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# Career Roadmap

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Claremont Graduate University

## *Career Development Office*

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## Introduction

Career planning can be challenging and anxiety provoking. It can seem particularly daunting if you aren't one of those people who's always known what they wanted to do, or who has felt a strong calling for a particular career path. Or maybe you thought you knew what you wanted to do, tried it and didn't like it.

The goal of this workbook is to help reduce some of the anxiety that comes with trying to figure out what you want to do/be and strategies to help you map out your career plan. It is designed for you to work at your own pace, reflect on, and return to as a guide to help you think strategically about where you want to go. You can also use this document in meetings with your advisor, mentor(s), career consultants at the Career Development Office (CDO) and anyone else you want to involve in your career journey. At the end of the document (pgs. 14-15) there is a timeline that lists all the activities involved in making your Road Map. Use this to set dates for goal completion and to track your progress for creating your Road Map.

It is also important to be flexible in your planning process. Be open to new experiences and ideas and adjust your plan as you gain new information and insights. Even if you already feel sure about what you want to do 5 years from now, things change. Additionally, the popular notion that your career should be your passion can actually be a barrier to exploration. There is not *one true career* out there that will make you happy forever. In fact, research on passion and career shows that passion for your career is an outcome of performing your tasks well over an extended period of time (10,000 hours). Thus, you can't know you are passionate about any career until you, have experience doing it. So leave passion out of the process for now and that may help reduce some of the anxiety!

Finally, an effective plan includes options for all contingencies. Going through the process of creating your plans will help you learn about yourself and open a world of possibilities you may be overlooking.

## Steps to Creating a Career Roadmap

### 1. Career Visioning?

- a) Mind Map
- b) Exploring hidden career paths

### 2. Who am I and how do I want to contribute?

- a) Strengths
- b) Interests
- c) Values

### 3. Identifying possible careers. (Resources provided later in the document)

- a) Read about different types of careers.
- b) Interview people in careers that sound interesting to you.
- c) Based on the results of your self-assessment and research, what careers seem like a good match.
- d) Identify your preparedness for these careers.

#### 4. Identify the best strategies for entering your chosen profession.

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- a) Conduct a gap analysis—what skills are you lacking for the career you desire?
- b) Which of your skills need further development?
- c) What specific steps will you take to close your skills gap?
- d) What professional organizations are relevant?
- e) How will you your network in your desired field?

#### 5. Prepare for your job hunt

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- a) Develop a branding statement.
- b) Develop tailored resumes.
- c) Write tailored cover letters.
- d) Identify the best job search resources for your chosen field, where are positions posted?
- e) Prepare for and practice interviewing.
- f) Learn to negotiate effectively.

### **Career Visioning**

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In this stage of the process don't think about job titles, industries or companies. Think broadly about how you envision yourself spending time and making a contribution. Make a mind map and use this as a reference as you move through the rest of this document. If you are struggling with words, use images from magazines you read, things you have tagged on Pinterest or Instagram, use anything that speaks to you.

#### **Mind Map :**

##### Step 1:

Get a bank sheet of paper. Choose one aspect of something you want in your career (i.e., helping people) and write that word in the center of the paper and circle it. Now write 5 or 6 words associated with that in other areas of your paper and circle them (the first words that pop into your head). For each of the 5-6 words write other words that come to mind. Don't judge, just write words that pop into your head and think fast. Set a 5 minute time limit on this so you don't overthink it. Complete Step 1 before you read step 2.

##### Step 2:

Now that you've completed the exercise, free associate and draw lines between words/images you see as connected. Now highlight a few of the words/images that really stand out for you and put them together to create concepts/groups that make sense to you. Look for patterns and concepts you are repeating. Based on what you see here, what are some new lines of career discovery you can explore? If you still lack clarity, meet with someone at the CDO so they can help you process the information.

**Exploring Hidden Career Paths**

While it's important to be thoughtful about your career and to create a plan, there are times when the plan doesn't work. Sometimes you find the career and sometimes it finds you. Part of the challenge in exploring careers is there are so many you have never heard of, so you don't know how or where to look for them. To find them, you need to broaden your horizons and find unconventional ways to explore these hidden careers.

Here are a few things you can do to start discovering unexplored career paths.

- 1. Ask at least 10 people you know to tell you the most unusual/interesting job title they have ever heard. Which are worth further exploration?

