

# SUCCESS STRATEGY 1: ACADEMIC PLANNING

## DUE: SEPTEMBER 14 AT 11:00 P.M.

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### OVERVIEW

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The two most dreaded questions when you start college are *what will you major in* and *what do you want to be when you grow up*? These are annoying for any college freshman who is just trying to figure out which direction is up, but it's particularly vexing when you tell someone that you are a student in the School of Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication. Even if you start your ATEC career with a sense that you want to focus on animation, EMAC, or gaming, many students change their mind as they discover new interests and skills.

At this point, any academic plan you make will likely evolve throughout your time at UTD, whether because your interests change, scheduling conflicts interfere with your plan, or any other number of reasons – but that does not negate the importance of developing an academic plan. In fact, it heightens its importance. An academic plan allows you to map out short, medium, and long-term components of an academic goal. It creates a framework that supports constant goal setting, evaluation, and revision to make sure that you stay on track even as that track may change.

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### DEVELOPING YOUR ACADEMIC PLAN

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An academic plan extends the suggested four-year curriculum contained in your orientation booklet. Rather than just replicating a generic form, you should personalize it to develop a road map for what prescribed electives and core courses you hope to take. This means that you should determine what prerequisites you must satisfy and consider when courses are offered (not every course is offered every semester).

To develop your academic plan, describe what you want to concentrate on while studying in the School of Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication, then map the courses you need to take to get there. You may follow the suggested four-year plan as a template, but you need to specify courses. The following questions should help you create your plan.

1. Concentration Area
  - 1.1. Identify what you currently plan to focus on in your degree. Are you interested in animation? EMAC? Gaming? Sound design? UX/UI design? Why does this interest you?
  - 1.2. What are the three most important prescribed electives for you to take? Why are you emphasizing these courses? (There is no secret right answer here – these are what you consider most important for your interests or goals.)
  
2. Four Year Plan

- 2.1. Using the attached “Four Year Plan Template,” develop an academic program that allows you to complete your degree in your preferred concentration area in four years.
- 2.2. Review the list of minors available in the UT Dallas 2016 Undergraduate Catalog. Select one that interests you and incorporate it into your four-year plan.
- 2.3. What critical dependencies must you accommodate to make this work?
- 2.4. How quickly can you complete your core curriculum? Why would you want to complete it early?

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## ***EVALUATION***

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I will assess your academic plan based on how well it:

- Demonstrates an understanding of the core curriculum,
- Analyzes critical dependencies that affect course sequencing, and
- Creates a plan that will satisfy major requirements in a timely fashion.

## SUCCESS STRATEGY 2: GOAL SETTING

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### OVERVIEW

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Setting goals empowers you and builds your self-confidence as you focus on your personal experiences and ambitions rather than just doing what everyone else does. In general, setting goals focuses your attention on critical activities and ignores less important ones. In particular, challenging goals lead to greater effort and persistence toward completing goals. Without careful planning, you might find yourself making arbitrary, random decisions about what to do and when to do it – potentially sidetracking yourself or procrastinating.

In other words, goal setting creates a road map for success. Setting effective, SMART goals can help you maximize your academic success and achieve other life goals. SMART goals are *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound* – creating realistic constraints that increase the likelihood that you will meet your goals.

You cannot “do” a goal; you can only do steps to accomplish a goal. For example, if you set out to make an A on a final paper in a class, you need to figure out what steps will increase the likelihood that you will earn that A. These could include developing a schedule for brainstorming, researching, drafting, and revising the paper; visiting your professor during office hours for feedback; visiting the writing center; and proofreading.

To make your goals more effective, try to

- State your goals in positive rather than negative terms.
- Set realistic goals.
- Make your goals compatible with your personality and lifestyle.
- Develop personal goals – you won’t likely accomplish a goal you don’t really value.

**SPECIFIC:** States clearly what will happen, why it should happen, what constraints apply, etc.

**MEASURABLE:** Identifies quantifiable criteria for measuring progress toward goal attainment

**ACHIEVABLE:** Defines goals that are neither out of reach (unrealistic) or below standard performance (meaningless)

**RELEVANT:** Establishes goals that matter – whether in alignment with other goals or in terms of your larger team or organization

**TIME-BOUND:** Sets a target date to define a time frame for completion

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### FORMULATING ACADEMIC GOALS

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Use the template attached to this assignment to set long, intermediate, and short term goals. The following questions may help you formulate your goals.

