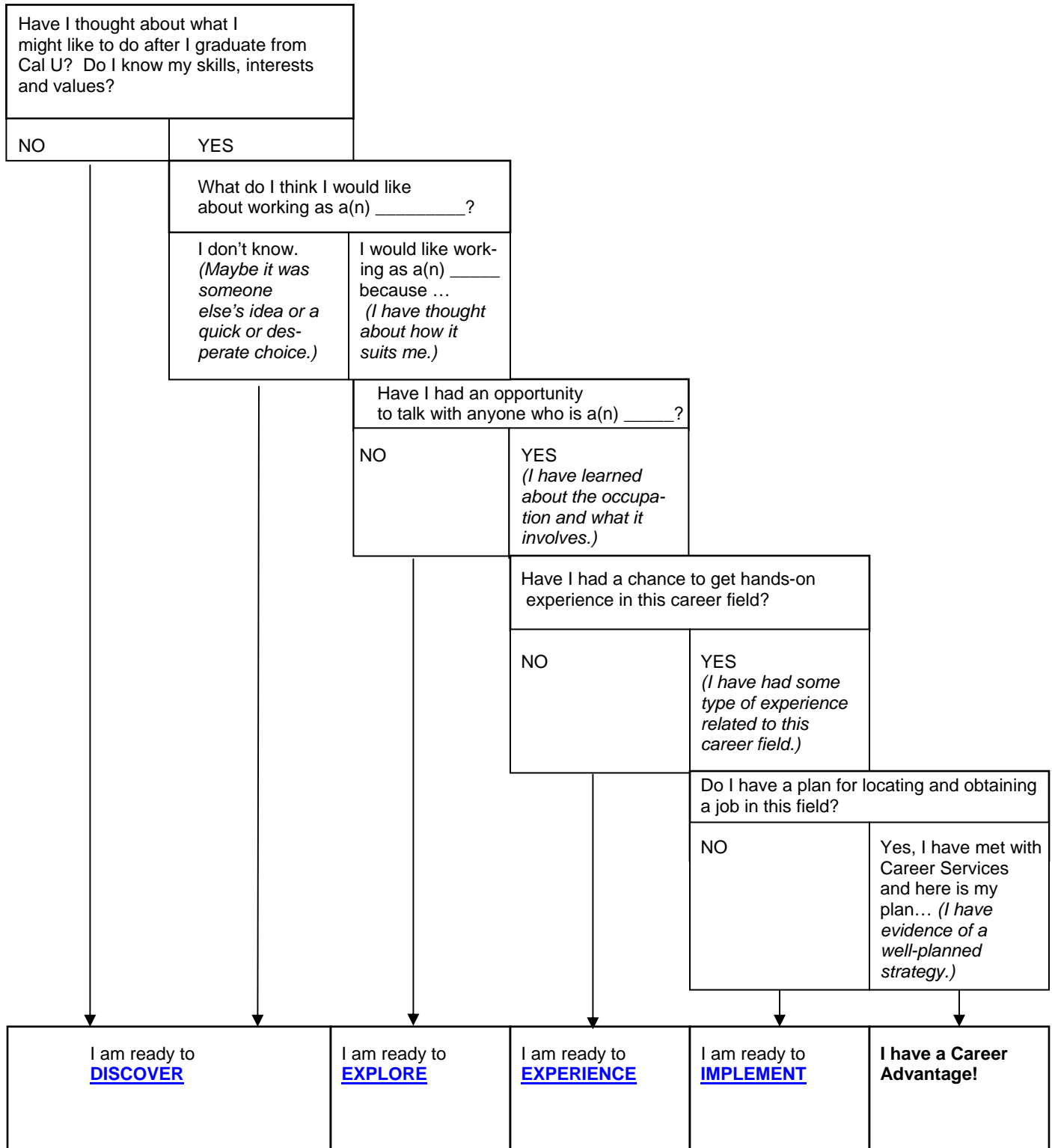


## Do I Have a Career Advantage?

Ask yourself the following questions and follow the path to find out! Visit the Career Services web site at [www.calu.edu](http://www.calu.edu) and click on "Career Advantage Program" under the Quick Links for more information.



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## DISCOVER (Freshman Year)

*Discover your interests, abilities, and work-related values.*

Because these are likely to change during your lifetime, it is important that you learn HOW to do self-assessment so that you can reassess your interests, abilities and values as they change.

**Question and reflect on your likes, dislikes, and any choices regarding career options or major you have made. This way, you learn more about yourself:**

What kinds of things do I enjoy doing?

What are my hobbies/interests?

What did I like (or dislike) about a past job (full-time, part-time or summer)?

