


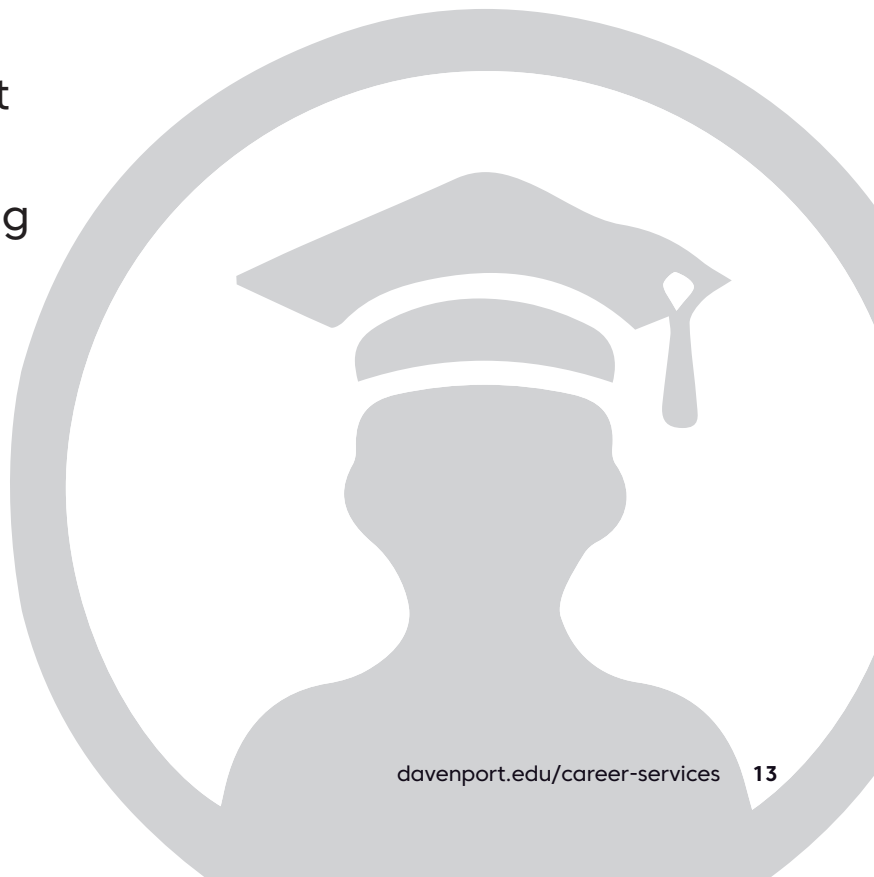




## Pick your career path

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# Choosing a major that fits your career path

## Use your interests and values

PathwayU is a great tool to help you discover careers that are appropriate for your major or to help you decide which major to choose. Go to [davenport.pathwayu.com](https://davenport.pathwayu.com) to create an account. Then you can take four assessments to help pair you with possible jobs and career paths.

