

GETTING INTO GRAD SCHOOL

CAREER SERVICES



Visit Early & Often to:

EXPLORE Majors & Careers

OBTAIN Student Employment & Internships

PREPARE for Grad School & Health Professions

TAKE Admission & Certification Tests

SUCCEED in your First Career Position

435.797.7777

www.usu.edu/career

University Inn, Ground Level 102



Career Services





Division of Student Services

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Additional Guides Available:

- Exploring Careers
- Applying for Jobs
- Acing the Interview

join  USUCareerServices
the  USU Career Services Group
conversation  USUCareer

Career Services' Staff by Specialty

For appointments, please call 435.797.7777

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Your Career Coach is:

A Member of



For a list of campus Internship Coordinators,
visit www.usu.edu/career

Visit Career Services to...

Explore Majors & Careers

Learn about **majors** and career options that fit your skills, values, interests, and personality. Access *Focus* for online career exploration and have your results interpreted by a Career Coach. Consider enrolling in PSY 1220, *Career and Life Planning*, to further explore your interests as they relate to major and **career** choices.

Obtain Student Employment & Internships

Explore both on- and off-campus **student employment** opportunities, including Work-Study, via Career AGGIE.

Gain career-related experience with an **internship**. Earn academic credit and experience employers are looking for. *Over 60% of students receive full-time job offers from their internship employers.*

Prepare for Grad School & Health Professions

Your Career Coach can help in reviewing your options for **graduate school** and your application/personal statement.

Prepare to attend graduate programs in **the health professions** by meeting with the health professions advising staff.

Take Admission & Certification Tests

Select testing on the Career Services' website for scheduling, tests offered, and additional information.

Succeed in your First Career Position

Meet one-on-one with your Career Coach to:

- discuss internship and career search strategies;
- build your network of alumni and employers;
- develop an effective LinkedIn profile and personal brand;
- create customized resumes and cover letters;
- participate in a mock interview;
- negotiate job/salary offers; and
- review graduate school applications.

Interview at Career Services with employers for internships and career employment. Attend employer **information sessions** to learn about opportunities, receive tips for application success, and to meet recruiters.

Access **Career AGGIE**, Career Services' online job posting and networking system, to:

- apply for student employment, Work-Study, internship, and career positions;
- create a customized "Search Agent" to receive email alerts for jobs/internships;
- network with over 12,700 employer contacts; and
- schedule on-campus interviews

2015-2016 Fair Dates

Fall

Graduate School Fair—September 22, 2015

STEM Fair—October 7, 2015

Fall Career Fair—October 21, 2015

Spring

Summer & Student Job Fair—January 27, 2016

Premier Spring Career Fair—February 24, 2016

Northern Utah Teacher Fair— March 16, 2016

See website for specific times, locations, and tips!

10-Minute Drop-ins

*Resume/cover letter edits and quick questions,
no appointment necessary*

Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday 1:30-3:30

Thursday & Friday 9:30-11:30

Graduate School Applications

Application Timeline

When applying to graduate school, it's best to start early. Applications for most medical school programs are due in December or January, while deadlines for master's programs tend to fall between January and March. No matter which degree you pursue, starting early will give you more time to prepare and polish your application. Applying earlier will also increase your chances of being admitted. Many programs have rolling admissions, so applications are evaluated as they arrive rather than all at once. Spots can fill up quickly as the final deadline draws near.

Below is a sample schedule for a student hoping to enter graduate school in the fall. Be sure to modify this schedule to fit the specific school's deadlines.

May (more than one year before graduate school begins): Research potential schools. Take practice tests for MCAT, LSAT, GRE, GMAT, MAT, etc. Study guides are available for check-out at Career Services. These guides will help you determine how much preparation you'll need and if a test prep course is necessary.

June: Register for the test at Career Services – Testing by calling (435) 797-1004 or through the appropriate testing company. Registration links can be found at:
www.usu.edu/career/html/testing

July: Request information from schools that interest you. Meet with several of your professors who can recommend good programs and help you make some connections.

August: Take required entrance exams. This leaves you time to take the test again if necessary. Begin writing your personal statement/letter of intent.

September: Finalize your list of prospective schools. Pick a professor or two from each school whose research interests mirror your own and familiarize yourself with their work. Contact your recommenders and ask if they will write letters of recommendation for you. Keep developing your personal statement.

October: Request official transcripts. Send your recommender supplemental materials (i.e., resume, personal statement, etc.) that they can use as a reference. Make contact with students and professors at your prospective schools. Arrange a campus visit, if possible, or follow-up to increase your chances of receiving an invitation for a visit from those programs that invite candidates (medical/dental schools).

