The Senior Launch

Preparing for Life After College

Graduation is more than finishing classes. It is a transition into a new rhythm of work, relationships, finances, responsibility, and growth. You do not need your entire life figured out before you graduate. But you can start preparing now for what comes next.

1. GET CLEAR ON WHAT YOU WANT
Before jumping into applications, take time to think about what you actually want from your next step.

Ask yourself:

- What kind of work sounds meaningful or interesting to me?
- What values do I want my work and life to reflect?
- What type of environment brings out my best work?
- What am I good at?
- What do other people consistently come to me for?
- What am I willing to try, even if I am not completely sure it is the right fit?

Remember: Your first job does not have to be your forever job. Look for a next step that gives you experience, relationships, and a better understanding of yourself.

2. BUILD YOUR CAREER TOOLKIT
Do not wait until you find the perfect job posting to start preparing.

Before graduation:

- Update your resume and learn how to tailor it to specific positions.
- Create or update your LinkedIn profile.
- Practice a 30-second introduction about who you are, what you have done, and what you are looking for.
- Practice answering interview questions out loud.
- Know how to write a professional follow-up and thank-you email.
- Review how you present yourself both online and in person.
- Identify professional references and ask for their permission before listing them.

The goal is to be ready when an opportunity comes your way.

3. START NETWORKING NOW
Networking does not have to feel awkward or transactional. At its core, networking is simply building relationships and learning from people.

Start with the people already around you:

- Professors
- Supervisors
- Coaches
- Alumni
- Family friends
- Employers
- Professionals in fields that interest you

Ask people about their careers. Request informational conversations. Attend career fairs, employer visits, workshops, panels, and networking events.

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You can also ask: “What do you wish you knew when you were starting your career?”

A strong network is not a list of people you can ask for jobs. It is a community of relationships you continue building over time.

4. LEARN THE BASICS OF WORKING LIFE
Getting a job is only one part of transitioning out of college.

Take time to understand:

- How to evaluate a job offer
- Salary expectations for your field
- How salary negotiation works
- Health insurance and employee benefits
- Retirement plans
- Taxes and take-home pay
- Paid time off
- Professional communication
- Workplace expectations
- Creating a realistic monthly budget
- Work-life balance

College provides a built-in schedule and structure. After graduation, you will be responsible for creating much more of that structure yourself.

5. KEEP EXPLORING
Graduating does not mean you have to stop learning or have everything figured out.

Consider:

- Shadowing someone in a career that interests you.
- Having conversations with people in roles you have never considered.
- Researching graduate school if it supports a specific career goal.
- Exploring job titles beyond the obvious options connected to your major.
- Learning a new skill.
- Trying something you have always wanted to do.
- Continuing to attend professional and networking events.

Stay curious. Your degree is a foundation, not the end of your education.

6. PREPARE FOR THE TRANSITION, NOT JUST THE JOB
Life after college is about more than employment.

Think about:

- Where you want to live.
- What kind of community you want around you.
- How you will maintain friendships when everyone is no longer in the same place.
- Who your mentors will be.

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- How you will build new relationships and community.
- What routines will support your faith, relationships, health, finances, and personal growth. What you want your life outside of work to look like.

It is normal for graduation to bring both excitement and uncertainty. You are leaving a season of life with built-in community and structure and beginning one where you will create much more of it yourself.

YOUR SENIOR LAUNCH CHECKLIST

- ❑ Resume updated and ready to tailor
- ❑ LinkedIn profile updated
- ❑ Professional references identified and asked
- ❑ 30-second introduction practiced
- ❑ At least three professional connections made in a field of interest
- ❑ Interview answers practiced
- ❑ Job search plan created
- ❑ Post-graduation budget created
- ❑ Salary expectations researched
- ❑ Benefits and job offers understood
- ❑ Mentor or trusted professional identified
- ❑ Plan for continued learning and professional growth
- ❑ A next step identified, even if the entire plan is not

QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING BEFORE YOU GRADUATE

- *What do I want my life to look like outside of work?*
- *What does meaningful work mean to me?*
- *What am I most excited about after graduation?*
- *What am I most nervous about?*
- *Who are the people I want to stay connected with?*
- *What is one opportunity I could pursue this month that would move me forward?*
- *Who could I ask for advice, an introduction, a job shadow, or an informational conversation?*

Adapted from Deborah J. Cohan, "Higher Education Needs a Senior Launch," HigherEdJobs, April 13, 2026.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT ALONE.
Career Services can help with career exploration, resumes and cover letters, internships, job searching, interview preparation, networking, graduate school decisions, and figuring out your next step.

Need help? Book a meeting with Career Services!

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CORBAN UNIVERSITY | **Office of Career Services**