



# Top 10 Career Strategies for College Students

Becoming marketable to employers or graduate schools is a four-year job. Here are the top 10 things you can do during college to make yourself marketable at job-search time:

1. **Keep your grades up**— Employers and graduate schools want candidates with good grades. That will probably never change. Doing well academically not only proves that you have a good knowledge base, but indicates a strong work ethic—a trait that employers value. If you need help academically, check out the Academic Success Center: <http://success.oregonstate.edu>
2. **Identify your interests, skills, values, and personal characteristics**— The first step to clarifying your career goals is to go through a process of self-assessment. Visit Career Services and take advantage of the career and self-assessment instruments we have to offer: <http://oregonstate.edu/career/career-assessments>
3. **Actively explore career options**— You owe it to yourself to find a career that enriches your life, not one that brings you down. Actively exploring careers means talking with professionals in occupations of interest and observing professionals on the job. Your academic department and Career Services can probably connect you with alumni and other volunteers who are willing to talk to you about their careers. Also, attend any career seminars, career fairs, and career speaker panels that are offered.
4. **Become active in extracurricular activities and clubs**— Active involvement in activities and clubs on campus is highly valued by employers and graduate schools. Joining a club is fine, but becoming active within that club is what matters most. Become a leader, hold an office, or coordinate an event. You will develop your skills in leadership and teamwork—skills that recruiters covet! Find a club to get involved in: [http://oregonstate.edu/sli/studentorgs/find\\_organization](http://oregonstate.edu/sli/studentorgs/find_organization)
5. **Get involved in community service**— It's important that you begin to understand and appreciate the importance of giving back to your community, and that you live in a larger community than your college or hometown. Typically, students look at community service as a chore. After they've served, however, it's usually one of the most rewarding experiences they've had! Recruiters love to see that you've volunteered to help in your community. OSU even has a center on campus that connects you with volunteer opportunities: <http://oregonstate.edu/cce>
6. **Develop your writing skills**— Over and over, company and graduate school recruiters complain about the lack of writing skills among college graduates. Don't avoid classes that are writing intensive. Work at developing your writing skills. Remember, the first impression you give to recruiters is typically your cover letter or personal statement. Need help with your writing skills? Check out the OSU Writing Center: <http://cwl.oregonstate.edu>
7. **Complete at least one internship in your chosen career field**— More and more, internships are the springboards to employment and getting into graduate programs. Many recruiters say that

when they need to fill entry-level jobs, they will only hire previous interns. In addition to making yourself more marketable, internships also are a great way to explore careers and determine whether or not certain careers are for you. When you work for a company as an intern for three to four months, you get a really good feel for whether the field (and company) is one in which you want to work day in and day out! Find out more about internships:  
<http://oregonstate.edu/career/internships>

8. **Gain an appreciation of diversity through study abroad, foreign languages, and courses—** We are now, more than ever, working within a global work force. For you to be successful at work and in your life, you must stretch yourself, and learn about people and cultures different than yours. Take advantage of the wonderful study abroad opportunities and the courses relating to diversity. This is your time to travel! Most people find it harder to take time to travel as they begin their careers and start families. Check out the study abroad opportunities available to you through OSU: <http://oregonstate.edu/international/studyabroad>
9. **Create a LinkedIn Profile—** LinkedIn is a social networking tool that allows you to strengthen and extend your network of contacts by exchanging knowledge, ideas and opportunities with a broader network of professionals. It gives you the keys to controlling your online identity. Have you Googled yourself? LinkedIn profiles rise to the top of search results, letting you control the first impression people get when searching for you online. It allows you to market yourself and create a professional brand. It enables you to establish, build, and maintain a professional network. It lets you share and gain information about career fields, companies, industry experts, and job leads. Employers also use LinkedIn to find candidates for their positions. <https://www.linkedin.com>
10. **Use your career center all four years—** Career Services is here to support you throughout your entire college career. Here is just a sampling of what Career Services can help you do:
  - Identify your skills, interests, and values
  - Choose, change, or clarify your major and career direction
  - Explore career options
  - Write a resume and cover letter
  - Develop your interviewing skills
  - Create a job/internship search or graduate school plan
  - Connect you with prospective employers (career fairs, on-campus recruiting, and more)

Remember, you control your career destiny. Don't wait until your senior year to start realizing your goals.

*By Bob Orndorff. Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, copyright holder, [www.nacweb.org](http://www.nacweb.org).*



### **Let Career Services Help You Blaze Your Trail!**

College is the time to develop the skills you need, and Career Services is here to help! Participate in Career Trail and learn more about yourself, know more about the world of work, be able to market yourself to others with the right tools and skills, and begin to connect to that network of folks who can help you continue on your career trail after college!  
[oregonstate.edu/career/career-trail](http://oregonstate.edu/career/career-trail)