

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDES

# Career Development Action Plan

The Career Development Office (CDO) has designed a two-year action plan to outline effective professional development strategies and resources available to you as a Harris Public Policy student. Your approach to the job search will be unique—shaped by your personal experiences, skills, and career objectives. Reference this action plan as a general guide to devise an approach that best fits your specific needs and goals.

## MPP CAREER DEVELOPMENT | YEAR ONE

### Take the First Steps

1. Familiarize yourself with the [CDO website](#).
2. Access your [HarrisLink](#) Account
3. Review the [Resume Approval Policy and Participation in Career Advancement document](#) and get activated for UChicago Career Advancement On-Campus Recruiting (OCR) Sessions.
4. Order Harris [Business Cards](#).
5. Review the CDO Section of the [Student Handbook](#) (27-33).

### Invest in Yourself

1. Review the [Career Development Guides](#) and attend workshops for information on preparing [application materials](#), conducting industry research, networking, interviewing, and negotiating your salary.
2. [Schedule a Counseling Appointment](#) to discuss:
  - Resume /Cover Letter Review
  - Skills and Values Clarification
  - Employment Consultation
  - Internship Consultation
  - Mock Interviews
  - Offer Review/Salary Negotiations
3. Make career decisions, set goals, and create a personal action plan.
4. Visit [UChicago Grad: Academic & Career Development](#) for information on job fairs, workshops, and campus resources.

### Build Your Network

1. Meet and network with other students, alumni, and faculty at Harris and around campus.
2. Become an active member of a [Harris Student Organization](#) related to your personal and/or professional interests.
3. Attend talks and presentations at Harris and around campus, and network with attendees and presenters.
4. Build a [LinkedIn Profile](#) to research organizations and positions that interest you, market your skills and accomplishments, and request informational interviews. Update your profile at least twice a year.
5. Take an active role in Harris and UChicago social media groups on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).
6. Use the [UChicago Alumni Directory](#) to identify UChicago alumni working in your area(s) of interest and conduct informational interviews.
7. Keep in touch with former contacts from your undergraduate institution and/or past employers.
8. Participate in the [Harris Mentor Program](#) to build a one-on-one relationship with a leading policy professional in your area of interest.

### Expand Your Awareness of Career Options

1. Review the CDO newsletter on a consistent basis for new internship and job postings and upcoming recruiting events.
2. Register for Employer Information Sessions to learn about potential organizations of interest and network with recruiters.
3. Visit the Events section in [HarrisLink](#) to identify dates and topics of Alumni Career Panels. RSVP and attend career panels to explore career options in a variety of policy areas and sectors.
4. Participate in Career Treks.
5. Monitor daily job postings on [HarrisLink](#).
6. Establish a “search agent” in [HarrisLink](#).

### Start the Job Search Process

1. Draft versions of your application materials (resumes/CVs, cover letters, personal statements, writing samples). Upload them to [HarrisLink](#). Have your materials critiqued by a CDO counselor, mentors, and/or your network.
2. Meet with those you plan to use as references and/or recommendation letter writers; share your plans and updated resume/CV with them.
3. Research each organization you are applying to and tailor your application materials to each position and employer.
4. Search for and apply to internship, fellowship, and assistantship opportunities.
5. Develop an [Employer Tracking Spreadsheet](#) to monitor employment/internship opportunities, early application deadlines, career contacts, employer information, professional organizations

### For International Students

Begin these activities in year 1 and also:

1. Familiarize yourself with the valuable information regarding maintenance of your status and related employment questions on the [Office of International Affairs \(OIA\) website](#).
2. Review our [Resources for International Students](#).
3. Use resources available to you through [OIA](#), and meet with an OIA advisor to discuss work authorization and processes.
4. Practice your English language skills through individual tutoring or a course on writing, pronunciation, and communication strategies offered by the [University of Chicago's English Language Institute](#).
5. Familiarize yourself with U.S. employment culture through interactions with American employers, alumni, students, faculty, and staff members.

## MPP CAREER DEVELOPMENT | YEAR TWO

In addition to continuing relevant activities from year one:

### Key First Steps

1. Update your resume with your summer employment and/or volunteer contributions, evaluations, and accomplishments.
2. Refresh your LinkedIn profile adding your summer work experience.
3. Assess your satisfaction with skills developed through your summer experience(s) by revisiting and revising your interest/value assessment and resume.
4. Ask your supervisor and/or a colleague if he or she would consider serving as a reference.
5. Update profile and resume in [HarrisLink](#).

### Invest in Yourself

1. Meet with a CDO counselor to assess summer experience(s), update resume, and discuss post-graduation job search strategy.
2. Review your job search goals and revise your action plan as needed.
3. Prepare an alternative post-graduation job search strategy.
4. Use career development resources offered at professional organizations and/or scholarly society conferences or on their websites.
5. Evaluate job offer(s) based on career goals, financial needs, and long-term objectives.

### Expand Your Awareness of Career Options

1. Conduct informational interviews with Alumni and other professionals in your field(s) of interest.
2. Leverage connections made through academic, co-curricular, alumni and professional experiences to learn about various organizations, policy areas of interest, and key industry trends.
3. Identify specific job titles of interest and conduct informational interviews with employed professionals in those positions.

### Build Your Network

1. Once you understand the types of organizations, positions, and sectors of interest to you, leverage social media tools to communicate with alumni and professionals in those fields. In particular, use your LinkedIn account to research the backgrounds and current projects of individuals working in your target organizations. Request informational interviews before applying to positions within their organizations.
2. Identify additional mentors as needed for career goals.
3. Update your [University Profile](#) at [my.uchicago.edu](http://my.uchicago.edu).
4. Get an [alumni email account](#) at [cnet.uchicago.edu/forwarding](http://cnet.uchicago.edu/forwarding).  
(\*\*cMail accounts will close two quarters after graduation)

### Continue the Job Search Process

1. Update application materials (resume(s), CVs, cover letters, personal statements, writing samples) as needed.
2. Keep references/recommendation letter writers informed of your progress.
3. Search for and apply to full-time, fellowship, and/or post-doc openings.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Capitalize on your time as a student. In addition to individual counseling appointments, attend career development workshops, employer recruiting events, alumni career panels, and networking events.

Commit an appropriate amount of time each week to your job search.

Maintain a professional online presence.

Plan to research organizations, apply for positions, and conduct informational and formal interviews early and often for optimal results.

Develop and maintain a professional network—this is a critical component of effective career development.