**Long Term Goal:** Long term goals are major life targets that may take years to achieve. Identify and describe one long term career goal, explaining why it matters to you. The following questions may help you think and develop a SMART goal.

- Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
- What kind of work are you doing?
- Why does this goal matter to you?
- Aside from money, what satisfaction does this goal provide?

**Intermediate Goal:** Goals that you may attain within a few years.

- What do you need to accomplish at UTD to help you reach your long term goal?
- What can you do in the next two years to make progress toward focusing your efforts on a long term goal?

Sample Intermediate Term Goals

(all need refinement to qualify as SMART goals)

- Engage in undergraduate research opportunities
- Serve in leadership roles in campus activities
- Research graduate school requirements
- Connect with mentors
- Develop marketable skills
- Participate in internship or study abroad

**Short Term Goal:** Goals that may be reached in a year or less and require action now or in the near future.

- What will you accomplish and by what date?
- What specific resources/knowledge/skills must you acquire?
- How will you determine whether you have met your goal?
- How will you prove you have met your goal?

Sample Short Term Goals

(all need refinement to qualify as SMART goals)

- Maintain a GPA of \_\_\_\_\_
- Improve academic skills
- Use academic support services
- Get involved in campus activities
- Locate financial resources
- Explore career options

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## **EVALUATION**

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I will assess your goal setting worksheet based on how well it reflects a thoughtful response that develops SMART goals that will contribute to your success at UTD and beyond.

# SUCCESS STRATEGY 3: CAREER PLANNING

Due: October 7, 2016 11:00 p.m.

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## OVERVIEW

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For Success Strategy 3, we are revisiting the vexing question of what you want to do when you grow up.

*He or she who gets hired is not necessarily the one who can do the job best but the one who knows the most about how to get hired.*

- *Richard Lathrop, Who's Hiring Who?*

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## DEVELOPING YOUR CAREER PLAN

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Your career plan should demonstrate that you are developing a clear sense of what career paths look like and how to enter the job market. You also should be able to demonstrate the beginnings of a professional network that will help you enter the job market. These questions should help get you started.

- What do you want to do?
  - Identify your top three career options based on your interests.
    - What is your rationale for choosing these careers?
    - What are the qualifications for those careers? (Identify key performance requirements associated with the job. What factors define or contribute to success? Identify both the technical/hard skills and soft skills linked to the job.)
  - What are the salaries/compensation structure?
  - What job progression/career path options can you expect with these positions?
- What can you do to prepare while you're at UTD?
  - What Career Center workshops, events, or services will help you find such a position?
  - What student organizations will help you prepare for such a career?
  - What internships are available?
  - How can you develop a network to help you find such a career?
    - What alumni can you connect with for informational interviews or possible connections?
    - What DFW-based organizations or resources are available for your chosen career path?
    - What professional and trade associations exist?
    - How can you connect with these?

- How can you develop professional credibility as a student moving into your chosen career track? (Be specific.)
- What will you need to do to remain current in your field after you graduate from UTD?

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***EVALUATION***

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I will assess your career plan based on how well it demonstrates thoughtful and complete responses that explore multiple options and reflects a realistic approach to developing a professional presence.

## SUCCESS STRATEGY 4: PERSONALITY INVENTORY

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### OVERVIEW

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With this assignment, we are shifting from thinking about *what* your career goals are to *how* to get there. When they think about how their abilities translate into careers, people often focus primarily on work content skills developed for specific jobs or positions. Such skills could include proficiency in software, such as Maya or Adobe Creative Suite; programming skills; editing skills; managing large projects; or social media management. These skills are important, but they do not provide enough foundation for a successful career.

When multiple applicants share similar work content skills, employers often differentiate among them based on functional (also sometimes called transferable) skills and adaptive skills. Functional skills include the talents and aptitudes that you can transfer from one job to another, such as communication, interpersonal, organizing, time management, analytical, creative, and team skills. You develop adaptive skills from life experiences. Such skills can include flexibility, motivation, decisiveness, responsibility, positivity, leadership, commitment, confidence, and enthusiasm. People often group these sets of skills under the broad label of “soft skills.”

