

mystory

CENTER FOR VOCATION AND CAREER

Know Yourself
Explore the Possibilities
Prepare for Your Future

My Blueprint (1.1)

Preparing for the future is multi-layered and sometimes messy. At the Center for Vocation and Career, we've created a basic blueprint to help you structure your effort and time as you navigate your vocational journey. You'll note that some layers are larger than others and this is intentional. Building a solid base now will ultimately help you land well later.



KNOW YOURSELF: Self-awareness is foundational when thinking about your future. Examining your vocations, interests, competencies, skills, strengths, and values sets you up for meaningful work: work that God has already wired you for. This is where you'll want to exert most of your initial effort, and it's where you'll return as you explore and prepare, adding new layers from the learning you've done along the way.

EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES: Exploration is the primary means for discovering what you will actually enjoy doing, rather than what you think you will enjoy doing. To do this well, you'll need to first spend time getting to know yourself and then try something out. Discover what you like or careers you could see yourself doing through things like internships, job shadowing, or informational interviews. Be sure to also take advantage of our many exploration-related events like Taco Tuesdays and Externship Day.

PREPARE: Preparation includes assembling all the tools you'll need to articulate who you are to prospective employers and graduate schools. Spending necessary time here will help you tell your story well through resumes/CV, cover letters, personal statements, and interviews.

LAND: Once you have leaned into each layer of your blueprint effectively, you are best poised to land in a role that aligns with your interests, skills, competencies, strengths, and values. Whether you land on Broadway, Wall Street, or Main Street, we know God will use you to build the church and benefit society worldwide.

FAITH: Finally, there is a theological base that infuses and undergirds every other area. Life looks different for us as Christians—as it should! Understanding and believing that our lives have purpose, will impact our subsequent pursuit of our vocation.

Common Missteps

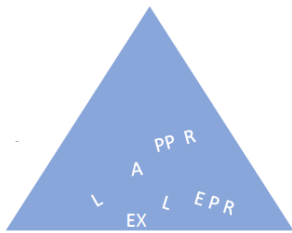
We must intentionally go through this process. Spending too much or too little time in any of these areas can distort your blueprint.



Jumping to PREPARE and LAND but neglecting the critical role of KNOW and EXPLORE, will result in a misshaped blueprint. These students sometimes are stepping into a direction because of external expectations or motivators but haven't always evaluated how that direction fits with their own skills, interests, values, and strengths. **Tip: if you feel stuck here, you'll need to spend more time in KNOW and EXPLORE, to realign your blueprint.**



Students are sometimes focused on their self-awareness but don't take action. They may know themselves well but haven't taken that necessary step of doing something with that information. These students might equate academic excellence as synonymous with career *preparation*. They are generally less excited about career *exploration*. **Tip: if you're stuck in KNOW, take a step forward and test out an EXPLORE activity.**



Sometimes students feel stuck from taking any action. They are confronted with mountains that feel too steep to climb; moving forward on their vocational journey feels insurmountable. **Tip: if you feel stuck here, start with a comfortable spot: KNOW yourself.** Managing life's circumstances could also be the priority for you right now instead and that's ok too. We'll be here when you're ready. You're not alone in this journey!



Activity: Your Blueprint

Reflecting on the following questions and choose 2-3 to respond to below:

- Where do you see yourself in this process? How have you been spending time/energy?
- How do you feel about moving forward?
- What most energizes you about your vocational journey and what's most intimidating?
- In your own words, express why it's important to go through each layer of the Blueprint in order to successfully land.

My Vocations (1.2)

When thinking about vocation or calling, we often ask questions like...

- What does God want me to do?
- What if I choose the wrong major or career path?
- How do I know if this is what I'm supposed to be doing?



Activity: My Own Understanding of Vocation

How do you feel when you see questions like the ones above? Who has most strongly influenced your views on vocation and calling?

Most of us have wondered at one time or another if we are doing what God wants us to do. Perhaps this is the first time you are considering whether God has called you to some specific path in life. The questions above are important ones that come out of a healthy desire to have meaning and to respond to God's call. However, these common questions can also reveal an important misunderstanding about vocation, and cause undue stress along the way.