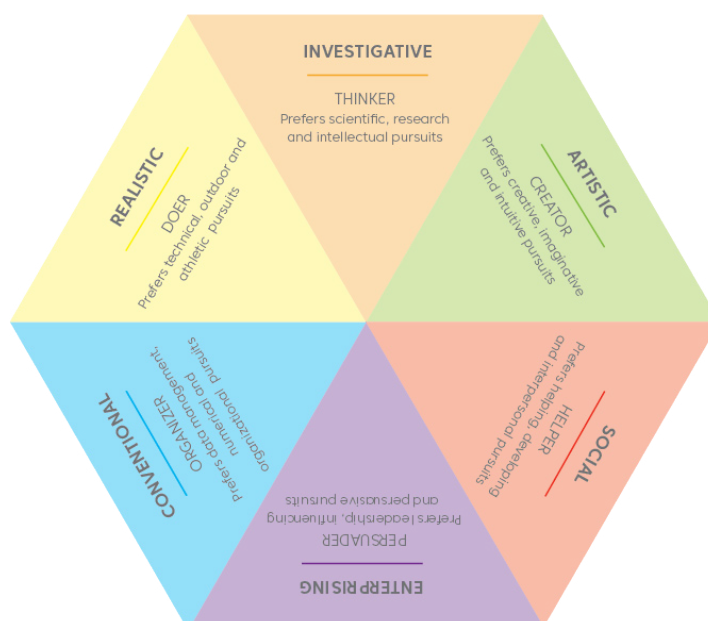
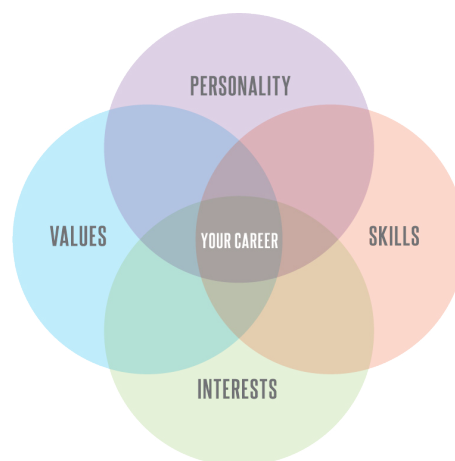


Contact your career coach for information and instructions regarding PathwayU or the Strong Interest Inventory.

## Choose your major

### Checklist

- ☐ You have completed and reviewed your PathwayU or Strong Interest Inventory assessment with your career coach
- ☐ You have conducted career research based on your assessment findings and personal knowledge of your interests and goals
- ☐ You have identified individuals in your careers of interest and conducted an informational interview or job shadow experience
- ☐ You have reviewed salary and outlook data and confirmed they meet your personal goals. See [onetonline.org](https://onetonline.org) for salary ranges
- ☐ You have reviewed the options for majors, concentrations and specialties found in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs for the year of your enrollment or current year
- ☐ You have met with your academic advisor to discuss and confirm your major and specialty or area of concentration. In addition, you have reviewed your Degree Plan, which allows you to lay out required courses, term by term
- ☐ You have met with Career Services to discuss your decisions and goals and to create your professional development plan
- ☐ You are aware of the Employment Guarantee as it pertains to your chosen major and efforts while at Davenport University



# Career planning checklist

Have a plan	Work the plan Using Career Services   Faculty   Community
<b>Start with awareness</b> Year 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your career coach to explore your goals, options and interests so you can select a major <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct informational interviews through LinkedIn, friends, family and others in your network <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your advisor to learn whether your major requires an internship or experiential learning <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate on- and off-campus opportunities to gain experience <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Career Services to discuss criminal background issues and challenging topics, such as termination, gaps in employment, age, disability or other perceived barriers to employment
<b>Develop your brand and expand your resources</b> Year 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Log in and explore Handshake by visiting <b>davenport.joinhandshake.com</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete your profile in Handshake, and make it “public” to employers <input type="checkbox"/> Have your résumé reviewed by your career coach, and upload it to Handshake <input type="checkbox"/> Draft a meaningful, adaptable cover letter and thank-you letter <input type="checkbox"/> Join relevant groups, clubs or associations, and be an active member <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in career-related professional development events <input type="checkbox"/> Learn and understand Davenport University’s experiential learning process, and know when you’re eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Work with your career coach to brush up on your interview skills
<b>Gain experience</b> Year 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Secure experience in your career field via internship, experiential learning, work-study or volunteer positions <input type="checkbox"/> Build your network and your online and social media presence <input type="checkbox"/> Update and learn to tailor your résumé to each desired opportunity <input type="checkbox"/> Fine-tune your elevator pitch and speak effectively about your personal brand <input type="checkbox"/> Attend career fairs, professional association meetings and other career-related events <input type="checkbox"/> Network with classmates, family, community members, mentors and peers <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for job opportunities and track your progress
<b>Transition into success</b> Year 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a job search strategy with your career coach to understand job websites, including Handshake, LinkedIn and industry-specific networks <input type="checkbox"/> Create a reliable list of references <input type="checkbox"/> Fine-tune your interviewing skills by conducting an AI mock interview with Quinn: <b>quinnia.io/access</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Tell your career coach when you land a job!





