might meet. The idea is to present yourself as knowledgeable, engaged, and ready to learn from your peers.

6) Learn How to Craft a Professional Email

Your college career has likely been filled with opportunities to hone your writing skills. If you haven't yet mastered the art of email communication, make sure you do so before you enter the professional world. College students should practice keeping their professional emails brief and to the point.

7) Maintain a Relationship With Your Mentor

If you've identified a career mentor, make sure you keep in touch. Check in regularly, update them on your career progress, and get their feedback on your resume or portfolio. Make sure to ask them to keep you updated on any internship or career opportunities they or someone in their network might have available.

8) Take The Right Classes For Your Major

It's easy to get swept up in the excitement of classes that interest or inspire you, but most colleges and universities require students to take specific classes in order to graduate with a specific major. Usually, your school's career center will provide a course track for your major - make sure you revisit that plan during your junior year so you can start checking your required coursework off the list.

9) Update Your Resume

Throughout the excitement of the year, it can be easy to leave responsibilities on the backburner. It's important to maintain your resume and keep adding to and editing its content. This way, if you need to send it out to jobs, internships, or job shadowing programs, it will be easily accessible.

10) Reflect

Now is the time to review your college experience thus far and determine how you might apply it to the real world. Reflect on the courses you've taken, and the projects completed to determine the underlying narrative: Who are you as a creative professional? What are some of the consistent themes in your work? Be sure they're reflected in your bio and artwork portfolios.

11) Enter Competitions/ Exhibitions

Winning an art competition is a great achievement! It is something you can add to your resume, mention to collectors, and discuss in interviews. However, even just entering art competitions, whether you are selected or not, tells the story about you as an artist. Entering art competitions can be a strong start in proving to yourself that you can be serious about your art. It shows that you are willing to put effort into it, and you think that your art deserves to be recognized more widely.

12) Update Online Portfolio

Portfolios are a great way and essential to demonstrate the competencies you would list on a resume or talk about in an interview – they allow you to show and not just tell. During a job search, the portfolio showcases your work to potential employers. It presents evidence of your relevant skills and abilities.

13) Create Artist Statement/Bio

An artist statement is a piece of writing that helps the audience access or understand you and your artistic work. It may include your personal history, the symbolism you give your materials, or the issues you address. Your statement should include whatever is most important to you and your work. Keep it short and sweet while still being unique to you.

Senior Year

Find a creative community and start planning for your career

Senior Year Timeline

1. Start your job search
2. Prepare for Industry Open House
3. Manage your work and social life
4. Meet with an advisor to solidify graduation
5. Expand your network
6. Set yourself up for a job
7. Create a five-year plan
8. Graduate
9. Reflect on your college years
10. Edit and finalize an industry ready portfolio
11. Explore alumni learning opportunities + connections
12. Avoid senioritis

Your Goals: Finding a creative community + developing your career

Those visits you've been making to the Career Services Office? Time to kick them into high gear. Thinking about your career and pursuing opportunities with the support (not to mention the connections!) of your school is a huge asset that you won't have next year. Talk to your classmates, professors, and community to find out what they're doing to seek employment and prepare for post-grad life.

Your Concerns: Graduating without mishaps

Two semesters left of college until you're released into the working world. A daunting prospect for sure, and you're feeling the pressure to make sure nothing happens to jeopardize your post-college success. Now is definitely a good time to start the job hunt and clean up your social media!

Your Main Values: Re-integrating into the community

You spent your summer working, interning, or traveling, and now a big priority is getting back into the swing of things. Reconnecting with friends and your creative community are top of mind. Use that nervous, beginning-of-the-school-year energy to hit the ground running in your courses, clubs, and creative pursuits.

Your Wants: Get the most out of senior year

This is your last year of college, and you don't want to waste it. You feel pressure to spend time with friends and soak up the last bits of your college experience, and at the same time, take your academics seriously. By prioritizing your time wisely, it's possible to do both!

Your Challenges: Senioritis

Let's face it. Senior year is fun. You've made great friends, you've gotten basic requirements out of the way, and you're ready to finish up your college experience by celebrating... all year long. And you should but fight the urge to slack off. Live this senior year with intention and you'll set yourself up well for life after college.

1) Start Your Job Search

The first order of business for students embarking on finding promising art careers is to talk to your network. While you might not be sure where to start, look no further than your favorite professor. Use the bond with your professor to ask for their connections. Often professors have careers outside of their university role and can connect you with opportunities beyond the campus.

2) Prepare for Industry Open House (IOH)

IOH is an annual networking event on campus where representatives from the entertainment arts industry are introduced to new graduates seeking employment. Have your tools ready; resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile and online portfolio.