November: Have someone in the field, a professor or advisor, and your Career Services Career Coach review and edit your personal statement. Leave time for rewriting and editing.

December: Complete and submit all applications, keeping a copy of every section for your records. Verify that your recommendations have been sent.

January: Focus on financial aid—fill out the FASFA online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

April: Celebrate your acceptances. Appeal the aid package (or apply for alternative loans) if the amount the school offers you doesn't meet your financial needs.

Almost every graduate school applicant will receive at least one rejection. While disappointing, it's not quite the final act. Contact professors in that department and politely express your regret at not being admitted. Ask them if they can point out where your application was weak or give you some suggestions on how you might strengthen your candidacy in the future. This will help if you choose to re-apply the following year.

Career Coaches' Favorite Sites:
gradschools.com
graduate-schools.petersons.com

A Personal Statement is:

An Impression. Your personal statement should produce a picture of you as a person, student, and potential scholarship or assistantship recipient.

An Invitation. The reader must be invited to get to know you, personally. Bridge the distance and make your reader feel welcome.

A Good Indication of Your Priorities and Judgment. What you choose to say in your statement tells the committee what your priorities are. What you say, and how you say it, is crucial.

A Story, or More Precisely, Your Story. Everyone has a story to tell, but we are not all natural storytellers. Before you do any writing, spend some time in self-reflective conversation with friends, family, and mentors.

A Personal Statement is Not:

An Academic Paper with You as the Subject.

The papers you write for class are typically designed to interpret data, reflect research, or analyze events all at some distance. We are taught to eliminate the “I” from our academic writing. In a personal statement your goal is to close the distance between you and the reader. You must engage on a different, more personal level than you have been trained.

A Resume is Narrative Form. An essay that reads like a resume of accomplishments and goals tells the reader nothing he/she could not glean from the rest of the application. This type of essay reveals little about the candidate and is a wasted opportunity.

Writing a personal statement is challenging and will take many drafts and much reflection. Don’t wait until you have it complete before you share it with others; their input will make it stronger, clearer, and focused.

Before You Write

Know Yourself

- What’s special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life?
- What details of your life (personal/family, history, people/events) that have shaped you or influenced your goals might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants?
- When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction in this field? What insights have you gained?
- What have you learned about the field through classes, readings, seminar, research, work/internship experiences, or conversations with professors or people already in the field?

Describe Your Unique Talents and Goals

- If you have worked during your college years, what have you learned (leadership, managerial, teamwork skills, etc.) and how has that work/internship experience contributed to your growth?
- What are your career goals?
- Are there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record that you should explain (great grades but mediocre LSAT or GRE scores or a distinct upward pattern to your recent GPA)?
- Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (economics, familial, or physical) in your life?

Know and Discuss Why You're the Best Candidate

- What skills (leadership, communication, analytical, etc.) do you possess? Use examples.
- What personal characteristics (integrity, compassion, persistence, etc.) do you possess that would improve your prospects for success in the field?
- Why might you be a stronger candidate for graduate school and more successful in the profession or field than other applicants?
- What are the most compelling reasons you can give for the selection committee to be interested in you?
- Identify a specific program or faculty member you might like to work with and why.

Writing Tips

- Plan on devoting a significant amount of time writing this essay. It is common to write several drafts of your personal statement.
- Proofread your essay several times. Make sure you have no punctuation or grammatical errors. Solicit comments from your Career Coach, professors, peers students, and other individuals you trust to give feedback.
- Keep it brief. Most instructions specify how long the essay should be. If length is not mentioned, stick to one to two pages, single-spaced (unless the instructions specify otherwise).

“Applying to graduate school takes a lot of time and energy. I had to prepare for the GRE, write my personal statement, and keep my grades up—all at the same time. My Career Coach at Career Services critiqued my personal statement and kept me motivated until I got into a graduate program.”

Monica Barrett
MS, Electrical Engineering



During my freshman and sophomore years at University A, I worked as a physical therapy assistant on a voluntary, part-time basis at Medical Center B in Hometown, State. During this experience, the most important conversation I had relevant to my career goal as a physician was with a nurse. I had observed that she was exceptionally intelligent, knowledgeable, and competent, and I asked her why she had elected to become a nurse rather than a doctor. "A physician has to make a lifetime commitment to medicine; his profession must be his first priority. I am not prepared to have a profession dominate my life." Her response did not surprise me; it only served to reinforce my commitment to a profession in which I had become actively involved.