# Exploring careers and informational interviewing

This type of interview allows you to learn more about a company, position or professional field by speaking with professionals who are already performing in those roles.

## Informational interviews

- Identify and research positions and the company (see page 52)
- Identify prospective professionals to interview from your network of friends, family affiliations, alumni associations, LinkedIn and other social media
- Send a request to interview the individuals identified, and enclose a list of questions you'd like to ask (10-15 questions)
- Be respectful of time and place by scheduling the interview to meet the time, location and style of the professional you are interviewing (on-site, a neutral site, Skype, phone, FaceTime or other electronic format)
- While conducting the interview, **be prepared** to describe your goals, **ask clear questions** and **LISTEN**

## Ask about job shadowing options

- Seeing a day in the life of a professional already in the field helps affirm that a specific position is a viable option
- Afterward, send a thank-you note to those you've met with and stay connected to them. This is a great way to find a mentor and access a larger network of professionals in your field



Always follow up with a thank-you note (see page 37). It can be handwritten or emailed, but it's more personal and more likely to be read if it's handwritten.

## Ask to shadow via email or LinkedIn message:

Dear Ms. Sparrow,

As a student at Davenport University, I am exploring careers to learn which would be best suited for me. I am very interested in the biological laboratory science profession and would appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about your work.

I found your information through Davenport's Alumni Association. After reading about your company's Biolife Reservation Initiative, I am confident that your insight could help me. If there is availability in your schedule over the next two weeks, please let me know. Ideally, we can meet for about half an hour.

Sincerely,  
Pounce Panther  
313 Prairie Pt.  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(616) 698-7111  
ppanther@email.davenport.edu

# Sample questions to ask in an informational interview or job shadow

## About the job

- What types of tasks do you spend most of your time doing?
- What excites you most about this job?
- What are some of the more difficult or frustrating parts of this career?
- I really like doing \_\_\_\_\_. Do you have an opportunity to do that type of work in this career?
- What types of advancement opportunities are available for an entry-level worker in this career?
- I read that \_\_\_\_\_ is an issue in this occupation. Have you found that to be true?
- Is this career/industry changing? How so?

## About working conditions

- What hours are typical for most jobs in this occupation?
- How often do you travel?

## Questions about other careers and contacts

- Do you know of any similar careers that also use \_\_\_\_\_ or involve \_\_\_\_\_?
- I know that people in this career specialize in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Do you know of any other specialties?
- Can you suggest anyone else I could ask for information? May I tell them that you have referred me?

## Questions about training

- What qualities should a person have to be in this field?
- What did your path look like to get into your job/position?
- Do you have any advice on how people interested in this career should prepare?

## Company-specific questions

- What types of positions would someone with my major/skill set excel in?
- What advancement opportunities does the company offer for people in entry-level positions?
- If I see a job that I am interested in with this company, what is the best way to apply?
- What qualities do hiring managers usually look for in ideal candidates at this company?

## ACES informational interview questions

- How long have you been a \_\_\_\_\_?
- How did you become interested in this career?
- What is your educational background?
- Was your education adequate, or were there areas in which you needed additional training?
- What would you change about your job if you had the opportunity?
- What skills do you wish you possessed when you started this job?
- What advice would you give someone starting out in this field?
- Is there any other information you believe would be helpful?



Be sure to utilize LinkedIn to connect with people you already know. If you cannot find anyone in the field whom you already know, find someone who can connect you and ask for an introduction! Go to Davenport University's LinkedIn page to easily search and connect with alumni (see page 46).



# Planning for graduate school

## Need help deciding if graduate school is right for your career path?

Visit Career Services: [davenport.joinhandshake.com/appointments](https://davenport.joinhandshake.com/appointments).

