

# Northwestern Career Advancement

## CONSULTING 4 YEAR CAREER PLAN

The career development model allows you to **assess – explore – decide – act**, all while reflecting upon your experiences. The recommendations for each aspect of this process included below will take place at various points throughout your college career and may even be repeated. The symbols after each line indicate the point in time during which we recommend you consider taking each step based on the consulting recruitment experience of other Northwestern students.

While these steps will help you in assessing your fit with consulting, exploring potential internship and full-time roles and deciding what steps to take to secure your future opportunities, no two students will have the exact same experience. Consultants across various firms and specialties share common responsibilities and there are many on and off campus experiences that can help you to build the necessary transferable skills to pursue consulting.

### KEY

- First year ◇ Sophomore □ Junior + Senior

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**ASSESS** – Analyze your interests, values and skills. Consider their alignment with the work, environment and lifestyle associated with consulting.

- Connect with your career counselor through the appointment types 'choosing a career path' and 'choosing a major' to examine values, interests and skills. • ◇
- Meet with a career adviser to understand the internship/full time recruitment and hiring process. Your adviser can help you reflect upon lessons learned if you have previously recruited. ◇ □ +
- Reflect on your existing experiences and skills and how they will translate to consulting. Identify skills you would like to develop during the academic year, summer or post-graduation. • ◇ □ +
- Consulting recruitment can be a stressful and time-consuming process. Take the time to evaluate your stressors and identify coping mechanisms that are effective for you to balance your wellbeing and academics. • ◇ □ +

**EXPLORE** – Research and learn about the consulting industry. Investigate a range of careers to help determine what interests you most.

- Enroll in a range of courses that will allow you to explore your interests. It is important to note that there is no one major tied to the consulting industry and employers hire across a wide-variety of disciplines. • ◇
- Speak with upperclassman you know pursuing careers in consulting to learn about the industry. • ◇
- Review employer career pages to explore company culture and make comparisons between firms. • ◇
- Get involved in student organizations where you can explore your interests and build your skillset through different committees or positions. • ◇ □ +
- Attend campus events sponsored by NCA, academic departments, and/or student organizations to explore the consulting industry. Firms will often host exploratory events for first and second-year students. • ◇ □ +
- Build your business acumen using resources like: The Economist, Business Week, Fortune, Wall Street Journal. • ◇ □ +

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**DECIDE** – Be strategic about your academics, involvement and job/internship search strategy to inform your decision making.

- Focus on selecting academic major(s), minor(s), and certificate program(s) and prioritize maintaining a strong academic record and GPA. • ◇
- Consider summer opportunities that will introduce you to a professional work setting and help you develop new skills that would be transferable to consulting. • ◇
- Reflect on your conversations with alumni and employers to determine if this industry is a fit for you and identify specific employers to pursue for internships and full time opportunities. ◇ □ +
- Consider your course load – applying can be time consuming and your wellness should be a priority. Discuss the recruitment season with your faculty at the start of the quarter to determine how you will manage potential conflicts with your interviews and class schedules. □ +
- Meet with your career adviser to evaluate offers you receive, discuss your decision, and negotiation. If applicable, consider return offers from your summer internship experience. • ◇ □ +

**ACT** – Gain hands-on experience, build connections, prepare and demonstrate your impact. Take action steps each year to progress in your career development.

- Convert your high school resume into a professional document and enhance your document by using VMock and meeting with a career adviser. •
- Develop relationships at your internship site, within and outside your department. ◇ □
- Study, review and practice for various types of interviews (behavioral, case) and formats (phone, virtual, in-person) during the summer and fall quarters in preparation for recruitment. ◇ □
- Create a recruitment strategy that includes time for exploration and networking in advance of applications opening. ◇ □ +
- Continuously update your resume to reflect new experiences (i.e. internship, leadership and courses), showcase outcomes and impact, and tailor your cover letters to specific employers. ◇ □ +
- Participate in employer hosted events throughout the year. Info sessions or coffee chats typically take place fall quarter. Case competitions and educational or training events often take place winter and spring quarters. ◇ □ +
- Activate your network by letting them know you are engaged in a search process – this may be helpful in obtaining advice and/or direct referrals to opportunities. □ +
- Elevate your leadership experience within your student organizations by chairing a committee, initiating a project or managing a budget. • ◇ □ +
- Develop and practice a professional introduction. Your professional narrative can evolve each year depending on the experiences you gain. • ◇ □ +
- Create profiles on LinkedIn, OurNorthwestern and the Northwestern Network Mentorship Program. Build your network by requesting connections with alumni/other professionals and conducting informational interviews. • ◇ □ +
- Create profiles and sign up for employer communications on firm career pages. • ◇ □ +
- Create a tracking system for conversations you have had with employers and alumni in order to maintain your network as a means of learning more about the consulting industry, the variety of job functions, and opportunities that may arise. • ◇ □ +
- Actively use Handshake to create a public profile, review postings and explore events. Indicating “Management Consulting” or “Technical Consulting” via Your Name > Career Interests will ensure you receive NCA Consulting Industry Team newsletters. • ◇ □ +
- Once you have written your application materials with NCA and prepared for interviews, apply to opportunities of interest. • ◇ □ +