Jerry Sittser, author of *The Will of God as a Way of Life*, explains this frequent misinterpretation:

For some reason we assume God has opinions about everything. I'm not sure God does. God might remain silent because he has nothing to say. His silence might mean little more than 'Fine, you can be an accountant or a teacher, move to Orlando or stay in Chicago, marry Sam or remain single. It doesn't much matter to me. I'll bless you either way.'...God's will is like several trails leading to the same goal. We can take any one of them to arrive at our destination. It is a waste of time and energy to try to make the 'perfect decision' (assuming that there is such a thing), if all the alternatives are good ones."

Sittser's words are challenging but important to heed. We do not want to think about God's calling as one path that we must find. For example, many of us think about the calling of the Apostle Paul; we hope to have Jesus appear to us and give us specific instructions on what to do with our life. This thinking often leads to paralysis and fear as we anticipate and wait for God's instructions. And the reality is that, more often than not, God doesn't speak directly regarding our callings. We are not the Apostle Paul, but many of us can identify with his apprentice, Timothy. God also had a plan for Timothy, but it was never explicitly delivered to him at a single point in time. Rather, Timothy's background, the godly counsel he received, and the circumstances he found himself in, contributed to the shaping of his life and vocations.



Activity: Respond to Sittser's View

In light of these encouraging words about vocation, spend some time reflecting on the following questions and respond below:

- Some individuals feel more freedom and others feel more stress when the common “one right career” mindset goes away and multiple career options open up for the future. What about you?
- Does Sittser’s reinterpretation of calling give you more freedom and clarity on your future? Does it open up any additional paths for you to consider?

A Canvas, Not a Bullseye

As Christians, we truly have a unique opportunity to benefit the church and build the society worldwide. There are lots of ways we can do this—from the marketplace to the church—from the boardroom to Broadway. There isn’t just one “holy” job that is acceptable to all Christians.



Sometimes we can think about God’s will for our futures as a bullseye, and we need to hit the center of that bullseye as we make decisions about what we will do. It feels like we must hit that mark perfectly. And failing to do so could feel like disappointing God Himself.



Rather than thinking so narrowly about God’s will for us, what if we think about God’s will for our futures as more of a canvas. Yes, it has edges, or borders that we shouldn’t stray beyond. There are obviously certain choices we could make about our future that wouldn’t align with God’s will for us. There are some boundaries.

But you also have quite a bit of freedom as you make decisions about your future. Yes, God has gifted you in certain ways. You have skills that He has given you the opportunity to acquire. You have developed a set of values and preferences around your personal and professional interactions. And you have some things that really interest you, and others...not so much.

It might be easier if someone, God, would just tell us what to do, that isn't typically how God works. Sittser, says it like this, "We might wish that God would tell us exactly what to do, where to go, and how to choose. Yet Jesus only requires that we make sure our heart is good, our motives are pure, and our basic direction in life is right, pointing toward the 'true north' of the kingdom of God." To love God and people is our primary calling.



Activity: A New Vocational Lens

Hopefully this reinterpretation of calling is encouraging to you. Spend some time reflecting on the following prompts and respond below:

- Throughout this process of exploring and preparing for your vocational journey, how will your personal faith impact your decision-making?
- How can you continue to intentionally foster your relationship with Christ amidst your current vocation as a student, friend, intern, teammate, etc.?

My Vocation Tree (1.3)

Fortunately, a good understanding of the theology of vocation can bring freedom and hope to the difficulty of important life decisions. Rather than playing hide and seek with God about His will for our lives, we can live in the freedom that He will delight in us regardless of our careers, as long as we are seeking after Him in the process.

As Christians, we all have multiple vocations. As we live these out it is helpful to think about how our love and pursuit of God impacts our vocational journey. Our primary calling is to love God and love people. Beyond that we all have secondary callings as well.



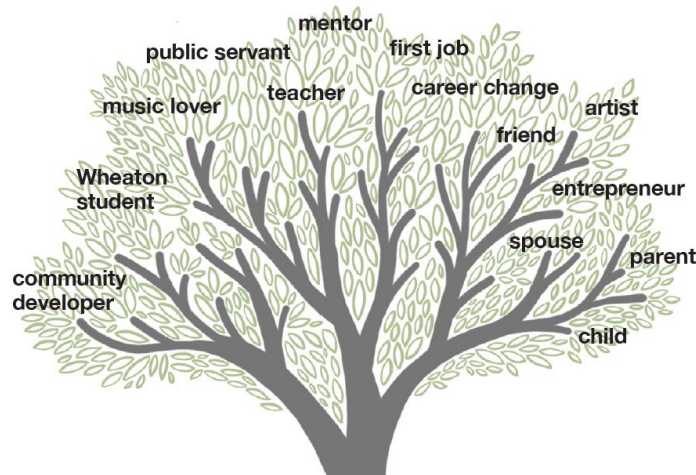
Deepening love for God naturally results in holy service to others



