02

Pick your career path

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Choosing a major that fits your career path

Use your interests and values

PathwayU is a great tool to help you discover careers that are appropriate for your major or to help you decide which major to choose. Go to davenport.pathwayu.com and use your Davenport email to create an account. Then you can take assessments that will use your interests and values to pair you with possible jobs and career paths.

Contact your career coach for information and instructions regarding PathwayU or the Strong Interest Inventory.

Choose your major

Checklist

☐ You have completed and reviewed your PathwayU and Strong Interest Inventory Assessment with your career coach

☐ You have conducted career research based on your assessment findings and personal knowledge of your interests and goals

☐ You have identified individuals in your careers of interest and conducted an informational interview or job shadow experience

☐ You have reviewed salary and outlook data and affirmed they meet your personal goals. See onetonline.org for salary ranges

☐ You have reviewed the options for majors, concentrations and specialties found in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs for the year of your enrollment or current year

☐ You have met with your academic advisor to discuss and confirm your major and specialty or area of concentration. In addition, you have reviewed both your Degree Plan and Student Educational Plan (SEP), which allow you to lay out required courses, term by term, providing a roadmap to keep you on track for graduation

☐ You have met with Career Services to discuss your decisions and goals and to create your professional development plan

☐ You are aware of the Employment Guarantee as it pertains to your chosen major and efforts while at Davenport University
Major & career decision-making research

You have identified your interests and values, now what?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After identifying your areas of interest and values with PathwayU and the Strong Interest Inventory, conduct informational interviews and research your options to see how they fit with your personal lifestyle goals:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work/life balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education/training required</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

O*NET OnLine | LinkedIn | Family | Friends | Faculty | Alumni

| • Use industry and community resources to research salary and types of positions available |
| • Understand the career outlook and typical position functions, then identify and request an interview with people already in those positions |
| • Understand current needs for this type of position and define which employers hire for those roles |

Informational interviews | Job shadow

| • Develop a list of questions you want to ask about the position |
| • Prepare the person you are interviewing by providing your questions to them ahead of time |
| • Use the Career Services department to help you identify and facilitate contact with employers and alumni for informational interviews and job shadow opportunities |

Develop a plan

| • Select a major that gives you the broadest range of options for your careers of interest |
| • Select a major that allows for internship and experiential learning options to help gain market insight and knowledge |
| • Know what is required and start planning ahead of time |

"A dream written down with a date becomes a GOAL. A goal broken down into steps becomes a PLAN. A plan backed by ACTION makes your dreams come true."

— Deborah Fraser, Career Coach
Exploring careers & informational interviewing

This type of interview allows you to learn more about a company, position, or professional field by speaking with professionals who are already performing in those roles.

**Informational interviews**

- Identify and research positions and the company (see page 52)
- Identify prospective professionals to interview from your network of friends, family affiliations, alumni associations, LinkedIn, and other social media
- Send a request to interview the individuals identified and enclose a list of questions you’d like to ask (10–15 questions)
- Be respectful of time and place by scheduling the interview to meet the time, location, and style of the professional you are interviewing (on-site, a neutral site, Skype, phone, FaceTime, or other electronic format)
- While conducting the interview, **be prepared** to describe your goals, **ask clear questions**, and **LISTEN**

**Ask about job shadowing options**

- Seeing a day in the life of a professional already in the field helps affirm that a specific position is a viable option
- Afterward, send a thank-you note to those you’ve met with and stay connected to them — this is a great way to find a mentor and access a larger network of professionals in your field

Always follow up with a thank-you note (see page 37). It can be handwritten or emailed, but it’s more personal and more likely to be read if handwritten.

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**Ask to shadow via email or LinkedIn message:**

Dear Ms. Sparrow,

As a student at Davenport University, I am exploring careers to learn which would be best suited for me. I am very interested in the biological laboratory science profession and would appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about your work.

I found your information through Davenport’s Alumni Association. After reading about your company’s Biolife Reservation Initiative, I am confident that your insight could help me. If there is availability in your schedule over the next two weeks, please let me know. Ideally, we can meet for about half an hour.

Sincerely,

Pounce Panther
313 Prairie Pt.
Lansing, MI 48933
(616) 698-7111
ppanther@email.davenport.edu
Sample questions to ask in an informational interview or job shadow

**About the job**

- What types of tasks do you spend most of your time doing?
- What excites you most about this job?
- What are some of the more difficult or frustrating parts of this career?
- I really like doing __________. Do you have an opportunity to do that type of work in this career?
- What types of advancement opportunities are available for an entry-level worker in this career?
- I read that __________ is an issue in this occupation. Have you found that to be true?
- Is this career changing? How so?

**About working conditions**

- What hours are typical for most jobs in this occupation?
- How often do you travel?

**Questions about other careers and contacts**

- Do you know of any similar careers that also use __________ or involve __________?
- I know that people in this career specialize in ________, and ________. Do you know of any other specialties?
- Can you suggest anyone else I could ask for information? May I tell them that you have referred me?