For the summer of 20xx, while I could have continued my work in physical therapy, I chose to seek a position which I felt would provide a new perspective from which to view medicine. Upon returning to Bigtown, I began working at the Department of Radiology at Medical Center C. My activities were concentrated in the Special Procedures Division where one of my duties involved assisting the nurses in preparing the patients and the rooms for the scheduled test. I observed the procedures which usually were angiograms, venograms or percutaneous nephrostomies. I was usually provided with a detailed explanation in the course of the procedure which was informative and educational. At the conclusion of the procedure, I listened to the radiologist read the X-rays and learned about the patient's problems and the appropriate treatment(s). The staff, after getting to know me, encouraged my spending time with many of the apprehensive patients to try and alleviate some of their anxieties and to be generally supportive. In addition, for one hour each day, I attended classes with the interns where I learned how to interpret some of the nuances of complicated X-rays and listened to a discussion of some of the interesting cases that occurred weekly. My experiences at Medical Center C were so stimulating that I immediately applied for placement for the following summer and was accepted.

In June of 20xx I began to work as a research assistant for Dr. Teicher, a surgeon at Medical Center C. The research concerned the reliability of the criteria for the diagnosis of appendicitis. The justification for the research is the problematic nature of diagnoses as evidenced by the significant negative laparotomy rate. The aim of this study was to assess the feasibility of increasing the diagnostic accuracy. A large part of my activities involved using the hospital computer to retrieve, study, and evaluate appropriate patient charts in order to enlarge the statistical sample. My activities have not only made me more aware of the importance of medical research, but it has also shown me how some physicians combine their practice with clinical research.

After reading the article "The Ordeal: Life as a Medical Resident" in *The New York Times Magazine*, my understanding of the strong commitment a physician must make was strengthened. Unlike the nurse in Hometown, I have been impressed by the many doctors who lead rich and rewarding home lives, as well as being totally dedicated to their profession.

Besides a sense of dedication, I am aware that appropriate academic ability is needed to meet the demands of medical school and postgraduate training. I elected to attend University A because it is an excellent institution of higher education, and I wanted to be on my own so as to develop the self-confidence necessary to manage my life. My high academic performance and my science MCAT scores confirm my ability to handle the anticipated demands of the medical sciences. In light of both my clinical exposure and medical educational preparation, I feel confident that I will be prepared for the demands of medical education, training, and practice. I look forward to beginning this exciting and challenging adventure.

Career Services-Testing provides students, potential students, and the community with admission exams for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and business schools, as well as other exams needed for professional licensure, certification, and employment.

Graduate & Professional School Admission Exams

GRE*

General, all-purpose graduate school admission test; offered several days each week

MAT*

Graduate admission test for use in selected programs; offered several days each week

GMAT

Computer-based entrance exam for business schools; offered weekly

LSAT

Pencil-and-paper law school entrance exam; given on four national test dates each year

MCAT

Computer-based entrance exam for medical schools; offered approximately 12 times yearly

Career Certification & Licensure Exams

Praxis I* & Praxis II*

Teaching competency exams in the areas of professional knowledge and subject-specific skills; states require current and future public educators to take these exams for certification and licensure

FE

For certification as a professional engineer in the United States; offered biannually in April and October

Kryterion, ISO Quality, Castle Worldwide, TSCS

Global online test providers offering a wide range of professional certifications and licensure exams for various companies and organizations

Undergraduate Admission Exams

ACT

Undergraduate admission exam administered nationally 5 times each year (scores valid for all schools) or **residually*** each week (scores valid only at USU)

SAT

Undergraduate admission exam offered in October, January, and June

GED*

Test of General Educational Development; provides passing candidate a Utah High School Completion Diploma for employment or higher education admissions

TOEFL

English language proficiency skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking; required for international students to gain undergraduate or graduate admission to USU

Exams for Credit

CLEP*

Allows students to earn college credit by examination

DSST*

Credit-by-examination program similar to CLEP or AP offering additional subject areas

Math Placement*

Exam used for placement into higher-level math or statistics classes than ACT scores or previous math classes will allow

**For more information on test dates, times, and registration procedures visit:
www.usu.edu/career/htm/testing**

*May be scheduled directly through Career Services – Testing by calling (435) 797-1004. All other exams must be scheduled through the appropriate test company; links available at www.usu.edu/career/htm/testing

Graduate School Checklist

A CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS

Are you considering graduate school? If you want to further your education, advance your career, or specialize in your field, then continue reading to see if grad school is right for you. Earning a graduate degree can create practically unlimited opportunities, but graduate school isn't for everyone. It requires a great deal of attention and work, and if you aren't considering an assistantship (which would equal even more work), it requires a great deal of money, as well.