- 2. Start a conversation with someone you don't know. Tell them you are a graduate student doing research on careers, then tell them what you want in a career (no titles, just skills you want to use and contributions you want to make) and ask them if they know of a career that sounds like what you described. Do this several times and write down the titles you collect.

3. Find some people in the careers that sounded interesting to you and set up informational interviews. Which careers do you want to learn more about?

4. Think about an industry (higher education, healthcare, management consulting) you want to work in, find some organizations in that industry and start looking at the divisions within those organizations that might allow you to do the type of work you want to do.

### Who am I and How Do I Want to Contribute

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We are often our own worst critics and graduate school can make us more hypercritical of ourselves. As you move through this section, be realistic in your assessment. Compare yourself to others at a similar stage in their education/career rather than those who are more advanced. It is also helpful to enlist the views of others since we all tend to notice qualities/characteristics in others we don't see in ourselves. Also, think about what you want and don't want in your career. You may be very good at something, but you don't want it to be part of your career.

### Skills and Strengths

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1. Ask 3 friends/family members what strengths they see in you.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Ask 3 people you have worked for/with what strengths they see in you.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_

3. In a recent goal I accomplished I used the following skills and strengths.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What skills and strengths do I find myself using frequently.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_

5. I want these skills and strengths to be a major part of my work day.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_

6. I don't want to do these things as part of my job.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_

### Interests

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1. What am I doing when I lose all track of time?

2. I wish I had more time to

## Values

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Identify your top 5-7 most important values. Write a brief sentence or 2 about why they are important. Add your own values to the list if you don't see them listed here.

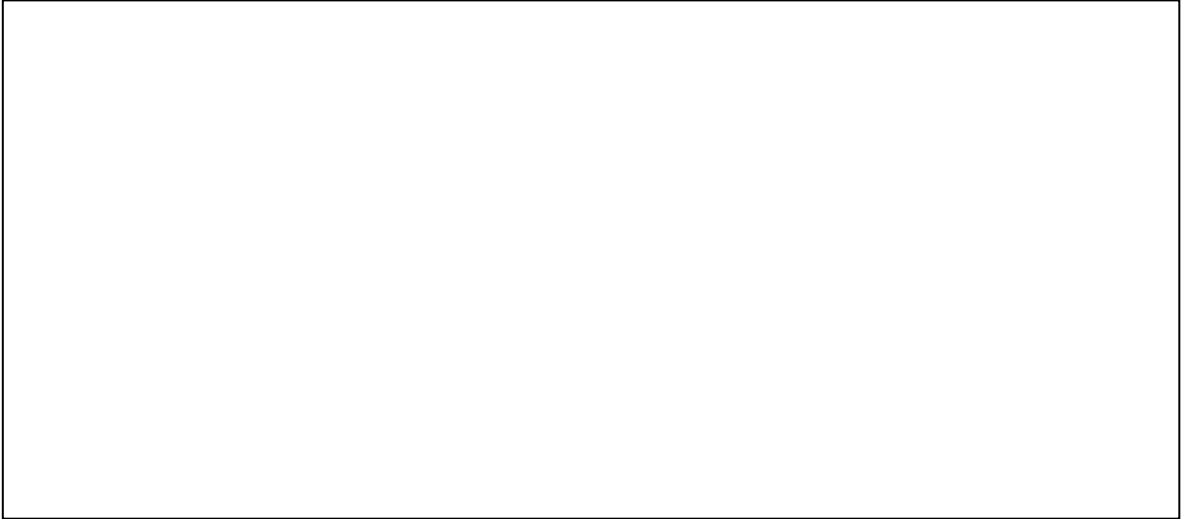
Creating things		Ongoing Learning		Mental challenge	
Flexibility		Physical challenge		Teamwork	
Integrity		Work/life balance		Predictable work	
Structure		Prestige		Fast pace	
Stability		Intellectual expertise		Advancement	
Innovation		Loyalty		Work with public	
Variety		Financial reward		Leadership	
Adventure		Public recognition		Autonomy	
Competition		Using pioneer techniques		Public recognition for work	
Low pressure		Good work relationships		Mentoring	

## Career Characteristics

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1. If money were not object, what would I do?

2. What contribution(s) do I want to make in my career?



3. What challenges do I enjoy the most?



4. What do I need to know to determine if a career is right for me?





5. Ask people who know you well, and not so well, what career(s) they see as a good match for you. Ask them to explain and take note of the characteristics of you and the career they mention.