## Consider our programs

Consider the Davenport University graduate programs or post-bachelor certification programs found here: [davenport.edu/academics/all-degree-programs](https://davenport.edu/academics/all-degree-programs).

## Reasons to wait to pursue a graduate program

- You believe you will make more money in your first entry-level job with a graduate degree
- You are considering staying in college longer to avoid student loan payments
- You are not sure what career you want to pursue

## Reasons to consider a graduate program

- You know what your career path requires, and a graduate degree is needed
- A graduate degree will help qualify you for a promotion
- Your company offers tuition reimbursement

<b>More than a year before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research programs</li><li>• Take tests required for admission, such as the GRE, LSAT and MCAT</li><li>• Identify people to write letters of recommendation</li><li>• Investigate how you will pay for graduate school</li><li>• Ask Career Services to aid in resources/decision-making materials</li></ul>
<b>Before deadlines (varies)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perfect your personal statement/statement of purpose and résumé (ask Career Services for help)</li><li>• Complete your applications (following instructions perfectly)</li><li>• Obtain letters of recommendation four weeks prior to deadline</li><li>• Request transcripts</li><li>• Apply for scholarships/funding (varies from school to school)</li></ul>
<b>The day/week after deadline (varies)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)</li><li>• Send thank-you notes to letter of recommendation writers and any other people involved in your process</li></ul>



Find Davenport's graduate program offerings:  
[davenport.edu/academics/all-degree-programs](https://davenport.edu/academics/all-degree-programs)

# Submitting personal statements for graduate school

A personal statement is a formal writing sample designed to excite the reader about placing you in their graduate program. If you truly want to get a graduate degree, you must have a good reason and reflection to prove you are ready. Choose three key themes you want to cover to give your personal statement direction and purpose.

Set up your personal statement with the three key sections found in any well-written document: introduction with a hook, three body paragraphs that clearly explain your themes, and a conclusion to summarize your interest and excitement.

Work with your career coach to make sure this document is engaging, without errors and well thought out.

## Content

The best personal statements give the reader an idea of who you are, often by using an example or story. Ask yourself:

- ☐ What is my primary message? What are two to four themes I want to portray? Write that first.
- ☐ How am I truly interested in and prepared for this advanced degree? Why am I deeply considering this option?
- ☐ Does the essay introduce me as a person and as a future practitioner in the field?
- ☐ Do I write in a manner that proves I have strong written communication skills?
- ☐ Do my personal values relate to the field?
- ☐ Do the action words accurately describe me?
- ☐ Are there specific, personal examples to support my statements and illustrate my qualities?
- ☐ Are there guiding questions posed in the program application, and have I answered them?
- ☐ Would the reader want to meet me after reading my statement because it is unique?
- ☐ How would the program benefit by accepting me?

## Organization

Even the best content will be lost if the ideas are presented in a jumbled and incoherent manner. Clear writing starts with a definitive outline:

- ☐ What is the best, most strategic order to tell your story and themes?
- ☐ Write your most important sentences. These direct your themes to your overall message.
- ☐ Write your introductory paragraph that hooks the reader and leads into your message/themes.
- ☐ Write so your thoughts seamlessly transition from one paragraph to the next.
- ☐ Does the final essay say what you want in a logical and compelling way?

## Edit

Poor grammar, incorrect spelling and typographical errors will ruin your personal statement. Review your essay for the following:

- ☐ Check guidelines for appropriate length and other guideline specifics required by the graduate program.
- ☐ Use varied sentence structures.
- ☐ Avoid starting too many sentences with "I."
- ☐ Do not use exclamation points or contractions, except in dialogue.
- ☐ Use active voice rather than passive voice, such as: "I lost the assignment" versus "The assignment was lost by me."
- ☐ Avoid run-on sentences or sentences with more than 30 words.
- ☐ Separate text into paragraphs, and indent first lines.
- ☐ Watch for proper subject and verb agreement.
- ☐ Use 10- to 12-point font and double spacing, unless requested otherwise.

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