

GRADUATE CAREER LITERACY

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FIRST-YEAR GRAD

Your first year as a graduate student is highlighted by learning how to manage graduate-level coursework and Graduate Assistantship (GA) expectations, potentially acclimating to a new collegiate environment, and understanding the “behind-the-scenes” of student affairs.

Use the following checklist to prepare for common milestones and challenges associated with being a first-year graduate student.

- Establish check-ins and expectations with your supervisor on day one.**
Your supervisor is one of your biggest advocates and consistently informing them of how you are feeling as you navigate your graduate career is important in your transition to life in student affairs.
- Learn as much as you can about office and institutional expectations.**
Talk with other staff members in your office to learn about what is expected of you as a graduate assistant.
- Organize your schedule to allocate appropriate time for office hours, courses, and additional meetings.**
Being able to manage your time with competing responsibilities is key to succeeding as a graduate student. Understand what needs to be a priority and what can be put on the backburner for a later date.
- Ask what professional development opportunities your office and institution can provide you.**
Having opportunities to strengthen your skills and build your network are just as important as your time in the office and classroom. Ask your supervisor about professional development funding and opportunities to attend conferences, workshops, etc.
- Reflect on what experiences you can gain from a practicum site(s).**
The purpose of a practicum is to gain additional skills and perspectives in other student affairs functional areas. When looking through practicum site options, think about what skills you are currently missing and seek out the opportunities that make you a well-rounded future professional.
- Seek out mentorship from other professionals in student affairs.**
Having a support system throughout your time as a graduate student is extremely beneficial, especially when entering the internship and job search processes.

NODA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

NODA offers a platform to facilitate the matching of motivated, quality students with challenging, exciting orientation, transition, and retention (OTR) positions at NODA member institutions across the United States and Canada.

The NODA Internship platform offers both candidates and host institutions:

- Standardized candidate profiles and job postings.
 - Centralized communication and timeline.
 - Application management.
 - Confirmation of candidate/internship matches.
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A NODA Internship offers graduate students benefits, such as:

- Gaining valuable insight into varied methods of planning and implementing OTR programs.
 - Expanding your knowledge based and understanding of diversity in programs.
 - Developing an extensive support and mentor base.
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To prepare for the NODA Internship process, consider:

Talking with individuals who have previously completed a NODA Internship about their experience.



Understanding the benefits and challenges associated with being a NODA Intern prior to applying can help you focus on your “non-negotiables” and what you are looking to gain from the experience.

Getting feedback on your resume/cover letter from colleagues or visit your institution’s Career Center.



Resume building is a skill you acquire over time! Getting feedback on your resume/cover letter from a professional(s) can help you market yourself as the graduate student everyone wants on their team.

Reviewing online resources for interview tips and etiquette.



Host institutions appreciate graduate students who communicate and are transparent throughout the internship process. Always remember to send a ‘thank you’ to the professionals who take time to meet with you.

SECOND-YEAR GRAD

Your second year as a graduate student is highlighted by preparing for the job search process, maximizing the time you have left in your graduate program, and seeking out opportunities that will help you meet your goals.

Use the following checklist to prepare for common milestones and challenges associated with being a second-year graduate student.

- Establish new (or revisit old) expectations with your supervisor.**
Communicate what you need to be successful in your second year as you prepare for graduation and the job search.
- Reflect on what skills and experiences you are missing that are commonly found in OTR job descriptions.**
Advocate for opportunities to strengthen your skills (e.g., budgeting, student leader recruitment/training, assessment, etc.) with your supervisor.
- Complete mock interviews (if your graduate program does not offer it).**
Practice always helps! Seek out opportunities to complete mock interviews with professional to receive feedback on what you are doing well and what you still may need to work on for the job search.
- Look for ways to get involved with higher ed-related associations.**
Getting your foot in the door with external opportunities such as NODA, ACPA, and NASPA can be difficult. Be on the lookout for committee/chair applications or volunteer!
- Seek out additional internship or practicum opportunities.**
Even if it is not required to graduate, having additional experiences you may not have had the opportunity to do yet can help you develop your skills while simultaneously building your network at your institution.
- Review your resume/cover letter (again!) and research effective ways to network.**
It is not always about WHAT you know, but also WHO you know. Building your network is just as effective as you being able to communicate your experiences and what you can add to an office.

JOB SEARCHING

The first professional job search can be daunting with so many factors to consider (salary, location, benefits, etc.). Use the information below to help you prepare and be successful throughout the process.

- 1** Decide WHERE you want to work, WHAT functional area(s) you are comfortable working in, and WHO you want to work for (e.g., supervisor and institution type).
- 2** Determine your references ahead of time and keep them updated throughout the search process.
- 3** Create a system to keep track of the jobs you've applied to. A spreadsheet that has portal log in information, position and institution information, and key deadlines is a place to start!
- 4** Update your LinkedIn profile to accurately reflect your graduate experiences. Don't be afraid to share that you are looking for positions with your network!
- 5** Begin combing through higher ed and student affairs job boards. To start your search, you can:
 - Create up to 10 'Job Alerts' on HigherEdJobs. These agents can filter search criteria based on location, institution type, position, keywords and more!
 - Join Facebook Groups that post open positions frequently (such as Orientation Professionals, Job Openings in Higher Education, and Student Affairs and Higher Educations Professionals).
 - Check out NODA Connect, a one-stop shop for various communities with other NODA members

For questions or support,
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