

CAREER ACTION PLAN

FRESHMEN AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Inquiry and Awareness

- Establish your LION JOBS Account at career.una.edu
- Read your catalog
- Consult with an academic advisor in your division to schedule classes and to plan a course of study
- Visit Career Planning and Development and meet with a Career Counselor to identify skills, abilities, interests and values as they relate to possible career choices
- Establish relationships with upper classmen, faculty members and administrators
- Visit the *Academic Resource Center in the GUC* if you need help with your study habits and test anxiety
- Get involved with campus activities
- Attend career development classes, workshops, seminars, presentations and career fairs

SOPHOMORES

Assessment and Exploration

- Establish your LION JOBS Account at career.una.edu
- Read your catalog
- Consult with an academic advisor early in the semester to select courses for the next semester
- Undecided about a major? See an advisor in your division or Career Counselor in Career Planning and Development, 202 GUC
- Need to improve your study habits, test-taking skills, help with test anxiety, visit the *Academic Resource Center in the GUC*
- Clarify skills, abilities, interests and values to help identify potential careers
- Begin to develop a resume
- Schedule a mock interview
- Get involved with campus activities
- Attend career development classes, workshops, seminars and presentations and career fairs

JUNIORS

Gaining Career Experiences

- Establish your LION JOBS Account at career.una.edu
- Read your catalog
- Consult with an advisor in your major to confirm degree requirements
- Continue developing skills and abilities, through student organizations, internships, part-time employment and community service
- Relate values, interests, skills and abilities to possible career choices
- Meet with a Career Counselor to discuss career choices
- Research thoroughly career choices and interview professionals in your area of interest
- Explore programs and entrance requirements to graduate school
- Make plans to take entrance tests appropriate to your program
- Update resume and explore career options
- Attend career development classes, workshops, seminars, presentations and career fairs

SENIORS

Job Search

- Establish your LION JOBS Account at career.una.edu
- Consult with advisor/ registrar to confirm degree requirements
- Apply for graduation
- Sharpen job search skills
- Have resume critiqued by Career Planning and Development
- Take advantage of on- campus and off-campus recruiting
- Network with professionals and alumni in fields of interest
- Apply to Graduate and Professional schools
- Use the internet in job search activities
- Meet with a Career Counselor regularly
- Attend workshops, seminars, presentations and career fairs
- Report employment status to the Career Planning and Development via the Graduation Survey

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

- Make sure your LION JOBS Account is updated at career.una.edu
- Meet with a Career Counselor to discuss career interests
- Clarify work interests and associate them with academic and career opportunities by utilizing self-assessments and other information resources
- Investigate the world of work
- Continue to update and revise your resume
- Network with employers through On-Campus Recruiting and attending Career Fairs
- Report employment status to the Career Planning and Development via the Graduation Survey

ALUMNI

- Make sure your LION JOBS Account is updated at career.una.edu
- Meet with a Career Counselor to discuss career interests
- Clarify work interests and associate them with educational and career opportunities by utilizing self-assessments and other information resources
- Investigate the world of work
- Continue to update and revise your resume
- Network with employers through Loin Jobs, On-Campus Recruiting and attending Career Fairs
- Report employment status to the Career Planning and Development via the Graduation Survey

INFORMATION INTERVIEWING:

A strategy to explore and research careers and employers

Information Interviewing is a technique used to explore and research occupations and organizations. Information Interviewing is discussed in nearly all career planning and job search books as a strategy that works. It involves talking with people who work in an occupation you are considering, potential employers, or simply contacts that may help provide information or further contacts for you. Information Interviewing has several benefits, including:

- Discovering "first-hand" information about an occupation. Reference books can provide facts about an occupation, such as salary and demand, but information interviews provide a personalized perspective of an occupation or job.
- Access to "hidden" job market. Only 20% of all job openings are advertised! Direct contact and networking is essential to finding out about unadvertised job openings. Information interviewing is not a job interview, but it can be a helpful first step in eliciting information about a prospective employer.
- Improvement of self-confidence and interviewing skills.

This handout explains how to set-up and conduct an information interview. The more prepared you are for an information interview, the more you will get out of it!

STEP 1: Plan your goals. Determine your purpose for the information interview. In his book, *The Complete Job Search Handbook*, Howard Figler identifies 5 levels of information interviews, including 1) background research on a field of work; 2) researching a type of organization; 3) finding out where the jobs are; 4) exploring a particular organization; 5) talking with someone with the power to hire you. Each level requires additional skills and planning to accomplish. Decide which level is commensurate with your information interviewing skills and goals.

STEP 2: Identify Occupations, Job Titles, or Potential Employers. Begin by identifying occupations, job titles, or potential employers that you want to explore. Research these areas as thoroughly as you can before you begin your information interviews to better prepare yourself for the interviews. You can find information in: the Career Planning and Development office (202 GUC), local public libraries, which typically have career sections and information on local companies; professional associations related to a particular industry or occupation, which frequently will send brochures and literature about the occupation; through employees of the targeted organization and through the local Chamber of Commerce.

STEP 3: Identify Potential Contacts. Begin to identify contacts through family, friends, instructors, employer directories, Career Planning and Development employer listings, telephone directories, and other networking contacts within the community. You may have to contact the organization directly to identify someone you can interview. Once you have researched your area thoroughly, you should be familiar with professional titles for the types of people you're trying to contact. As an example, if you are interested in a marketing position, you might contact a particular company and ask them for the name of the Director of the Marketing Department. Usually you don't have to identify yourself to elicit the name, title, and business mailing address of the individual. Once you've developed a list of contacts, it's time to set up the interviews.

STEP 4: Schedule Information Interviews. You can either write a letter or call to arrange an appointment with the individual; however, direct telephone calls usually are the most effective. Once you have contacted the individual, state your purpose. You might begin your conversation like this:

Student: "Hi, Ms. Smith, my name is _____, and I am a University of North Alabama student. I am very interested in the marketing field and I am trying to find out as much as I can about it. I have read a lot about the area, but I really feel it might help to talk to someone who works in the field. I would appreciate meeting with you to discuss this occupation, if you have the time. The interview would only take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. My schedule is flexible and I can meet with you at your convenience."

Be sure to make it clear that you're not looking for a job at this time, but that you are just trying to obtain information.

