



WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Graduate Student Development Plan

This outline is intended to help you with your career planning and graduate student development. Review the suggestions below and then develop your own path that will help you make the most of your academic, personal and career growth.

Remember that you should begin your thesis/internship/experiential learning opportunity planning early and visit the Career Services Office often to best prepare yourself for a great career after graduation!

Students often begin graduate school coming from different areas of life. Therefore, this development plan is only a guide and it is important that you establish an individual development plan that is more tailored to your needs and goals.

First Semester – 0-6 credit hours - REFLECT

- Reflect on values, interests, and personality
- Get to know professors and colleagues in your program
- Review course offerings (timeline)
- Get off to a good start academically – develop time management, study skills, and note taking skills.
- Begin thinking about graduate assistantships that could give you work and/or research experience and help offset costs

Second Semester – 7-12 credit hours – EXPAND

- Build relationships with professors and colleagues in your program
- Join a professional organization for your career field
- Research potential employers that might interest you and continue to attend career related programs such as career fairs and employer of the week programs
 - Identify who has the potential to fulfill your mentorship and sponsorship needs
- Identify areas of interest that you would like to learn more about and potentially conduct research to expand your knowledge base

Third Semester – 13-18 credit hours – CONNECT

- Establish a mentorship and a sponsorship
- Solidify your research topic in an area that is of interest and is meaningful to you
- Schedule an appointment with the career counselor to refine your resume and/or CV (and discuss internship interests)
- Review your digital footprint (social media) and begin developing your professional persona

Fourth Semester – 19-24 credit hours – PREPARE

- Consider who might serve on your thesis committee
- Attend Career Services events such as Dress for Success and Interview Preparation
- Schedule appointment with career counselor for writing CV/Resume Building Session/Writing a Cover Letter and establishing your E-Brand
- Review your values and interests and identify what you are looking for in a job

Fifth Semester – 25-30 credit hours – SEARCH

- Begin thesis/internship/experiential learning work
- Begin job search and/or PhD application process
- Attend the Ace the Interview session with Career Services
- Attend the Career and Employment Expo

Sixth Semester – 31-40 credit hours – APPLY

- Present thesis work at professional conferences locally, regionally and nationally
- Talk with individuals (professors, current or previous employers), mentors, and sponsors who will serve as your references and give them a copy of your resume
- Continue to update CV/Resume/Cover Letter
- Apply and interview for positions or PhD programs