

4 Years to Career Success Psychological Sciences

First Year

- Identify your motivations, interests, values and skills. Write them down and discuss with your advisor, a faculty member, mentor, or [CCO career coach](#).
 - Find out your Top 5 myStrengths results by attending a [Strengths 101 workshop](#). Identify your top strengths and how you can use them in your college and career success planning.
- Identify and research careers of interest to you that are aligned with your motivations and strengths.
 - [Explore about the day-to-day realities of these careers](#).
 - Learn about basic qualifications (including specific prerequisite coursework), and learn what additional qualifications distinguish successful applicants from unsuccessful applicants (both for graduate school and for careers).
 - Learn about typical career paths for people who enter these careers.
 - Learn about job market within these fields.
- Learn about Purdue career planning resources.
 - Explore the [Center for Career Opportunities \(CCO\) website](#) and office resources.
 - Read the [HHS Career Development newsletter](#) announcements to learn about the kinds of opportunities that are available now and for the future.
- Develop a rough 4-year plan.
 - Identify the kinds of experiences you hope to do (e.g. [research](#), [study abroad](#), [co-op](#), internships, other special programs), and plan for when you may complete these experiences.
 - Identify classes, skills, or a minor that may supplement your major
 - Examples may include development of public speaking skills, writing skills, a second language, business/accounting skills, coding skills.
- Plan to use your summer productively.
 - Use summer jobs, volunteer work, or job shadowing to build experience and to start to evaluate whether a career path is a good fit for you.

Second Year

- Register for PSY courses that relate to your career interests and that will fulfill prerequisites for more advanced courses that interest you.
 - Complete statistics and research methods. These courses build marketable skills and are very important for many areas of graduate study.
 - Consider courses taught by faculty who work in areas that interest you and who you might want as a mentor.
- Learn how to practice using your strengths in a team setting by attending a [Strengths 201 workshop](#).
- Register for courses in other areas you want to explore or that add value to your major.
- If applicable, start talking with faculty about potential research opportunities.
- Continue (or begin) building experience.
 - Part-time jobs or volunteer work
 - Research experience (PSY 39000). If you are interested in the Research-Focused Honors Program, begin by the Spring of the second year in the lab of a faculty member doing research similar to your area of interest.

Second Year - continue

- Consider whether the PSY Co-Op program aligns with your goals, and apply if interested.
- Get involved in [student organizations](#) related to your career interests or other interests. This can be a good way to network, to gain information about a career area, and/or to build leadership skills.
- Make sure you know specific prerequisites for [professional programs](#) (e.g. Law, Medicine) and for type of grad programs (including GPA, courses, etc.)
- Based on your experiences so far, evaluate whether you are still motivated toward the career fields you identified in year one; change or update plan accordingly.
- Identify a focused use for your summer, including skill-building jobs or volunteer experience, or special summer research experiences at universities across the country.

Third Year

Develop a resume using the [CCO Handbook](#), have reviewed by CCO and evaluate areas that still require work. After edits, upload your resume to [myCCO](#). If applying to graduate school, consider seeking faculty feedback [to create a CV](#).

- Commit to a career focus and identify your next step (job search, more education).
 - If applying to graduate school, identify a large pool of programs to which you might apply. Check application requirements (including GRE) and deadlines. Seek guidance from relevant faculty. For medical/dental school, prepare for and take the MCAT/DAT.
 - If going into the workforce immediately, participate in relevant workshops offered by the CCO, attend career fairs, etc.
- Explore what your strengths means by attending a [Strengths 301 workshop](#) and learn how to use in your career plans.
- Continue to develop research and/or other skills. If seriously interested in research, make arrangements to do a senior research project (PSY 49800) either within Research-Focused Honors program (apply Fall semester), or separately under the supervision of a faculty mentor.
- Engage actively with your course faculty and research lab faculty; ultimately you may be asking faculty to write recommendation letters for grad school or to serve as job references. These letters will be stronger if the faculty have witnessed you demonstrate skills your academic rigor in action, aptitude to be successful in your program, and can include personalized examples of observing your character. The best environment for this will be in smaller, advanced courses that are related to your area of interest and research labs.
- Based on your experiences so far, evaluate whether you are still motivated toward the career fields you have been working toward; update plan accordingly. Develop an alternate plan in case your first choice does not work out.
- Use summer for both professional/academic development.
 - If applying to graduate or professional school (other than medical or dental school), use the summer to prepare for any required admissions tests; register to take the test in summer or very early fall.

Fourth Year

- Continue to take advanced coursework and to build relevant experience.
- Stop by a [Strengths Break](#) to chat about your Top 5 Strengths and discussing how to use them in the next career step and your cover letter or personal statement.
- If applying to graduate school/professional program:
 - Identify the programs to which you will actually apply.
 - Update your resume/CV for graduate school.
 - Arrange for letters of recommendation.
 - Write your personal statement and have it reviewed by [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) for grammar, or [Office of Pre-Professional Advising](#) as appropriate, and finally ask for faculty to review for specific psychology content.
- If going into the workforce:
 - Do a final inventory of your experiences, skills, and knowledge,
 - Set up [a job search strategies appointment with a CCO career coach](#) to identify the types of positions to which you will apply. Update your resume accordingly.
 - Continue to use the [CCO services](#) to develop skills for attending career fairs, interviewing, negotiating offers, etc.
 - Attend [multiple career fairs](#) and begin your job search.