6. What does my dream job look like?



## **Identify Possible Careers**

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### Research Career Options

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Based on the activities you have completed so far, you should have some careers that are worth further exploration. There are a variety of ways to learn more about the careers you are considering. Some careers you can research simply by reading about them and that should be your first step. However, the best way to really learn about a career is to speak to people in that career. This is also how you can begin building your network. Once you have spoken to some people in a particular career of interest, you may want to ask them if you can job shadow them for a day. This is one way you can see people in action and experience a “day in the life.” You may want to try this at a couple of different companies as well since the same job can vary depending on the company culture and industry.

Here are a few resources you can use to read about careers:

- Occupational Information Network - [www.onetonline.org/](http://www.onetonline.org/)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook - [www.bls.gov/ooh/](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/)
- Imagine PhD - <https://www.imaginephd.com/>
- Your professional association
- LinkedIn - [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com)

Here are a few resources to help you prepare to talk to people about their about careers:

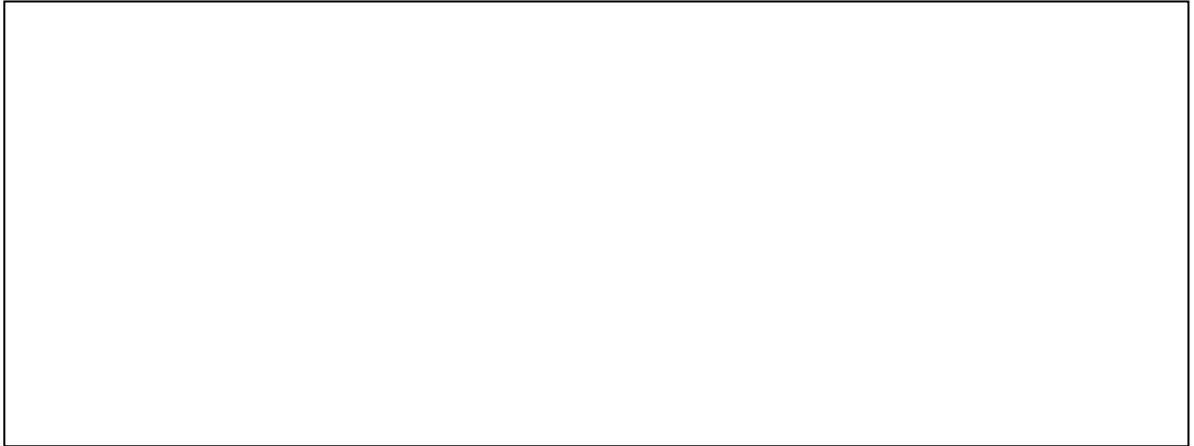
- Informational Interviews Handout—see the resources section of Handshake for this helpful guide on how to prepare for an informational interview.
- Search [LinkedIn](#) for people with careers of interest to you. Join a group related to the career(s) you are exploring. Start a discussion online that can lead to a deep one offline.
- CGU alumni networks (from both the university and your department)
- Your professional association

### Focus on Careers that Match Your Preferences

1. What careers interest me most? What makes them appealing?

2. What careers make the best use of my assets?

3. List at least 3 job titles of interest to me.



4. What more do I need to learn about my career choices?



5. What industries/employers hire people in these positions?



**Strategies for Entering your Chosen Profession**

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Once you have an idea of the job titles that match your career aspirations it is important to assess your preparedness for these careers. In the beginning of this document you did a skills and strengths analysis, so you should have a good idea of what you can do. During your career research you should have gained information about the skills and experiences required for the positions you desire. Now you need to compare your skills and experiences to the careers you will be seeking and identify the gaps in your current skills and experiences. After you've finished this, create a plan to fill those gaps.

**Gap Analysis**

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- 1. What skills and experiences do I need to gain to be competitive for the position(s) I desire?

- 2. How will I gain the skills I need?

In the table below, list the skills required for your preferred career(s). Next, determine your proficiency level for each required skill. There is another chart on the next page with a time line where can create specific strategies and a timeline for filling your skills gap. You may also want to list additional skills you have that are not be required for the position but which you can argue are value added for an employer. If you still have more than one career option you are exploring at this point (and that's totally OK) you may want to make separate charts for each.

