

4-Year Career Plan

Freshman year

Assess

- Identify how your interests, values, and skills align with career options by taking a career assessment, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or Strong Interest Inventory.

Explore

- Get involved in one or two student organizations to explore your interests.
- Take diverse coursework and talk with different academic departments to explore interests and strengths.
- Speak with upperclassman you know pursuing careers in finance to learn about the process.

Decide

- Research summer opportunities that will support specific skill development for a career as a financial professional.

Act

- Convert your high school résumé into a professional document and upload it to CareerCat.
- Create a LinkedIn profile and build your network by requesting connections with personal and academic contacts.
- Join professional financial groups/association in LinkedIn.
- Pursue summer opportunities with targeted résumés and cover letters.
- Attend early identification programs sponsored by financial firms.
- Enhance your Excel/spreadsheet skills experience.

Sophomore year

Assess

- Meet with a career counselor to better articulate your skills, values, and interests.
- Begin to develop a career narrative and professional introduction.

Explore

- Use LinkedIn and Our Northwestern to view profiles of alumni who studied your major and work in finance industries.
- Conduct one or two informational interviews each quarter with personal contacts, Northwestern alumni, or industry experts.
- Increase your leadership experience in student organizations by chairing a committee, initiating a project, or managing a budget.

Decide

- Decide on summer opportunities to pursue.
- Narrow down and decide on academic major(s), minor(s), and certificate program(s); meet with University Academic Advising if you are considering an interschool transfer.

Act

- Update your résumé in CareerCat.
- Engage with financial professionals and do an informational interview with financial sectors you are interested in.
- Update your LinkedIn profile and connect with new contacts.
- Participate in career fairs to connect with specific firms and learn about early identification programs.
- Apply for summer internships using targeted résumés and cover letters.
- Get acquainted with financial terms such as ROI, DCF, and etc.
- Continue to work on your Excel/spreadsheet skills.

Junior year

Assess

- Engage with your Career Advisor to work on an effective internship search strategy that would utilize your experience and tease out your metrics/accomplishments according to the finance industry.

Explore

- Research organizations and discriminating between their cultures and work specialties
- Evaluate summer internship options and application timelines

Decide

- Identify employers to pursue.
- Consider alternative summer plans.

Act

- Prepare for finance interviews (understand financial terms).
- Continue to network with Northwestern alumni using the LinkedIn alumni tool.
- Strategically participate in recruitment events.

Senior year

Assess

- Reflect on your summer experience and what you learned.
- If offered a full-time role, investigate offer and assess if it matches career needs for future.

Explore

- Expand your knowledge of specific consulting opportunities and examine work settings
- Engage in networking at employer information sessions, coffee chats, career fairs, etc.

Decide

- Identify employers to pursue based on the perceived cultural fit and skill set requirement
- If applicable, consider full-time employment offer from summer internship experience

Act

- Attend career fairs to make full-time employment connections with specific employers.
- Apply for full-time positions as early as possible and tailor cover letters to each company and position.
- Follow up with employer contacts from past career fairs, information sessions, and informational interviews.
- Do not miss interviews and show up early and prepared.
- Stop job search once you accept an offer.
- Partner with University Career Services, Alumni Association, or School-based Professional Development office to think of ways to impart career knowledge to younger students.