Failure to seek a deepening love for God can make growth less fruitful

This image of a tree can be a helpful way to visualize this multidimensional theology of vocation. The roots of the tree symbolize our deep love of God. The leaves represent what happens when we live out our lives while loving God. Jesus says in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.” Deepening love for God = deepening roots and therefore more fruit.

If we think about having multiple vocation at one time, we can see how the branches represent those multiple callings. One person’s tree might look like this:





Activity: Your Own Vocation Tree

As you examine your own life, reflect on the following questions and respond below:

- What callings do you have? What activities and roles has God already given you? Write down the callings you most identify with below.
- In what ways are you currently nourishing your “roots” (spiritual disciplines, prayer, Bible, fellowship with believers, etc.)? How are you intentionally ensuring that the rest of your vocation tree grows strong as well—growing naturally out of your love for God?

As you think about the ways God has equipped you for the future, the interests you already have and those you will develop, you can imagine a tree that is filled with many opportunities to live out your callings in God’s kingdom. In fact, sometimes the challenge is finding the time to do them all!

During your myStory experience, continue to bring to mind this intentional foundation of your faith on your vocation and career. Wherever you are in this process, know that we in the CVC are here for you and praying for you.

Scripture for reflection:

But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when the heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

My Self: Interests (2.1)

Understanding more about yourself—your interests, strengths, skills, and values—is foundational to your career exploration process. Skipping it might save some time initially, but if you don't take the time to build this necessary foundation of self-awareness now, you may miss out on key factors to help you move forward into a fulfilling career in the future.



Activity: What Energizes You? What Are You Best At?

To get started, reflect on the following questions, and write in your answers in the chart below:

- What three topics energize or interest you?
- What three things are you best at?

What Three Topics Energize or Interest You?	
1.	
2.	
3.	
What Three Things Are You Best At?	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Not sure what you're interested in? Or interested in everything? Try this:

[Career Explorer](#) is a free assessment that can help you focus your interests by thinking about what types of jobs most appeal to you.

Unpacking Your Past, Present, and Future

To better discover and articulate your interests, it can sometimes be helpful to think about your past, present, and future, and how your interests manifest themselves in different times of your life. Below are several sets of questions to help you do this. Through this process, you may find more clarity on where you'd like to be or what you'd like to do.

Struggling with your answers? This can be a great section to work on with close friends and family to ask for their feedback as well.



Activity: Reflecting on the Past

Reflect on the following questions, and choose 1-2 to respond to below:

- When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- What tended to come naturally to you? Where did you easily exceed the capabilities of others?



Activity: Synthesizing the Present

Reflect on the following questions, and choose 1-2 to respond to below:

- What do you enjoy doing so much that you may even lose track of time?
- What problem in the world do you want to solve?
- Who are some of the loudest voices influencing your career direction?
- Who are the people you admire/follow closely? Who would you pattern your life after? How are you alike/different from these people?



Activity: Projecting into the Future

Reflect on the following questions, and choose 1-2 to respond to below:

- Assume you were free from the pressure/judgment of others, what would your dream job be? Where would it be?
- In 20 years, what do you want to be known for? What would you want people to say about you?
- If time, money, or prestige weren't a factor, what would you choose to do?
- What would you choose to build or create?



Activity: Digging Deeper?

Reflect on the following questions, and choose 1-2 to respond to below:

- What themes do you see from your answers above?
- Share your results with your friends/family. What did they add?

My Self: Strengths (2.2)

While it's true knowing your *CliftonStrengths* won't point you directly toward a particular job, they can say a lot about the kinds of work environments that might be appealing to you and continue to help build your self-awareness. They can also reveal insights into your skills and natural talents, like public speaking or conducting research, or working with large groups versus individuals.

Now, let's think about how your unique Strengths influence your life. (*Don't know your Strengths? Learn how you can take the CliftonStrengths assessment at the bottom of this page.*)



Activity: What Are Your 5?

Start by writing down your top 5 Strengths, then spend some time thinking about specific times you've seen each one in action. Fill in the chart below.