### Gap Analysis Chart

Required Skills/Competencies for Desired Career	I have strong skills in this area	I have adequate skills in this area	I need to develop skills in this area
My additional skills I can leverage			

### Job Search Plan

Searching for a career position will take longer than you think it should. A very short job search is 3 months, an average length one is 6 months and if you want to make 6 figures, research shows that can take 1 1/2 years. If you want a short-average length search you need to know the specific career you are seeking, have your network in place and know the industry/employers you are targeting. That's why you need to figure out your preferred starting month and then work backwards to figure out when you need to begin developing your map so you are ready to actively apply for positons up to 6 months before you want to be

employed.

Are You Ready to Apply?

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1. What is my brand statement? If you don't know, see the "Branding Statement Exercise" in the resources section of Handshake.

2. I can name some specific companies where I want to work. List at least 5.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_

3. I have a network of people in the career I want to enter and at my companies of interest. List at least 3 people who can help connect you to your target career/employers.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

4. I know where to find postings for jobs of interest to me. List at least 3 job search sites specific to your career.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Create versions of your resume that effectively communicate your brand and are tailored to specific positions/companies. Have your resume and cover letters reviewed at the CDO before you apply.

## Prepare to interview

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Just getting to the interview stage takes hard work, but you're not at the finish line yet. According to research on job search outcomes, there are 59 applicants for each job, 12% will get interviews and of those 17% will get an offer. Being qualified is important, however you also need to interview well by demonstrating your qualifications and your fit. If you are being interviewed, the hiring manager believes you can probably do the job, so the interview is about whether the hiring manager thinks you'll work well with the team, fit the company culture and be easy to manage. Thus, it is a subjective process and you need to be well prepared to excel.

The CDO has resources to help you prepare. You can start with the "Interview Techniques" document in Handshake that lays out the basics for successful interviewing.

Next, check out the CDO's [YouTube](#) to watch an interview workshop or to look at our Career Bites for interviews—the bites are 5 minutes or less, so perfect if you just have a little time.

Next, when you have more time, log into [Big Interview](#), an interview preparation platform we subscribe to for you. It has instructional videos and a practice platform where you will be asked a question, you can record your response and then listen to analyze the effectiveness of your response.

Finally, nothing beats doing a mock interview where you'll get immediate feedback on how to improve your performance. You can sign up for a mock interview through Handshake. Before your interview, send the consultant your resume and the job description you are preparing to interview for. And if you want to practice well before you have an actual interview (not a bad idea), just send a job description that is similar one you'd like to interview for.

If you take all these steps you'll be very well prepared for your interviews and then you'll move to the final stage of the job search process—negotiating your job offer!

## Prepare to Negotiate

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You should be well prepared to negotiate your job offer before you even interview. It is important to feel comfortable and confident so you can negotiate successfully. Women tend to negotiate less frequently than men, which is one reason they earn less. And while you should always try to negotiate your offer, it is important to learn how to do so effectively so both you and the employer are satisfied. Think of it as a positive conversation with your future boss about what you need to be successful rather than a confrontation with an adversary. There are many resources you can use, some are listed below. You can also come to the CDO to discuss negotiation strategies with the Career Consultants.

See the Career Bites [Deciphering the Offer Letter](#) and [Negotiating the Offer](#) on the CGU [CDO YouTube](#) playlist

## Road Map Timeline

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Part of the reason people fail to reach their goals is that they don't set specific timelines for completion and track their progress. And if you're one of those people who needs to be held accountable by someone else in order to assure you are completing your tasks on schedule, then find someone who can fill that role for you. Finding a job search buddy may help you feel less anxious about your search and will give you the social support that is important during the job search process. The CDO consultants are also here to help you manage the process, you can schedule an appointment through [Handshake](#). Below is a chart you can use to track your progress. You can also find a timeline on [ImaginePhD](#) where you can drag and drop activities into a calendar.

### Phases & Activities

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Date for Completion</i>	<i>Progress</i>
<b>Self-Exploration</b>		
Identify Goals		
Complete Self-Assessments		
Generate Career Choices		
<b>Career Research</b>		
Investigate Options		
Analyze Choices		
Narrow Choices		
Select Direction		
<b>Career Preparedness</b>		
Identify Competencies		
Identify Learning Needs		
Assess Feasibility		
Create Timeline		
<b>Self-Branding</b>		
Plan Branding Strategy		
Develop Branded Materials		
Strengthen Interview Skills		
Learn About Negotiation		
Create Job Search Plan		
<b>Launch Job Search</b>		
Evaluate Opportunities		
30-60-90 Day Plan		