What do I think I would like about being a \_\_\_\_\_ or majoring in \_\_\_\_\_?

What makes me well-suited to being a \_\_\_\_\_?

If there are certain careers I would not like, what is it about those careers that I think I would not like?  
*(Analyzing your “dislikes” may help you to see what might be appealing instead.)*

**IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE READY TO MOVE ON TO [STEP 2 - EXPLORE!](#)**

**IF YOU CANNOT ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, THINK ABOUT WHICH OF THE ACTION STEPS TO THE RIGHT YOU CAN TAKE...**

### Action Steps:

- Complete a career assessment such as the following:
  - Strong Interest Inventory (learn more about your career interests). The Strong Interest Inventory is available online and is administered in First Year Seminar or in Career Services (call (724) 938-4413 to set up an appointment).
  - [eDISCOVER](#) (learn more about your career interests, personal abilities and work-related values). eDISCOVER is available online. Get a User ID and instructions from Career Services by calling (724) 938-4413.
- Meet with a career counselor in Career Services to talk about your interests, abilities and values as they apply to the world of work. Call (724) 938-4413 to make an appointment.
- Register for XCP194 - Career Planning, a one-credit course to help students explore career interests and goals. Offered in the spring semester.
- Sign up for a Career Advantage workshop in Career Services (workshop dates are listed at [www.calu.edu](http://www.calu.edu) under “Students/Career Advantage Program.”)
- Become familiar with the skills employers seek (see Career Advantage checklist or eDISCOVER).
- Attend the Student Organization Fair in September or February to explore opportunities to get involved in campus activities and The Cal U Experience. Think about activities in which you would like to get involved.
- Register with the California University Experience (CUE) transcript online at <http://sai.cup.edu/cue> or by contacting the CUE Transcript Office in Student Development & Services at (724) 938-4515.
- Begin and file your Career Advantage Plan in Career Services, 230 EST or online at [www.calu.edu](http://www.calu.edu) under “Students/Career Advantage Program.”

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## EXPLORE (Freshman and Sophomore Year)

*Learn information about careers that interest you.*

You will explore career options over and over again in your life, so it is important to learn HOW to do this.

**Actively explore the world of work by reading about careers and talking to people in those careers. This way, you learn about what those careers are actually like and can make informed choices regarding majors and career options.**

Have I had an opportunity to read about these careers?

Have I had an opportunity to talk with anyone who is working in the jobs/careers that interest me (informational interview)?

Have I had an opportunity to observe (job shadow) people in these careers?

Did I look at a variety of occupations before deciding that I want to be a(n) \_\_\_\_\_?

*Doing informational interviews and job shadowing can:*

- *help to make an occupation "come alive."*
- *give you current information about the career field.*
- *help make future job interviews seem less threatening.*
- *help you to make contacts that will be valuable in the future.*

*Talking with people in a variety of occupations may help you to learn more about occupations you never knew about, and may expand your career options.*

**IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE READY TO MOVE ON TO [STEP 3 - EXPERIENCE!](#)**

**IF YOU CANNOT ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, THINK ABOUT WHICH OF THE ACTION STEPS TO THE RIGHT YOU CAN TAKE...**

### Action Steps:

- Talk with alumni and other professionals working in careers that interest you. This is called an "Informational Interview." Use the Cal U Career Network, a database of Cal U alumni who are willing to talk with you about their careers (located on the Career Services/College Central Network web site at [www.collegecentral.com/caluc](http://www.collegecentral.com/caluc)), and your network of family and friends to identify professionals with whom you could speak.
- Observe a professional at work! Meet with a career counselor to assist you in setting up a "Job Shadowing" experience. Contact Career Services at (724) 938-4413 to make an appointment.
- Research careers using web sites such as "What Can I Do with My Major" located online at [www.calu.edu](http://www.calu.edu) under "Quick Links" and under "Students/Job Search and Career Planning web sites", and using resources in the Career Resource Center in EST 200.
- Enroll in UNI200, the one-credit Career Readiness course, to investigate careers via informational interviewing, develop a resume and interviewing skills, and learn job search strategies. Career Readiness is a prerequisite for Cooperative Education (see the next section "Experience").
- Volunteer or get involved in student activities and organizations to explore career options and to enhance your skills.
- Register with the California University Experience (CUE) transcript or update your CUE transcript online at <http://sai.cup.edu/cue> or contact Student Development & Services at (724) 938-4515.
- Develop a resume using "The Red Book" resume guide on the Career Services web site at [www.calu.edu](http://www.calu.edu) (under "Quick Links"), or purchase a hard copy in Career Services.
- Update your Career Advantage Plan online at [www.calu.edu](http://www.calu.edu) under "Students/Career Advantage Program" or in Career Services, 230 EST.