3) Manage Your Work + Social Life

Employing time management strategies wisely allows you to efficiently complete your schoolwork, leaving time for your social life without that nagging feeling that you've left assignments undone. You can also combine the social with your professional pursuits by joining a professional association or club on campus. That way, you can be networking and pursuing a post-college career while still meeting people and having fun.

4) Meet With an Advisor to Solidify Graduation

You've probably had that nightmare where it turns out you somehow totally missed a huge requirement you needed to graduate. Ever had the one where you're signed up for a class but didn't know it, so you never went? Yikes. Avoid these nightmare scenarios by meeting with your advisor early on to make sure you're on track to graduate, (and make any contingency plans if need be).

5) Expand Your Network

It's easy for students to get caught up in the typical web of final exams, term papers, club meetings, social events, and everything else that comes with being an undergrad. While these are certainly important tasks every student must tackle, it's important not to forget the impact building a network while in school can have on your creative career. Prioritize attending networking events in your prospective career field, set goals (talking to at least three people is a good start!), and arm yourself with an icebreaker to calm your nerves. Listen and learn from those you meet and follow up with these new contacts for additional conversations.

6) Set Yourself Up for a Job

- Polish your resume and clean up your portfolios - adding your latest works, accomplishments and skills.
- Go ahead and ask your professors and employers if they're willing to write you letters of reference when you apply for jobs.
- Practice your interview skills with a friend, your advisor, your career center, a parent, whoever! You've accomplished so much in college, and it's important to practice wording those milestones properly to wow prospective employers.
- Research the companies where you're interviewing - not just the blurb from their homepage, but a deeper dive, making sure you *actually* understand their business, their culture, and their mission.

7) Create A Five- Year Plan

Think about what you want to accomplish in the next five years. Of course, life throws you curveballs, ambitions change, and you may not want at 27 what you wanted at 22 but sitting down and planning for your future is a useful exercise. It helps you put into words your skills, inspirations, values, and goals, and can help keep you on track if you're feeling lost down the road.

Reports have stated that successful creative professionals have relied on strategic planning for their success. Being thoughtful and strategic when thinking about your career will provide personal touch points that can guide you on your career journey. List actionable and quantifiable goals and return to your plan once or twice per year to reflect, adjust, and prioritize.

8) Graduate

This needs no explanation. Congratulations! Have an amazing celebration and pat yourself on the back for four years (or more!) of hard work, lifelong friendships made, experiences you'll never forget, and knowledge gained from so much hard work and creativity.

9) Reflect On Your College Years

Use graduation to reflect on your college career. Not just for nostalgic sake, but to think about how it shaped and prepared you for what's next. Think about who you were when you entered college and who you've become - both as a person and a creative. Be proud of your accomplishments + growth and go confidently into the working world!

10) Edit and Finalize an Industry Ready Portfolio

In order to maximize your odds of standing out, you need a portfolio that can highlight your skills and accomplishments. It'll help you to land that dream job and get higher paying clients. Remember, people have limited attention spans, and you only want to highlight the pieces that best demonstrate your talent and experience—and showcase the type of work you want to be hired to do.

11) Explore Alumni Learning Opportunities + Connections

LCAD has a wonderful community of Alumni across the world who can act as great resources for you! Network with these alumni through LinkedIn or other channels to build connections. Attend alumni panels and ask questions about the fields you are interested in.

12) Avoid Senioritis

You'll have a lot of freedom senior year, and you may be tempted to phone it in as graduation approaches. However, you must schedule your time effectively and urge yourself to keep going. If you employ useful time management strategies, you'll have time to work and play. Leave your living space and go somewhere else, to the library, the studio, or a coffee shop, for example - so that work gets done in a designated space, and when you are home, you can relax!

Interview

It's super intimidating, and many of us don't know how to properly interview post-graduation. It's important to start building these tools whether you are transitioning into your freshman year or your senior year. Always be confident about the position you are interviewing for - internship or not, every interview will be a major learning experience.

Be present

Are you interviewing for that amazing internship at your dream company? Make sure you are listening actively throughout the interview. Show your confidence with direct, natural eye contact with the interviewer.

Plan for success

Remember that every interview from internship or entry-level position will be unique. Plan how you want to present your skill set or portfolio ahead of time.

Be confident, but not cocky

Employers like interviewees with confidence. Start the interview by greeting the hiring manager with a firm handshake, a smile, and strong eye contact. Remember to be sincere and express interest in the position while highlighting what makes you the right person for the job.

Keep Learning

Find more creative career development related information, resources + tips under the Career Services section on my.lcad.edu

Source:

College Resource Guide - All Years. Creative Circle. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.creativecircle.com/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/College_Resource_Guide_Full.pdf