	What Are Your 5?	Story About How You Use This Strength
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Don't Know Your Top 5 Strengths?

Fill out [this online form](#) or stop by the CVC for a discounted *CliftonStrengths* assessment code.



Activity: Digging Deeper

How do your top 5 *CliftonStrengths* impact the following areas? Choose 2-3 to answer below:

- The way you work with others
- How you manage the things you are responsible for each day
- What motivates or energizes you
- How you think about and process information

Curious to learn more about your Strengths?

Sign up for one of the CVC's weekly Strengths workshops on [Handshake](#).

Been there, done that?

Explore [Gallup's YouTube Channel](#) and [podcasts](#) for even more *CliftonStrengths* content.

Scriptures for reflection:

Whether you use the gifts and experiences He gave you matters to Him. He is the One who created you. He is the One who has opened the doors to your experiences. Our Strengths are not a surprise to our Father and they are meant to be used for good!

We are told throughout Scripture that God cares for us. Just as He cares for the lilies in the field, just as He feeds the birds in the air, so your Heavenly Father will care for you—and all the details of your life.
Matthew 6:25-34

Trust that He is in this process as well. Seek Him. Ask Him to reveal your interests, the ways He has gifted you; and where those skills and interests fit in the work of His kingdom.
Matthew 7:7-12

My Self: Competencies (2.3)

You've got to know yourself to tell your story. To tell your story well, you need to know your audience: employers. Even if you're headed to grad school right now, someday you'll be talking to an employer. One of the main things employers are listening for when you tell your story is: *what can you do well?*

What is a competency?

A competency is the **application** of skills, knowledge, and experiences that enable you to efficiently and successfully complete a task. It captures the "**how**" you decide to manage a task and perform it well.

8 Career Readiness Competencies You Need to Land

Below are eight must-have, non-negotiable career readiness competencies that ALL employers want in their new hires, identified by The National Association of Colleges and Employers:

- ❑ **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Identify and analyze complex problems and propose creative solutions based on current or obtained facts, knowledge, and data.
- ❑ **Oral/Written Communication:** Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization.
- ❑ **Global/Intercultural Fluency:** Demonstrate openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people; valuing differences in race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.
- ❑ **Professionalism/Work Ethic:** Display personal accountability and effective work habits, understand impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image, and demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior.
- ❑ **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build productive and effective relationships with colleagues and customers with diverse cultures, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints.
- ❑ **Digital Technology:** Utilize new and existing technologies efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.
- ❑ **Career Management:** Communicate skills, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired; develop career goals; explore job options; identify areas necessary for professional growth; and self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.
- ❑ **Leadership/Initiative:** Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

Become a Storyteller

How do you demonstrate to employers that you're competent in these key career readiness areas? **Through telling stories.** Think about experiences you've had where you've used these competencies—what problem did you solve, what project did you accomplish, what people did you lead?

Practicing telling these kinds of stories is one of the best ways to prepare for when you start talking to employers, especially through interviews and cover letters.



Activity: Competencies Brainstorming

Explore how your past experiences can illustrate your competencies and think about what future experiences might help you sharpen new ones. Fill in the charts below with 4 to 6 competencies and think about the stories you can tell, the competencies you've already begun to master, and discover opportunities where you can grow (a few examples are included).

Competencies I Have

Competency	Stories I can tell about this competency
Digital Technology	At my internship last summer I learned SQL and HTML to manage the company website and database. I also curated the company's social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.
Leadership/Initiative	In my role this year as Editor-in-Chief of the Wheaton Record, I am tasked with managing a team of senior editors, copyeditors, and photographers, as well as helping cast the vision for the future of the newspaper.
Professionalism/ Work Ethic	As a hospital nurse intern in the cancer unit I sought to serve patients in a timely manner according to their appointments and needs. I also remained calm, kind, and caring when patients received upsetting news or went through painful post-op procedures.

Competencies I Want to Develop

Competency	Where and how will I learn/develop this competency
Global/Intercultural Fluency	Right now I am taking a 200-level Spanish class. I would like to continue learning and developing my Spanish language proficiency through more classes and potentially study abroad next year in Peru.
Oral Communication	I still get very nervous when giving presentations, so I want to meet with 5 alumni that speak publicly in their roles and get their advice. I will also try to speak publicly in low-pressure situations more often, like speaking up in class and volunteering to give parts of group presentations.
Critical Thinking & Digital Technology	I plan on learning AutoCAD and SketchUp at my internship at a local architecture firm. Once I learn to use these programs I hope to utilize them appropriately to solve problems and provide relevant solutions to my boss and clients.