Perhaps the most important issue regarding preparation for graduate school is to understand that being passive will not produce results—action is required. The following list identifies areas of consideration in making this important decision. Start checking off as many of these items as you can, and you'll find yourself on the way to successfully preparing for graduate school.

Step 1: Should I go to graduate school?

I want to:

- advance my career.
- take my career in a different direction.
- earn a higher income.
- become an expert in my field.
- pursue my love of learning.
- learn in a challenging and stimulating environment.

Step 2: Is this the right time for me to attend graduate school?

I have considered the:

- cost and the need for financial aid or support from my family or employer.
- potential loss of income if I attend school full-time or part-time while working.
- need for sustained hard work and mental exertion.
- possibility of needing to relocate for school if it means a better program.
- effects of school on my family and relationships.

Step 3: Choosing the right school.

I have:

- investigated the research interests I may want to pursue.
- spoken to professionals in the field who know about the different programs I could choose.
- researched the reputation of the department and professors I would be studying under.
- considered the cost of attending this school.
- discussed financial aid options with a graduate school program advisor.

Step 4: Visiting campuses.

While on campus I:

- visited the department and the campus to get a feel for the school.
- spoke with students in the program to get their impressions.
- met with key professors to evaluate them and let them evaluate me.
- explored the surrounding area in which I will be living.
- visited Career Services to identify potential employers/career options.

Graduate School Checklist

Step 5: Graduate school applications.

I have:

- completed the necessary tests (GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT, etc.) and submitted my scores.
- arranged for and obtained the necessary letters of recommendation.
- written the required essays (personal statements, etc.) and have them edited several times.
- completed the necessary application forms.
- ordered and sent undergraduate transcripts.

Step 6: Paying for graduate school.

I have:

- researched institutional funds such as scholarships, grants, loans, and part-time employment.
- investigated teaching and/or research assistantships.
- applied for federal loans such as the Federal Stafford Loan.
- completed my FAFSA form.
- investigated private loans through financial institutions or other agencies.

Career AGGIE is your exclusive online resource to:

- Apply for job postings including student employment (on- and off-campus), internships, and career positions
- Identify key employer contacts
- Sign-up for campus interviews and more!

Access Career AGGIE:

- Login at: www.usu.edu/career
- Click Career AGGIE
- Select the Students/Alumni Job Seekers login option
- Enter your username: A# (A00000000)
Enter your password: birthdate (mmddyy)
no slashes

The following headings reflect options on the toolbar and are identified in italics throughout the guide. Commands are identified in brackets—for example: [Edit] or [Save]. Make sure that pop-ups are allowed on your web browser.

1. Completing Your Profile

- a. Under *My Account* select *My Profile* to update the following sections of your profile: *Personal Information*, *Demographic Information*, *Skills*, and *Additional Information*. Required fields are marked with an asterisk (*)

2. Searching for Jobs

- a. Select *Jobs/Internships* on the toolbar then *Jobs & Internships* to view opportunities. If you have been approved for Work-Study, a Work-Study option will be available to you.
- b. Select *Advanced Search* to customize your job search.
- c. For a customized search, choose *Position Type* and *Major(s)*, make your selections, and click [Search].
- d. Click on the *Job ID* number to view the job posting.

3. Applying for Jobs & Uploading Documents

- a. Click on the *Job ID* Number to view the job posting.
- b. To apply for a position, carefully review the *Position Information*, *Contact Information* (if available), and *Posting Information*.
- c. Pay particular attention in the *Position Information* section for *How to Apply*. Typical options include applying via Career AGGIE, directly to the employer's website, or to a contact's email with a specific subject line requested.
- d. Create the employment documents required for the position. Stop by Career Services during drop-in resume edits for assistance or visit our website.
- e. If instructed to apply via Career AGGIE, upload the required document(s) to your account via *My Account* and select *My Documents*. Career AGGIE lets you upload multiple documents—label your documents clearly to upload the correct documents for the correct job (ex: Marian Jones IBM Resume).
- f. If you are uploading more than one resume, make sure to identify one resume as your *Default Resume*. You may update or revise documents in this section at any time.
- g. Select the *Submit Resume* button and choose the appropriate document(s) as required.
- h. If a transcript is required, see Number 12, **Uploading a Transcript**.

