



Pioneer Career Planning Checklist

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Knowing what you want to do after college and formulating a plan is key to successfully completing college in a timely manner. Career planning is crucial to saving you time and money. The Career Services office has developed the following Career Planning Checklist to assist you in planning your career development while you are a student at Prairie State College. Each

stage is anchored by the number of credit hours you've completed and shows the various career-related items you should be working on during that period. This Career Planning Checklist is intended to be a resource that you can bring to your appointment so that a career services staff member can guide you through each stage and answer questions along the way.

45 to 60+ Credit Hours to Graduation

During this stage, it is an ideal time to reflect on who you are and where you want your college experience to take you. Furthermore, you should maximize your college experience by exploring all the resources available to you.

Professional Development

- Meet with a professional in the Career Services office to learn about the career resources available to you.
- Discuss your career plans with a Career Services staff member.
- Register on [Pioneers Get Hired](#) to explore career

related videos, podcasts and other resources; explore internships and jobs.

- Explore PSC recognized [student organizations and clubs](#) and the [Student Government Association](#) in preparation to join one (or more) that interests you.

Explore Career Options

- Take an interest inventory to examine your career interests by contacting a Career Services staff member.

- Consider how courses taken at PSC reflect your career interests.

Build Your Network

- Begin having conversations with professors, personal contacts, and employers regarding your career interests.

30 to 44 Credit Hours to Graduation

Now is a good time to join an organization on campus to strengthen your resume. Begin using resources available to you like the [Student Success Center](#), [Veterans Services](#) and [Library](#).

Professional Development

- Develop or refine your resume and cover letter.
- Create your LinkedIn profile. Identify and join relevant LinkedIn groups.
- Join a student organization or student government to strengthen your resume.

Build Your Network

- Use informational interviewing or job shadowing as a way to gather more industry or employer information.
- Develop a method for tracking your networking conversations (Excel is a great option).
- Identify mentors who support your career goals and professional development.
- Begin connecting with professors, classmates, and professionals in your field of interest on LinkedIn.

Explore Career Options

- Identify post-graduation opportunities aligned with your values, interests, personality, and skills (VIPS).
- Research industries of interest using resources like Career One Stop, O*Net, Career Match, and Occupational Outlook Handbook.
- If you are transferring, develop a transfer plan with the [Transfer Office](#) for your final semesters.

29 to 15 Credit Hours to Graduation

Now is a great time to narrow down your post-graduation options and move forward in your career decision making.

Professional Development

- Start formalizing your career plan. If you are currently employed, decide if you will remain with your current employer or if you will pursue other options.
- Meet with a Career Services staff member to set career goals. (Where do you see yourself after graduation?)
- Consider an internship to add experience in your field of interest, especially if you are changing careers or if you do not have relevant work experience.
- Revisit your resume and cover letter – update with class projects and student organizations or student government.
- Update your LinkedIn profile if needed, and post articles for discussion that are professionally relevant.
- Consider joining PSC recognized [student organizations and clubs](#) or the [Student Government Association](#) to strengthen your resume.

Explore Career Options

- If you have not yet identified a clear career focus, meet with the Career Development Advisor to discuss your options.
- Start identifying industries and employers of interest by leveraging networking conversations and past research.
- Shadow a professional to learn more about a specific field and to make contact within your field.

29 to 15 Credit Hours to Graduation (cont'd.)

Build Your Network

- Identify and join professional associations in your field. Student memberships are usually available through your professional association. If you are not sure what professional association to join, Google "Professional association for insert your field of interest" For example, "Professional association for accountants" or "Professional association for nurses". Multiple

networking opportunities are available to you like conferences and meetings through your professional association.

- Continue connecting with professors, classmates, and professionals in your field of interest on LinkedIn. Also consider past teachers and family friends.

Start Job Search Process

- Develop your job search plan for your final semesters.
- Meet with a Career Services staff member to learn about recruiting strategies for employers from your industry of interest.
- Establish your job search timeline based on your chosen industry.
- Identify events to attend to gather information or networking contacts.
- Integrate your networking plan into this overall job search plan.
- Craft a job search routine that you can manage

with your busy schedule: check websites, research new employers, network with contacts, and actively send out resumes.

- Expand your knowledge of job opportunities and work settings, and prepare for interviewing by networking with employers in your field.
- Extensively research specific careers, industries, and targeted employers using LinkedIn, Indeed, Monster, and company websites.
- Identify contacts who work for specific employers (search Prairie State College on LinkedIn and search connections) and polish your professional communication.

Less than 15 Credit Hours to Graduation

Make decisions about post-graduation opportunities and implement your intentional career search strategy.

Professional Development

- Update your resume in [Pioneers Get Hired](#) and other online resume posting sites, incorporating professional skills and accomplishments.
- Update and tailor your LinkedIn profile (include career goal-specific headline and content

throughout), adding new professional contacts, and join groups and follow companies related to your career goals.

- Learn strategies on negotiating a job offer. Talk to a Career Services staff member for help with this.

Activate Your Network

- Supplement your online research by conducting informational interviews with personal contacts, PSC alumni, and industry experts who work for employers of interest.

- Attend events, especially professional networking events (conferences/conventions), and on-campus employer information sessions offered by PSC.

Continue Job Search Process

- Select 2-3 industries and related employers to pursue for full-time employment and learn/ implement the best job search techniques for those industries.
- Activate your job search: check websites, research new employers, network with contacts, and actively send your resume to employers of interest.

- Tailor your resume and cover letter to each job opportunity and employer.
- Strengthen your interviewing skills by conducting a practice interview with a Career Services staff member.
- Identify potential references and obtain permission to use their information in your applications for full-time employment.