My Self: Skills

In addition to the eight competencies listed above, employers are also interested in learning about your specific skills. Learning to recognize, develop, and articulate your skills is a key part of knowing yourself.

What is a skill?

A skill is a **specific learned activity** and can range widely in terms of complexity. Microsoft Excel, time management, HTML, conflict resolution, and Mandarin Chinese are all skills. They focus on the “**what**” in terms of the abilities you have to perform a function or activity.

Which skills will I need?

Unlike the eight career readiness competencies, there isn’t necessarily one set of skills that all employers are looking for. It would be impossible to have every skill needed to do every job!

Instead of being overwhelmed by all the potential skills out there, start by focusing on the ones that fit well with your strengths, the way God has created you. Then, consider which skills are necessary for the kinds of work you are interested in. And keep in mind: with every job, you will learn new skills.

Maintaining a posture of *teachability* is critical to success.



Activity: Skills Brainstorming

Check out the tables of soft and hard skills below on the next two pages. The lists aren’t exhaustive, of course, but it’s a place to start! Highlight the ones you have, and brainstorm a couple of your own and fill in the blanks. Questions to consider as you think about your skills:

- What things/tasks do I find easier to do than those around me?
- What tasks do I tend to take initiative to complete?

After going through the lists of skills, spend some time reflecting on the ones you highlighted or wrote down. What themes or patterns did you notice? Which skills did you see that you’re most eager to start developing?



Activity: Interested in learning new skills or sharpening existing ones?

Check out [LinkedIn Learning](#)! LinkedIn Learning is an online learning platform with thousands of video training courses on just about every job skill you can think of. Wheaton provides all students with FREE access to this incredible tool.

Spend some time exploring the website and take note of which video courses most interest you. Write down 2-3 skills you could start developing through LinkedIn Learning:

Hard Skills

Hard skills are specific, learned abilities that are easy to quantify. Typically, you'll learn hard skills in the classroom, through books or other training materials, during an internship, or on the job. Below are some examples:

Accounting Methods	Editing/Proofreading	Premiere Pro
Administering Injections	Event Planning	Processing X-Ray Films
Administration	Facility Management	Project Management Applications
Amazon Web Services	Filming	Prospecting
ArcGIS	FinalCut	Python
Asana	Financial Recording	Qualitative Analysis
Asset Management	French	Quantitative Analysis
Auditing	German	R
Automotive	Google AdWords	Realistic Drawing
Banking	Google Analytics	Research Methods
Benchmarking	Grant Writing	ROI Calculations
Billing	Graphic Design	Salesforce
Blogging	Hand Eye Coordination	Scheduling
Brand Management	Handling Instruments	Sculpture
C++	HTML	Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
Case analysis	HubSpot	Social Media Management
Cataloging	Illustrator	Spanish
Charting	InDesign	Speech Writing
Chinese	Java	SQL
Coding for Medical Claims	MailChimp	SurveyMonkey
Cognos Analytics	MATLAB	SWOT Analysis
Cold Calling	Mechanical Repair	System Administration
Composing Music	Microsoft Excel	Tableau
Conducting Music	Microsoft PowerPoint	Taking Blood Pressure
Constructive Drawing	Music Production	Technical Writing
Copywriting	Patient Intake	Trello
Data Visualization	Photography	WordPress
Database Management	Photoshop	Writing IEPs
Digital Radiography	Predictive Modeling	Zoho

Soft Skills

Soft skills, on the other hand, are subjective skills that are much harder to quantify. Also known as "people skills" or "interpersonal skills," soft skills demonstrate your ability to relate to and interact with other people. Soft skills are often harder to teach on the job than hard skills, thus many employers are especially interested in certain soft skills, sometimes over hard skills (e.g. specific software programs) which they can more easily provide training on. Check out the examples below:

