

Chart your personalized path to career success

ProReady Planning Guide



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, consult the Planning Guide for suggested activities for each year of your undergraduate CU Engineering career. Visit the ProReady [website](#) for more details!

1st year:



Chart Your
Career Path

- Meet with an academic advisor to map your foundational, department, and elective courses. Consider an academic minor to expand your interests and distinguish yourself to employers
- Explore your career options: meet with Engineering Career Services ([ECS](#)), review internship and job descriptions, and research companies
- Prioritize your academic success and GPA by seeking out academic coaching, tutoring, study groups, office hours as needed
- Build your weekly calendar: classes, exams, deadlines, work, study, ProReady activities, and fun
- Consider how Humanities & Social Science (H&SS) + elective courses can help your career goals
- Develop a first draft of your resume and work with an ECS Career Peer Mentor or use the [VMock](#) online review platform to have it reviewed
- Connect with [ESCEND](#), the college's innovation and entrepreneurship center, to discuss your interests and learn about available programs and resources



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 or the [Volunteer Resource Center](#)
- Apply for summer and 2nd year [study abroad programs](#); consider summer abroad in your first 2 years to allow for future internships, research, or other experiences
- Consider enrolling in a first-year Engineering Projects course
- Gain entrepreneurship exposure by participating in Hackathons, attending maker space workshops, or starting a personal project



Grow Your
Professional Network

- Join a student organization or society related to your current/potential major or career interests. Talk with students already in that major to decide which organization is right for you.
- [Attend](#) career fairs, company info sessions, and networking events to learn more about career paths and start building your network contacts
- Seek out a professional mentor or join a [mentorship program](#), such as department-based programs or the Kiewit Design-Build Scholars program
- Create an account on [LinkedIn](#) and [Forever Buffs Network](#) and join college/department groups

2nd year:



Chart Your Career Path

- Declare your major/minor, if you have not done so already
- Prioritize your academic success and GPA by seeking out academic coaching, tutoring, study groups, office hours as needed
- Meet with [ECS](#) 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 an ECS Career Peer Mentor
- Hone your behavioral and technical interview skills by utilizing [Interview Prep](#), an online mock interview platform
- If you are considering graduate school, talk to your academic advisor, faculty members, or attend an Intro to Graduate School workshop to learn about timelines and preparation



Gain Relevant Experience

- Strengthen your [Skills for Success](#) by taking on leadership roles in student club or society, obtaining a part-time job, or volunteer experience
- Seek internships 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 3 free elective credits in *most* departments, or technical elective credits in *some* departments
- Consider applying for [summer research opportunities](#), including Discovery Learning Apprenticeship (DLA), Summer Program for Undergraduate Research (SPUR), University Research Opportunities Program (UROP), or NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) sites. You can also participate in research abroad.
- Plan for your [study abroad](#) experience with the director of International Programs and your academic advisor
- 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
- Continue to [meet company recruiters](#) through career fairs, company info sessions, and mock interviews
- Continue your [involvement](#) in student clubs and societies and take on a leadership role
- Join a state, regional, or national professional association or society in your field—an annual student membership is usually \$40 or less
- Connect with [ESCEND](#) for an introduction to an entrepreneurial mentor to discuss your ideas for a product or service
- Update your [LinkedIn](#) and [Forever Buffs Network](#) profile and connect with CU Boulder alumni for future career opportunities. Consider taking a free professional [headshot](#) through ECS.
- Order business cards and purchase a quality padfolio to use at career fairs, networking events, and interviews
- Consider taking a course through the [Engineering Leadership](#) program, which can lead to an eventual certificate

3rd year



Chart Your Career Path

- Review your degree audit with your academic advisor to ensure you're on track to graduate
- Meet with [ECS](#) 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. Check with ECS to learn about recruitment timelines for your chosen career field.
- If you are considering graduate school:
 - Identify graduate school programs that meet your educational and career goals. Consider Bachelor Accelerated Master's (BAM) programs at CU Engineering
 - Become familiar with admissions procedures, including any required entrance exams
 - Develop your application materials and meet with ECS 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

- 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 clubs and societies, or the [Volunteer Resource Center](#)
- Connect with faculty members in your department for teaching or lab assistant positions
- Continue to seek out [research experience](#) such as DLA, SPUR, UROP, NSF REUs, independent study, research abroad, and more
- Apply to be a department peer mentor, Engineering Launch Leader, or [Student Ambassador](#)
- Participate in additional [ESCEND](#) experiences: be a team lead in the New Venture Challenge competition, enroll in an Engineering Entrepreneurship elective course, or apply to the Catalyze CU startup accelerator program
- Study, intern, or conduct research [abroad](#) before your Senior Project



Grow Your Professional Network

- Continue to expand your professional connections via [LinkedIn](#) or [Forever Buffs Network](#). Reach out to professional contacts and CU Engineering alumni with similar interests to learn about their career path
- [Attend](#) career fairs and company 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 clubs and societies: seek out a formal leadership role and attend events and conferences
- Attend [ESCEND](#) networking events and skills workshops

4th year



Chart Your Career Path

- Meet with [ECS](#) to develop a customized job search strategy
- 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 job 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 a faculty member or ECS 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 in your department or [Student Ambassador](#) for the College or your
- 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 and [Regional Alumni Networks](#)