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## EXPERIENCE (Sophomore and Junior Year)

*Test out careers by gaining hands-on experience.*

Learning HOW to find opportunities for gaining experience is a skill that will help you throughout your life.

**Become an active learner to develop the skills needed to be successful in your life and career. Seek opportunities to gain experience and develop skills through your classes, through hands-on experience, and through extracurricular activities and organizations.**

Have I had a chance to get any experience in the career field(s) that interest me; for example, a part-time job, internship, Cooperative Education, service-learning or volunteer work?

*Doing internships, Cooperative Education, service-learning, career-related volunteer work or part-time jobs are ideal ways to gain experience before graduation.*

*Employers generally favor students who have had experience related to the field for which they are applying.*

*No matter what your major is, career-related experience can give you an "edge" over students who do not have experience in their area of interest.*

**IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE READY TO MOVE ON TO [STEP 4 - IMPLEMENT!](#)**

**IF YOU CANNOT ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, THINK ABOUT WHICH OF THE ACTION STEPS TO THE RIGHT YOU CAN TAKE...**

### Action Steps:

- "Test-drive" career opportunities and gain career-related experience through [the Cooperative Education program \(Co-op\)](#), [internships](#), service-learning, career-related summer jobs and volunteer work.
- Visit the College Central Network at <http://www.collegecentral.com/caluc> to upload your resume and search the online postings for Co-op positions, internships, and other career-related jobs.
- Meet with prospective Co-op and internship employers in your career field through job and career fairs (e.g. WestPACS and @pgh.café), on-campus interviews and information sessions.
- Get involved! Take on leadership positions in student activities, organizations and volunteer groups that can help you to develop your skills and interests (e.g. Emerging Leaders, Student Government, Peer Mentor program, departmental clubs, CUTV).
- Begin or update your California University Experience (CUE) Transcript online at <http://sai.cup.edu/cue> or contact the CUE Transcript Office in Student Development & Services at (724) 938-4515.
- Enroll in "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People." Contact Lifelong Learning at (724) 938-5840 to enroll.
- Target electives to increase marketability; consider a minor related to your interests.
- Update your Career Advantage Plan online at [www.calu.edu](http://www.calu.edu) under "Students/Career Advantage Program" or in Career Services, 230 EST.

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## IMPLEMENT (Junior and Senior Year)

*Learn how to pursue your career goals.*

Learning HOW to conduct a job search or explore opportunities for further education are skills that will benefit you throughout your life.

**Learn effective job search strategies and how to implement them. Conduct an active, not a passive, job search. Determine if further education is needed to prepare you for your intended career field. Identify possible graduate or professional schools and plan a strategy for applying to them.**

Do I have a plan for locating and obtaining a job in this field?

Do I know the most effective job search strategies?

Do I know how to develop and utilize my personal and professional network in my job search?

Do I know how to effectively articulate my skills and experience on my resume, at a job fair, and in a job interview?

*It is important to start planning for the job search early in your senior year (even earlier for the graduate school process).*

**CONGRATULATIONS! IF YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY ANSWERED ALL OF THE QUESTIONS LISTED THROUGHOUT THE HANDOUT, YOU HAVE A CAREER ADVANTAGE!**

### Action Steps:

- Meet with a career counselor in Career Services to develop job search strategies and to "fine-tune" your resume, cover letter, portfolio and interviewing skills. Call (724) 938-4413 to set up an appointment.
- Visit the College Central Network at [www.collegecentral.com/caluc](http://www.collegecentral.com/caluc) to upload or update your resume and search the online job postings.
- Sharpen your interviewing skills by participating in a mock interview in Career Services.
- Develop networking relationships through Career Services, faculty, extracurricular activities and family. Use the Cal U Career Network (alumni mentor network) at [www.collegecentral.com/caluc](http://www.collegecentral.com/caluc) to identify alumni who have offered to network with you.
- Participate in on-campus interviews, employer information sessions, job and career fairs (e.g. WestPACS, PERC, and Cal U's On-Campus Teacher Recruitment Fair), use the Career Resource Center in EST 200, and visit job search web sites to target and research potential employers. Links to all of these are located at [www.calu.edu](http://www.calu.edu) under "Students."
- Discuss applying for graduate school with your faculty advisor or career counselor. Take the GRE, GMAT, LSAT or the appropriate required graduate admission test for your chosen field of study.
- Update your California University Experience (CUE) Transcript online at <http://sai.cup.edu/cue> or contact the CUE Transcript Office in Student Development & Services at (724) 938-4515.
- Update your Career Advantage Plan online at <http://www.calu.edu> under "Students/Career Advantage Program" or in Career Services.