Accuracy	Evaluation	Patience
Active Listening	Facilitating Group Conversations	Perceptiveness
Business Storytelling	Flexibility/Adaptability	Persuasion
Clarity and Concision	Goal Setting	Planning
Communication	Handling Confidential Information	Positivity
Compliance	Honesty	Prioritization
Confidence	Humility	Problem Solving
Conflict Resolution	Identifying Measurable Outcomes	Public Speaking
Creativity	Integrity	Punctuality
Critical Thinking	Interpreting	Receiving Feedback
Customer Service	Investigation	Resilience
Decision Making	Leading Meetings	Restructuring
Defining Expectations	Management	Risk Assessment
Delegation	Mediating	Sales
Delivering Feedback	Mentoring	Strategic Planning
Diagnosing	Motivating	Stress Management
Dissecting	Negotiation	Teachability
Emotional Intelligence	Networking	Teaching
Empathy	Open-Mindedness	Teamwork
Enforcing Boundaries	Optimizing	Time Management
Ethics	Ownership/Commitment	Work Ethic

My Self: Values (2.4)

It's surprisingly easy to make a decision that does not align with your values. We often don't realize the number of factors we care about in a work setting until we are already there! It's unlikely one role will capture all your preferences, but it is important to determine which of these are non-negotiable, and which are more flexible for you.



Activity: Imagine Going to Work

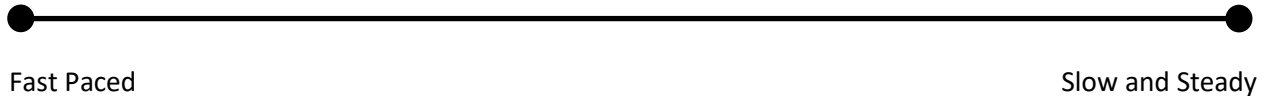
With all that in mind, picture yourself heading to work. What are you wearing? What does your office space look like? How are you getting there? What is the workplace culture like?



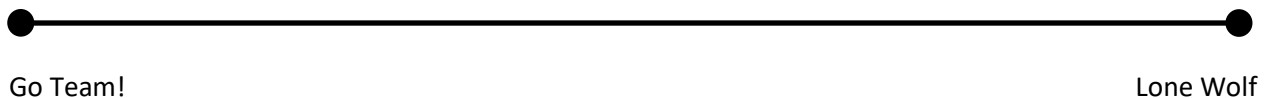
Activity: Your Values Spectrums

Whether we resist structure or flourish with routine—it's important to know what rhythms of work feel empowering to us. Use the buttons below to mark where you would fall on the spectrum of these values within the workplace.

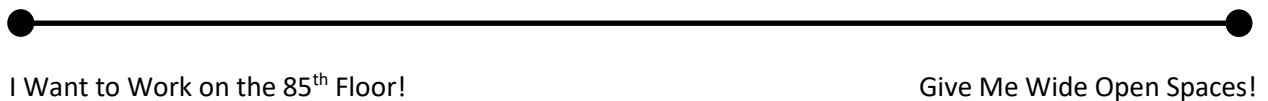
Pace of Work



Working Style



Place



Upward Mobility



Group Dynamics



Looking to Lead

Just Tell Me What to Do

Family



There's Always FaceTime!

No One Misses Sunday Lunch!

Work Hours



Working Nights? No Problem.

Gotta be Home by 5

Creativity



New is Always Better

If It's Not Broken, Don't Fix It!

Salary



My Bank Account Matters!

Ramen for Dinner? Yes!

Variability of Work



Every Day is Different

I'll Have the Regular

Feedback



Yes, Please!

Once a Year is Fine with Me!

Internal Mobility



There are 5,000 Jobs Here, I'm Bound to Like One!

I Like My Role, That's All I Need

Workplace Flexibility



Living Room, Airbnb, Mom and Dad's—All My Offices!

No Substitute for In-Person Communication!

Commute



Ten Feet Down the Hall

Train Time is Transition Time!

Dress Code



My Tie is Fly

Socks and Chacs

Independence



A Boss? No Thanks!

Could Someone Tell Me What to Do?



Activity: Prioritize Your Values

Write down the top three values that matter most to you in the workplace. How might these inform your decision about your next destination?



Activity: Your Values at Work

Reflect on some of your own experiences in different workplaces (e.g. a part-time job, an internship, etc.). What about the workplace culture, your working style, or your team most aligned with your values? What things didn't align? What did you learn about yourself?

Tip: Consider coming back to this chart as a 'tie-breaker' if you have a few different opportunities you are trying to compare. See how they match up to your workplace values.