**Questions about training**

- What qualities should a person have to be in this field?
- What did your path look like to get into your job/position?
- Do you have any advice on how people interested in this career should prepare?

**Company-specific questions**

- What types of positions would someone with my major/skill set excel in?
- What advancement opportunities does the company offer for people in entry-level positions?
- If I see a job that I am interested in with this company, what is the best way to apply?
- What qualities do hiring managers usually look for in ideal candidates at this company?

Source: Informational Interviewing: Getting the Inside Scoop by Olivia Crosby
Planning for graduate school

Need help deciding if this is right for your career path?
Visit Career Services

Consider our programs
Consider Davenport University graduate programs or post-bachelor certification programs found here: davenport.edu/academics

Reasons to wait to pursue a graduate program
• You believe you will make more money in your first entry-level job with a graduate degree
• You are considering staying in college longer to avoid student loan payments
• You are not sure what career you want to pursue

Reasons to consider a graduate program
• You know what your career path requires, and a graduate degree is needed
• A graduate degree will help qualify you for a promotion
• Your company offers tuition reimbursement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More than a year before</th>
<th>Before deadlines (varies)</th>
<th>The day/week after deadline (varies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Research programs</td>
<td>• Perfect your personal statement/statement of purpose and résumé (ask Career Services for help)</td>
<td>• Complete the FAFSA (Free Student Application for Federal Student Aid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take tests required for admissions, such as GRE, LSAT, and MCAT</td>
<td>• Complete your applications (following instructions perfectly)</td>
<td>• Send thank-you notes to letter of recommendation writers and any other people involved in your process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify people to write letters of recommendation</td>
<td>• Obtain letters of recommendation four weeks prior to deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Investigate how you will pay for graduate school</td>
<td>• Request transcripts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask Career Services to aid in resources/decision-making materials</td>
<td>• Apply for scholarships/funding (varies from school to school)</td>
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Submitting personal statements

Personal statements can be hard because they are a formal writing sample designed to excite the reader about placing you in their program. If you truly want to get a graduate degree, there needs to be good reason and reflection to prove you are ready. Choose three key themes you want to cover to give your personal statement direction and purpose.

Set up your personal statement with the typical three sections in any paper — introduction with a hook, three body paragraphs that clearly explain your themes, and a conclusion to summarize your interest and excitement.

Work with your career coach to make sure this document is engaging, without errors, and well thought out.

Content

The best personal statements give the reader an idea of who you are, often by using an example or story. Ask yourself:

- What is your primary message? What are two to four themes you want to portray? Write that first.
- How am I truly interested and prepared for this advanced degree? Why am I deeply considering this option?
- Does the essay introduce me as a person and as a future practitioner in the field?
- Do I write in a manner that proves I have strong written communication skills?
- Do my personal values relate to the field?
- Do the action words accurately describe me?
- Are there specific, personal examples to support my statements and illustrate my qualities?
- Are there guiding questions posed in the program application and have I answered them?
- Would the reader want to meet me after reading my statement because it is unique?
- How would the program benefit by accepting me?

Organization

Even the best content will be lost if the ideas are presented in a jumbled and incoherent manner. Clear writing starts with a definitive outline:

- What is the best, strategic order to tell your story and themes?
- Write your most important sentences. These direct your themes to your overall message.
- Write your introductory paragraph that hooks the reader and leads into your message/themes.
- Write so your thoughts seamlessly transition from one paragraph to the next.
- Does the final essay say what you want in a logical and compelling way?

Edit

Poor grammar, incorrect spelling and typographical errors will ruin your personal statement. Review your essay for the following:

- Check guidelines for appropriate length and other guideline specifics required by the graduate program.
- Use varied sentence structures.
- Avoid starting too many sentences with "I."
- Do not use exclamation points or contractions, except in dialogue.
- Use active voice rather than passive voice. For example: “I lost the assignment” versus “The assignment was lost by me.”
- No run-on sentences or sentences with more than 30 words.
- Separate into paragraphs and indent first lines.
- Watch for proper subject and verb agreement.
- Use 10- to 12-point font and double spacing, unless requested otherwise.
What makes Sparrow a great place to work?

We are Mid-Michigan's largest private employer with two Lansing campuses, hospitals in St. Johns, Ionia, Charlotte, and Carson City as well as dozens of satellite care centers.

- Sparrow Mid-Michigan's premier healthcare organization and the region's largest private employer.
- Nurse Magnet® Designation is the nation's highest prestigious honor for nursing achievement and excellence. Sparrow was originally designated as a Magnet hospital in 2009 and redesignated in 2014 and 2019.
- The Sparrow Hospital Emergency Department is the only Level 1 Trauma Center in Mid-Michigan.

Sparrow = Safety

Sparrow has been a leader in protecting our caregivers during the pandemic. We were among the first hospital laboratories in the state to perform in-house COVID-19 testing, we were a leader in implementing caregiver and visitor screenings, and we've worked around-the-clock to scour the world for personal protective equipment for our team.

Join us. 517.364.5858 or apply today at Sparrow.org/Careers.