

1 Self Awareness

Definition

Being able to articulate your skills, interests, and values for your own clarity and decision-making - and to communicate with others.

Why it Matters

Often overlooked, understanding yourself - your strengths, skills, interests, and values - is foundational. It enables students to connect their Wake Forest experience to the world of work and confidently articulate who they are and what interests them. It is the “personal” in Personal and Career Development.

2 Career Awareness

Definition

Knowing potential career paths of interest that are aligned with your interests, values and skills.

Why it Matters

Many students have limited vision about careers - many only focus on what they’ve heard of or what their families do. Most are unaware of the range of careers available to today’s graduates.

3 Personal Branding

Definition

Having strong, updated personal-branding materials: resume, LinkedIn and Handshake profiles, and a professional introduction.

Why it Matters

A personal brand is the impression a student gives - in person, online, or on paper. A positive impression is often the difference-maker in getting hired and building a professional network.

4 Network & Relationship Building

Definition

Building and sustaining successful relationships to share knowledge and information - one person at a time.

Why it Matters

Students may not like the term “networking” and it can be helpful to reframe this step as something students have done their entire lives: build relationships. Young professionals seeking opportunities need to learn, connect and have conversations with adult professionals and employers who can offer information, perspective, and advice about careers, helpful resources and experiences, internships and jobs.

First Action

Ask your student to make two lists: what are your three strongest skills and three top topics that energize or interest you.

Deeper Dive

Take a College to Career course - see the OPCD website.

Meet a career coach or visit drop-in office hours in the OPCD or take a self-assessment.

First Action

Ask your student to create a list of three career areas to explore. For ideas, check out the “Explore Careers” page on the OPCD website.

Deeper Dive

Browse Wake Forest alumni profiles by city, career, or major on LinkedIn.

Introduce students to someone you know who works in their area of interest. See guidelines and tips for informational interviews on the OPCD website.

First Action

Suggest your student create (or update) their resume, LinkedIn and Handshake profiles using best-practice tips and examples on the OPCD website.

Deeper Dive

Guide your student to refine their LinkedIn profile and add professional experience to highlight their measurable impact on the organization.

Your student can use the “elevator pitch” worksheet on the OPCD website or work with a career coach to develop a 30 to 60-second snapshot of their interests and why they add professional value.

First Action

Help your student build 5-10 connections on LinkedIn with alumni and professionals by sending well-written personal connection requests.

Deeper Dive

Help students be prepared with a solid answer to the question, “What do you want to do after Wake Forest?”

Encourage them to share career interests with a network of “adult fans”: family, friends, and professors. They may be able to connect your student with contacts and/or opportunities.

Use LinkedIn to identify and connect with interesting alumni in companies, job function, locations and other areas of interest.

5 Interviewing Skills

Definition

Ability to conduct a formal conversation with a potential employer or admissions officer who is seeking to determine if a student is the best fit for that opportunity.

Why it Matters

Few students have experience interviewing under pressure. Opportunities may be decided based on interviews, so students must have practiced, confident, researched answers - and questions for the interviewer.

First Action

Help your student create a list of five important experiences highlighting skills and experience desired by school or organization using the STAR method on the OPCD website.

Practice talking about these experiences in front of a mirror or by recording and watching on a phone.

Deeper Dive

Help your student identify skills for the role they seek (based on the job description) and help them refine stories based on their skills and experiences.

Encourage your student to practice interviewing with you, an OPCD coach or on InterviewStream, an online mock interview practice tool on the OPCD website.

6 Professional Skills and Literacy

Definition

Having the skills, knowledge, and attitude to be effective and successful in the workplace and/or graduate school environment.

Why it Matters

For internships, first jobs and graduate school, organizations want students to arrive with workplace skills and attitudes, including etiquette, professional written communication skills, and use of business software like Excel. Skills may be learned outside the classroom, including at work, in campus organizations, and through online resources and courses.

First Action

Help your student develop new professional skills - or improve existing ones - using LinkedIn Learning courses. A link is available on the OPCD website.

Deeper Dive

Encourage students to be professional in all correspondence especially email.

Your student can develop public speaking skills by presenting in class, in an internship, or in extracurricular activities - and asking for specific feedback.

Complete advanced LinkedIn Learning courses focused on Excel, technology, project management, time management, and other necessary skills. Students can find a link to the LinkedIn Learning courses on the OPCD website.

7 Life and Leadership

Definition

Preparing for a life after college with knowledge and skills to manage personal relationships and professional choices, and to be an authentic, ethical leader contributing to the community with a spirit of Pro Humanitate.

Why it Matters

Leading an authentic and meaningful life is the core of Wake Forest's commitment to educating the whole person. To do so, it is imperative for students to not only find a job and be successful in the workplace, but to honor and focus on the development of their own character, values and strengths.

First Action

Visit the Alumni Personal & Career Development website to access tools, resources, and guidance for your student's life after college; and review/read "Five For Your First Five: Own Your Career and Life After College" to learn the five areas for young adults to master in the first five years after Wake Forest.

Deeper Dive

Encourage your student to intentionally reflect on college, first professional experiences and what they know now about their personal values, strengths, and interests.

Students can learn strategies for managing priorities and finances through CashCourse which can be found on the OPCD website.

Encourage your student to build community with people who can provide feedback, mentorship and connect to helpful resources.