My Exploration (3.1)

Your vocational journey begins with you, your understanding and development of your skills, values, and interests—but it doesn't end there. Exploring the ways God can use you in His kingdom comes next. There are many ways to begin exploring career options. Here are some we recommend:

- ❑ **Internships**—The most effective way to explore a career is to do it. An internship requires only a short-term commitment, and you'll discover whether you like the field, build your professional network, and your resume will get a boost too!

Internships are the number one way students land jobs in today's marketplace. Whether they receive an offer from their internship employer, develop key new skills, or gain credibility with other employers, an internship is a must-have element in every student's vocational journey. [Explore available internships on Handshake.](#)

- ❑ **Part-Time Jobs**—Many students find that in addition to making a little money, they learn a lot about the type of work they like to do, the work environment that fits them, and if a particular field is of interest. [Explore available part-time jobs on Handshake.](#)
- ❑ **Informational Interview**—Ask someone in the field to share their experience with you. Ask lots of questions about job activities, education, necessary skills, and what a typical day looks like. You can learn a lot just talking to someone about their own experience.
- ❑ **Job Shadowing**—Want to try out a few different fields before you commit to an internship? Spend a day with someone in the field. Use the WiN network, LinkedIn, or other people in your personal network to identify opportunities. Be sure to read about Externship Day below!
- ❑ **Talk to People**—You know that man or woman at church you see every time you are home? Ask them about their career. How are they using the gifts God gave them? People love to talk about what they do. Sometimes you just have to ask!
- ❑ **Online Research**—Unsure of where to start? The reality is you aren't going to know every possible job out there. Thankfully, there are lots of online exploration tools to help you find careers to consider based on your interests and skills. Here are a few to check out:
 - [Career Explorer](#): a free assessment which lists jobs that align with your interests/skills.
 - [MyNextMove](#): a site run by the US Department of Labor with some great job-search resources and information on job outlooks, salary data, necessary skills, and more.
 - [Vault](#): a premium career exploration site that you have free access to as a Wheaton student. It provides the inside scoop on industries and jobs in over 400 career fields.

EXPLORE is often the trickiest part of the Blueprint—but it is vital to everyone's vocational journey. Sometimes it's helpful to talk with a trusted friend, family member, or mentor to process together what you've been learning about yourself and start making an exploration plan.

Your CVC Career Coach can help you do just that. [Schedule an appointment on Handshake.](#)

Engaging with Alumni

Curious about where other Wheaton students have landed? The CVC provides multiple opportunities for you to engage with alumni to explore careers. For more details on these, [visit Handshake](#).

- ❑ **TACO TUESDAYS**—These popular events include casual conversations with alumni who share their real-life experiences in a particular industry or functional role. Watch our weekly e-mail or check Handshake for information on the 10+ **Taco Tuesday** events scheduled for this year.
- ❑ **EXTERNSHIP DAY**—Each year on a Tuesday in February, the CVC, in collaboration with the Alumni Association, arranges a full day of job shadowing. You apply, we find the alumni, and you benefit from a great day of learning!
- ❑ **NETWORKING NIGHT**—This evening for juniors and seniors features exceptional young alumni in a range of industries and job roles. This is a low-pressure way to meet professionals in roles that you are interested in and expand your network of connections!



Activity: My Exploration Plan

Now that you've got some ideas of how you can begin exploring, it's time to make a plan. Come up with some action steps you can take this semester to begin your vocational journey.

Questions to consider as you think about your exploration plan:

- What jobs or career fields interest me? How can I begin learning more about them?
- When should I do an internship? What organizations would I like to intern with? What would I like to learn as an intern?
- Who do I know who might be able to tell me more about their experience in an informational interview? Who could I job shadow with?
- How can the CVC help? Should I meet with my Career Coach? What events can I go to?



Activity: Debriefing My Exploration

These exploration experiences, which may include student teaching, scientific research, or a paid or unpaid internship, are valuable in helping you develop your career readiness competencies, skills, and interests. And they will help you understand your values.

Reflect on one of your recent exploration experiences and process through what you've learned from it by completing the chart on the below.

My Exploration Experience:			
	What I liked	What I didn't like	What I think that means
The People: Demographics of the employees (genders, ages, ethnicities, beliefs, etc.), the leadership of the organization, my supervisor, my peers, etc.			
The Work Culture: Structured or flexible, a lot of supervision or a lot of freedom, independent or social, the dress code, etc.			
The Work Environment: Where people work, the noise level, the lighting, the layout, etc.			
The Tasks: Computer work, meet with people, market research, data analysis, product testing, etc.			