4. To Receive Emails of Customized Jobs—Create Job Agent(s)

- a. Follow steps 2 a-c above. The Search results will appear.
- b. At the center of the screen select *Email me New Jobs for this Search*.
- c. Name and [Save] your *Job Agent*. You can create multiple job agents—name your *Job Agent* wisely (ex: Marketing Internships).
- d. To manage your Job Agents select *My Account* and *My Activity*.
- e. On the tab bar select *Job Agent*. You can *View*, *Disable/Enable*, or *Remove Job Agent(s)*.
- f. You cannot edit *Job Agent(s)*. Simply create a new one.

5. Viewing On-Campus Interview Schedules

Interview schedules are either Pre-Screen (candidates submit application materials and employers select interview candidates prior to a campus visit) OR Open (candidates sign-up for an interview and submit documents at that time).

- a. To View schedules of employers conducting on-campus interviews, select *On-Campus Interviews* on the toolbar.
- b. Select *Sign-Up—interviews you are qualified for*.
- c. Select the *Interview Schedule ID Number* to view the interview schedule details. Select either *Sign-Up* (for Open Schedules) or *Request Interview* (for Pre-Screen Schedules).
- d. Select *View ONLY—All future schedules* to search future interview schedules. This may include schedules you are not qualified for due to your major, graduation date, etc. Please keep these fields current in your profile.

6. To Apply for Open Schedules

- a. Complete steps 5 a-c above.
- b. Sign-up for the time slot that works for your schedule. Please note the interview date and time on your calendar.
- c. After signing-up for the time slot, you will upload the required documents—see steps 3 e-h.
- d. To cancel or change an interview time slot, go back to the Interview Schedule ID Number, scroll down to the *Sessions* section and click on the *Interview Date*. Find yourself on the interview schedule and click on the appropriate *Action* to the far right of your name.
- e. Application deadlines are at **3:00 p.m.** on the deadline date—if you have any problems contact 435-797-7777 as soon as possible.

7. To apply for Pre-Screen Schedules

- a. Complete steps 5 a-c above.
- b. Select the *Request Interview* button at the top of the screen.
- c. Select the resume (and other documents) you would like to submit.
- d. You will be notified via email if you have been selected/not selected for an interview.
- e. To sign up for an interview select *My Account* and *My Activity*.
- f. Click on *Schedules* and on *Pre-Select* to see all schedules you have been selected for.
- g. Click on the *Job Title* and then the *Sign-Up* button to view all available time slots.
- h. Click *Sign-Up* next to the interview time slot you would like. Note the interview date and time on your calendar.
- i. To decline an interview, select the *Decline Interview* button.
- j. Application deadlines are **3:00 p.m.** on the deadline date—if you have any problems contact 435-797-7777 as soon as possible.

8. Researching Employers

- a. You may research employers to obtain information for contacts within the organization you have an interest in networking with for student employment, internships, or career employment.
- b. Select *Employer Directory* and enter an *Organization Name* (if known). Use various capitalizations and spacing to receive an organization match, as it must be an exact match based on how the employer entered it.
- c. Use *Advanced Search* to customize your employer search.
- d. For a customized search choose *Employer Industry*, make your selections, and click [Search]. You can choose *City* or *State* but this may eliminate some employers who have multiple corporate locations or whose offices are not in the Intermountain West.
- e. Click on the Employer to view *Details*, *Openings*, and *Contact(s)*.

9. Searching Career Events

- a. Select *Career Events* and all events will automatically be displayed. Choose a *Category* to refine your search.
- b. To research employers attending Career Fairs, select the appropriate Fair and click *View Employers*.

10. Searching Career Resources

- a. Select *Career Resources* to access additional career search technologies including: CareerRookie.com, Internships.com, and Career Services' Facebook and LinkedIn accounts.

11. Networking with Alumni Via Social Media

- a. Showcase your skills as they relate to employers' needs, via USU Career Services Facebook and LinkedIn pages while building your network of Aggies. Follow step 10 a above.

12. Uploading a Transcript

- a. Access your transcripts through the Banner ACCESS system.
- b. Login using your User ID and PIN.
- c. Go to Students > Student Records > View Transcripts.
- d. Upload your Undergraduate and Graduate transcripts as separate documents.
- e. Highlight your transcript and right click [Edit] and [Copy].
- f. Open Microsoft Word (make sure your margins are set to 0.5" on all sides) and right click [Edit] and [Paste] your transcript into a blank document. Save the file as a Word document.

Log into Career AGGIE and upload your transcript into the *My Documents* section just as you would for your resume.

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- Available in Alternate Formats
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How 11: A Handbook for Office Professionals Clark, James L, and Lyn R. Clark, 2007

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