

ProReady Planning Guide

for international students



How do I become ProReady?

ProReady is an initiative to prepare every student in the College of Engineering and Applied Science for career success in their chosen field. Using the ProReady Formula (icons on the left), consult the Planning Guide for International Students for suggested activities. Visit the ProReady website for more details!

1st year:



Chart Your
Career Path

- Meet with an academic advisor: map your foundational, department, and elective courses. Consider enrolling in COEN 1830: First-Year Experience seminar.
- Explore your career options: meet with Engineering Career Services, review internship and job descriptions, and research companies
- Develop a first draft of your résumé and have it reviewed by Engineering Career Services
- Meet with the Director of Entrepreneurship to discuss your entrepreneurial interests and learn about available resources
- Keep your GPA as high as possible: seek out academic coaching, international student tutoring, study groups, English tutoring, academic culture workshops, and professors' office hours
- Build your weekly calendar: classes, exams, deadlines, work, study, ProReady activities, and fun
- Familiarize yourself with curricular practical training (CPT) and optional practical training (OPT) policies. Note any GPA and class standing requirements.



Gain Relevant
Experience

- Activate and complete your Handshake account
- Research internships and part-time/summer jobs in career fields of interest
- Seek out a volunteer opportunity through your department, a student organization, or the CU Volunteer Resource Center
- Start exploring study abroad options. Consider going abroad after your 1st or 2nd year to allow time for future internships or other experiences
- Enroll in a first-year Engineering Projects course
- Gain basic entrepreneurial exposure by participating in Hackathons, attending workshops to develop your maker skills, or starting a personal project
- Consider applying for an on-campus job to gain U.S. work experience



Grow Your
Professional Network

- Join a student organization related to your current/potential major or career interest. Talk with students already in that major to decide which organization is right for you.
- Attend career fairs, Buff Talks, and Show & Techs to learn more about career paths and start building your network contacts
- Seek out a professional mentor or join a mentorship program in your department, if available
- Start your LinkedIn account and join college/department groups
- Attend Founder Fireside Chats to network and learn from local entrepreneurs
- Attend career services workshops specifically designed for international students

2nd year:



Chart Your Career Path

- Declare your major/minor, if you have not done so already
- Meet with Engineering Career Services to clarify your interests, skills, and values. Develop a plan to Gain Relevant Experience and learn about hiring timelines and recruitment trends in your field.
- Update your résumé, draft a cover letter, and have them reviewed by Engineering Career Services
- Schedule a mock interview appointment with Engineering Career Services or utilize the InterviewStream online system to practice on your own
- If you are considering graduate school, talk to an academic advisor, Engineering Career Services, or faculty member about timelines and preparation
- Attend CPT workshops through International Students and Scholar Services (ISSS)



Gain Relevant Experience

- Strengthen essential professional skills by taking on leadership roles in student organizations, obtaining a part-time job, or volunteer experience
- Study abroad in the summer after your 2nd year; pay close attention to application deadlines
- Consider internships using CPT for the summer after your 2nd year; visit the ProReady website or Handshake for a full list of options. Internships may be technical or administrative-focused.
- Talk to your academic advisor about internship for credit; earn between 3-6 free elective credits in many departments
- Consider applying for summer research opportunities both on and off campus
- Participate in entrepreneurial experiences, including New Venture Challenge, hackathons, and enrolling in the Engineering Entrepreneurship Minor



Grow Your Professional Network

- Develop strong connections with your professors, academic advisors, work supervisors, and peers and discuss your professional goals with them. Maintain ties with these connections for future professional references or recommendations for graduate school.
- Continue to meet company recruiters through career fairs, company info sessions and mock interviews
- Reach out to professional contacts in your home country or future countries of interest
- Continue your involvement in student organizations and take on more of a leadership role
- Join a professional association or society in your field—an annual student membership is usually \$40 or less
- Meet with an Entrepreneurial Mentor to discuss your ideas for a product or service
- Update your LinkedIn profile content and a professional head shot. Connect with CU Boulder alumni to begin making connections for future career opportunities.
- Order business cards and purchase a quality portfolio to use at career fairs, networking events, and interviews
- Consider enrolling in the Engineering Leadership Program