Personality inventories identify characteristics often considered soft skills: your strengths, weaknesses, temperament, and leadership style. While they rarely produce any surprises, personality inventories can give you a new level of self-awareness and focus your attention on unique functional and adaptive skills. They highlight core attitudes, behaviors, values and strengths. Once you have identified your strengths, you can better relate them to the needs of specific employers when you enter the job market.

One word of caution when interpreting your personality inventory: No personality inventory determines your destiny. Just as you can use them to determine what areas you excel in, you also can use them to identify areas that would benefit from improvement. If you figure out now that your natural tendency is to prefer to work independently, you have your college career to work on learning to adapt to the collaborative work style that dominates so many careers that our students enter.

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### UNDERSTANDING YOUR PERSONALITY INVENTORY

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There is no single most-accurate personality inventory, and no inventory gives a complete set of results. For this assignment, you will take two inventories. Each will take approximately 20-30 minutes.

- Complete the Focus 2 personality inventory located at <https://www.utdallas.edu/career/secure/webresources.html> (you will need to login

using your UTD NetID and password, then select Focus 2 roughly two-thirds of the way down the page – pay attention to directions about how to set up your account)

- Complete the KeirseY Temperament Sorter located at <http://keirseY.com/sorter/register.aspx>

You should also have someone who knows you well (but not a relative or romantic partner) complete the KeirseY Temperament Sorter with you in mind. In other words, have someone else rate YOU – not themselves.

After all three inventories have been completed, reflect on the results. Your reflection should summarize your results, then consider what they mean. The following questions may help focus your thinking:

- How do the descriptions generated by you and the other person compare?
  - Were you surprised by any of your results? Any of the other person's results?
  - How do you account for any differences in the two results? What insight does this offer about different perceptions of you?
- How will these personality characteristics affect your functioning during your time at UTD and beyond?
  - How will your strengths benefit you in your chosen career?
  - How can you overcome any weaknesses or deficits? Please be specific.
  - How can you communicate your strengths to potential employers?

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## ***EVALUATION***

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I will assess your personality inventory reflection based on how well it demonstrates thoughtful responses that use this information productively to plan for success.

# SUCCESS STRATEGY 5&6: REVISED COURSEPLAN AND RESUME

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## OVERVIEW

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With this assignment, you will plan for your academic success as well as your professional success.

The first part of this assignment asks you to revisit Success Strategy 1: Academic Planning. You completed this Success Strategy early in the semester. Likely, some things have changed since then, potentially including your interest in ATEC topics *and* the availability of classes next semester. As such, this assignment asks you to revisit and re-plan your 4-year schedule. Is there a course next semester that you planned to take but isn't being offered? Is there a class you really want to take, but didn't know about until recently? Has your advisor suggested courses you neglected to include on your first course plan? Account for these and other changes as you re-complete the 4-year course plan.

The second part of this assignment asks you to create a resume. Over the last few weeks we've talked about ways to begin professionalizing yourself. We've talked about personality inventories, portfolios, and resumes. Now, you'll need to make your own.

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## DEVELOPING YOUR REVISED PLAN

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1. Open the excel sheet you submitted for Success Strategy 1.
  - 1.1. Review the course you planned to take and the order you planned to take them.
  - 1.2. Revise your 4-year schedule based on interest and availability of courses.
  - 1.3. Save your revised file as SS5Schedule.yourname.
2. Write a brief reflection in which to account for the changes you made to your schedule. In other words, communicate what is different between SS1 and SS5.
  - 2.1. Save this file as SS5Reflection.yourname.

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## DEVELOPING YOUR RESUME

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1. [Determine what type of resume you need](#): chronological, functional, combination, or targeted.
2. Research free and available templates that you might use to your advantage.
3. Compose a resume that highlights both your professional experience, education, talents, skills, and personality.
4. Save your file as SS6.yourname

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## EVALUATION

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You must upload three files to eLearning for this assignment – Your updated course schedule, your brief reflection on changes you made to your schedule, and your resume.

I will assess your assignment based on how well it demonstrates thoughtful responses that use the available information to plan for your academic and professional success.