Tip: Save a copy of this chart and use it after your next exploration experience!

My Preparation (3.2)

Now that you've built a solid foundation by developing your self-awareness and understanding your interests, skills, competencies, and values, there are still a few more steps necessary before you're ready to effectively land.

First, it is crucial to **prepare a healthy mindset** about your Landing timeframe as you're considering what you need to do to Prepare. A senior's Prepare timeline will likely look very different from that of a first year or sophomore who's still very early in the Explore stage. That said, it's never too early to begin thinking through the tools you'll need to effectively communicate your story to employers or grad schools, and start building your own Preparation Plan.

Your Preparation Toolbox

There are multiple Preparation tools you'll need in order to take the next steps on your vocational journey, and the CVC has assembled guides and resources to help you understand some of these tools. Here are the ones we recommend (Click the links to view their respective resource page on Handshake):

- ❑ **Resume**—A resume is a tailored summary of your skills and experiences, and is often the first introduction most employers will have to you. [Check out our Resume Guide on Handshake.](#)
- ❑ **Cover Letter**—A cover letter is your chance to highlight key experiences from your resume and show why you'd be a good fit for the job. [Check out our Cover Letter Guide on Handshake.](#)
- ❑ **Interview**—An interview is your chance to show an employer you have what it takes to do the job and that you'll be a good fit for the organization. Practice and preparation is *critical* for making a good impression. [Start practicing by using Big Interview, and interactive interview tool.](#)
- ❑ **LinkedIn**—LinkedIn is a professional networking social media platform that more and more employers are using to find and evaluate potential employees. Creating a compelling LinkedIn profile page can help you tell your story and really set you apart as a desirable job candidate. [Learn more about LinkedIn in the Networking Resources on Handshake.](#)
- ❑ **Drop-Ins**—Meet with CVC Ambassador or Career Coach for a quick 10-15 minute conversation about resumes, cover letters, LinkedIn, or other career topics. [Learn more about Drop-Ins.](#)
- ❑ **Industries Recruiting Timeline**—Every industry recruits a bit differently. This recruiting timeline resource can help you generate reasonable expectations for the industries you are interested in. [Check out the recruiting timeline on Handshake.](#)



Activity: My Preparation Plan

Now that you've got some ideas of how you can prepare, it's time to make a plan. Come up with some action steps you can take this semester to get ready for the next step in your vocational journey. Questions to consider as you think about your Preparation plan:

- When do I need to start applying?
- What tools do I already have? What tools do I still need to build (resume, cover letter, LinkedIn, etc.)?
- Am I ready to interview? How can I be preparing?
- How can the CVC help? Should I meet with my Career Coach or go to Drop-Ins? What Handshake resources can I use?
- When should I have some of these things ready? What deadlines can I set for myself?

My Landing (3.3)

Well done!

You've put in the hard work of drafting a blueprint for your life! You have learned to articulate your interests, skills, competencies, and values; you have built an exploration plan to see what options are out there; and you have equipped yourself with the necessary preparation tools. You are well on your way to take the next step in your vocational journey!

While you may have completed the workbook, the beauty of myStory is that it is never truly finished. The concepts you've learned in myStory are designed to be revisited again and again when you will pivot towards the next step on your vocational journey. As you well, know your first job out of college will not be your last. And with each new endeavor, you can return to the Blueprint to consider what you now know about yourself, what new vocational options should you now explore.



It can be daunting to think about the future, even after we've spent time building our Blueprint. Yet we are told throughout Scripture that *God cares for us*. Just as He cares for the lilies in the field, just as He feeds the birds in the air, so your Heavenly Father will care for you—and *all* the details of your life.



Activity: My Calling

What do I understand about my "calling" having completed myStory? That is, where can God use me in His world?

We want to thank you for slowing down to complete myStory in order to reflect on how God has uniquely wired you and is calling you to build the church and benefit society worldwide. As the Apostle Paul said, "whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. **You are serving the Lord Christ.**"

The Center for Vocation and Career's vision is that all students would develop a plan for life after graduation, have the tools necessary to implement their unique plan, and be provided ample opportunity to execute their vocational plan, as we educate them as whole persons who build the church and benefit society worldwide.



Wheaton College
For Christ and His Kingdom

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