3rd year



Chart Your Career Path

- Review your degree audit with your academic advisor to ensure you're on track to graduate
- Meet with Engineering Career Services to refine your interests and internship search plan
- Review and update your resume. Upload your application materials to Handshake and make your profile visible to employers.
- Review job and internship postings on Handshake and begin to apply. Meet with Engineering Career Services to learn about recruitment timelines for your chosen career field.
- Familiarize yourself with OPT policies, requirements, and deadlines
- Work with your academic advisor to discuss whether the Entrepreneurial Capstone option would be the right experience for you
- If you plan to attend graduate school after graduation:
 - Identify graduate school programs that meet your educational and career goals
 - Become familiar with admissions procedures, including any required standardized exams
 - Develop your application materials and meet with Engineering Career Services to review your personal statement
 - Seek out research experience or an internship to prepare for graduate work
 - Begin obtaining letters of recommendation from faculty for your graduate school applications



Gain Relevant Experience

- Using CPT, complete an internship and add it to your resume. It's most common for students to intern between their 3rd and 4th years. Consider interning at a startup to see if small company culture is a fit for you.
- Seek out another volunteer opportunity through your department, student organizations or the CU Volunteer Resource Center
- Connect with faculty members in your department for teaching or lab assistant positions
- Continue to seek out research experience on/off campus
- Apply to be a COEN 1830 Peer Mentor, Engineering Launch Leader, or Student Ambassador
- Participate in additional entrepreneurial experiences: be a team lead in the New Venture Challenge competition, enroll in an Experiential Entrepreneurship elective course, or apply to the Catalyze CU startup accelerator program



Grow Your Professional Network

- Continue to expand your professional connections via LinkedIn
- Reach out to professional contacts and CU Engineering alumni (LinkedIn) with similar interests to learn about their career path
- Attend career fairs and employer information sessions in your field of interest. Begin doing in-depth research into companies you will target for internships or full-time employment.
- Continue your involvement in student organizations: seek out a formal leadership role and attend events and conferences
- Attend Entrepreneur Mentor networking events and skills workshops

4th year



Chart Your Career Path

- Meet with Engineering Career Services to develop a customized job search strategy
 - Apply for OPT if interested in working in the U.S. and attend an OPT workshop through ISSS at least 90 days prior to your program end date
 - Launch your job search in your home country or other country of interest
- Continue researching companies and organizations you wish to pursue for employment
- Implement your full-time job search 6-9 months prior to graduation. Peak hiring season for employers: September-October in the fall | January-March in the spring
- Polish your résumé, cover letters, and interview skills. Create an online portfolio of your work or personal brand website.
- Prepare for professional life after college. Develop your professional wardrobe, learn salary negotiation skills, and understand your personal finances.
- If you haven't yet studied abroad, CU allows you to go during the summer right after graduation
- If you are attending graduate school after graduation:
 - Meet with an academic advisor, a faculty member, or Engineering Career Services to finalize your application before submitting. Application deadlines are typically late fall to early spring.
 - Provide your references ample time to write a recommendation letter, as well as a template and resume to guide their writing



Gain Relevant Experience

- Excel in your Senior Design project and add it to your resume
- Serve as a peer mentor or Student Ambassador for the College or your department
- Enroll in an independent study course to work on an interdisciplinary, research, or entrepreneurial project
- Continue to seek out research experience on/off campus; visit the ProReady website or Handshake for a full list of options
- Study and sit for the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Exam
- Participate in the Catalyze CU summer accelerator or the New Venture Challenge competition. Many graduating students use these experiences as a launch pad for their company.



Grow Your Professional Network

- Network with employers as much as possible by attending career fairs, employer panels, and other special events
- Connect with your professional network contacts for leads on potentially unposted jobs. Ask them to serve as a future professional reference for you.
- Utilize resources from professional associations or societies that you belong to, including networking and job searching
- Network with fellow entrepreneurs, mentors and investors to gain exposure to the vibrant startup community in Colorado
- Stay connected to CU Engineering after graduation through alumni events around the world, including Regional Alumni Networks and virtual events