

Career-Ready

A Four-Year College Checklist



It's not too early!

Open the doors for future opportunities

Congratulations! You're in college. The next four years have a lot in store for you. You'll learn new skills, pick up valuable knowledge, make lifelong friends, and grow as a person. This time of your life will also project you into your career. It's not time to sit back and let the current take you—you have to be proactive! That's why we made a straightforward four-year plan to help you make the most out of your college career.

Freshmen

Focus on your GPA. It's not just a number—many internship and job opportunities require you to have a GPA of at least 3.0, 3.25, or even 3.5. You don't want to miss out on any opportunities just because of a low GPA.

Join a club. Attend the Andrews club fair/ice cream social and check out all the clubs on campus. Pick one (or more, but don't get too carried away) that lets members get really involved. Keep in mind that you might want to hold a leadership position later on.

Spend time on your resume. Edit and update if you already have one, and make one if you don't. Check out our other article, *How to Write a Great Resume*, to get started. Don't have experience to put on your resume? Apply for a part time job on campus! Speak with professors, check out different departments, and apply as soon as you can, but don't overload your work hours (remember to focus on the GPA).

Volunteer. Volunteering is not only fulfilling and helpful to the community, it's also a great way to build connections, gain experience, and enhance your resume. Try to volunteer at least once a month. There are plenty of volunteer opportunities through clubs or various departments.

Create a portfolio. Understand what a portfolio is and start building it up. Don't worry if it seems unimpressive right now, you can add to it over the coming years. Put things such as relevant essays, projects, and awards (portfolios are especially important if you are in a creative field).

Learn professional dress and etiquette. Attend workshops and seminars (Andrews regularly hosts events like these). Practice professionalism in your interactions with professors in class and at your job.

Consider getting a senior student mentor. Having a senior student mentor, preferably in the same department as you, can be a great help. They will be able to give you valuable advice related to your studies as well as drop possibly life-saving tips (such as when to take certain classes and from whom). Check to see if your program already offers a freshman-senior mentorship program.

Attend a career fair. Andrews University has a number of career fairs you can attend. Dress professionally, bring copies of your resume, and don't be afraid to approach a representative to ask questions. Career fairs are a great way to network and learn about companies you may want to work at one day.

Plan for the summer. There are many things you can do over a summer to grow professionally and build up your resume. Some options include attending a study tour, volunteering, or interning. It's helpful to start planning or at least have an idea of what you would like to do over the summer early on.

Research industries and careers you might be interested in. The next four years will fly by, so start researching now! Talk with your professors, take note of which classes you especially enjoy or succeed in, and consider job shadowing a professional.

Sophomores

Keep focusing on your GPA. Keep up the good work (spoiler, this one will be here every year).

Find a part time job. If you haven't already, now is a great time to get a part-time job on campus. If you can, try to find one that relates to your major/what you want to pursue career-wise.

Schedule a one-on-one resume review. Meet with a professional who can give you valuable feedback on improving and updating your resume. Resume revision will continue throughout your college and professional career.

Look for leadership opportunities. Running for a position (even a seemingly small one) in a club that you joined freshman year is a great way to go about this. Be responsible and remember to have a good attitude.

Skills to learn:

1. How to write a cover letter
2. How to nail interviews (try to participate in at least one mock interview)
3. Personal branding

Aim to contact ten employers about internships. Internships are *super* important. Not only do they give you experience that you need, they also can act as a foot in the door for you to work at certain companies. Think about it, a company would rather hire someone who has already proven to be a valuable asset through a summer program than hire someone they don't actually know.

Apply for Sophomore internships. Plan to either work as an intern or hold a summer job in the field you are pursuing. There are quite a lot of sophomore internships out there. Hopefully contacting the 10 employers will get you somewhere, but if that doesn't work out, volunteer for the summer in your field.

Attend career fairs. Keep honing your speaking and networking skills at these events.

Keep researching career paths. You're about halfway through your college career already! Narrow down your list of fields/industries/careers to your top few and really dig deep into what these areas entail. Remember to keep an open mind.

Juniors

Continue keeping up your GPA. Now that you're in your third year, you know all about college classes and time management, right?

Build your professional online presence. Join LinkedIn and put some effort into building up your profile. Treat it like a social media version of your resume/portfolio. This is also a good time to remind you that employers *will* check other social media platforms you use. Make sure you leave a good impression.

Pursue leadership opportunities. Now that you've had the chance to prove how responsible and hardworking you were over the last two years (in club positions, etc.), it's time to invest the time and effort into becoming a great leader. Leadership is a skill that can always be improved: be humble and listen to constructive feedback.

Attend resume building workshops and other professional events. Take advantage of all the resources and events that Andrews offers for free to students. We want you to succeed! Don't miss out on these opportunities.

Attend career fairs. Take these seriously. Dress professionally and speak confidently about what you are pursuing in your career.

Land that internship. We've talked about this before, but it's even more important now. It should be easier to find internships as a junior, so really hit the internship searching hard.

Set up four informational interviews. You can learn so much more about the inside workings/daily life in an industry or career from an informational interview than you could by just reading articles online. Make sure to do ample research beforehand and go into the interview with an open mind, ready to learn.

Keep researching career paths. Has anything changed since last year? The informational interviews should provide some great insight, and shadowing someone could also be helpful.

Seniors

That's right, keep that GPA up. Don't let the senioritis hit too hard, you got this!

Take advantage of all career-related workshops, assemblies, and recruiting events. You never know what useful information you might pick up on or who you could meet.

Seek out a mentor. A great place to do this is on the Andrews Network. There, you will find many successful alumni who are excited to help students from their alma mater. Check out our articles *Making the most of the Andrews Network* and *Mentorship: What is it and how do I Start?*

Focus on leadership. Club positions and volunteer or outreach leadership are some great options for cultivating leadership skills and enhancing your resume.

Make a list of companies you want to work for and identify helpful alumni. Start working on this as early in the year as you can. Start with some extensive research to develop a good idea of what industries and companies you might be interested in working with someday. Next, identify Andrews alumni (the Andrews Network is great for this) or others in your network to have a conversation about what it's like working in that field. You'll want to have a list of questions ready before you start these conversations.

Set up a few informational interviews with people in industries/careers of interest. Don't underestimate how helpful these can be.

Start applying for jobs. They say time flies when you're having fun—it's already time to step out into the working world! There are many platforms you can use to apply for jobs. You can apply directly on company websites and search for job openings on sites such as the Andrews Network, indeed.com, linkedin.com, and many more. Your department is also likely to post openings as well. Don't be afraid to talk with recruiters or contacts within your network about open positions at your companies of interest. Keep your eyes and ears open!