**Career Development Process**

The purpose of career planning is to help you identify career fields most satisfying to you. Below, you will find a suggested timeline for the career development process. Career Connections staff seek to help you at every stage of your career search.

**Self Assessment Stage (early in academic program)**

In general, you want to identify your interests and explore your skills:

* Meet with a UMA career counselor to discuss your goals and plan self-assessment activities.
* Identify and prioritize your work-related values and interests by using UMA CareerLink, a computerized career planning tool. Use UMA CareerLink (blue cube on your UMA Portal Launchpad) to identify your transferable skills gained during previous employment. Also, use it to explore related jobs and internship opportunities.
* Complete the Career Explorer in UMA CareerLink through a [UMA workshop](http://www.uma.edu/careerplanningworkshops.html) to discover your areas of career interest.
* Try the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator through a [UMA workshop](http://www.uma.edu/careerplanningworkshops.html) to discover your personal preferences as they relate to career choices and work environments.
* Try the StrengthsFinder assessment to identify your personal strengths and how to leverage them in your life to make satisfying career choices, and to be successful in and out of the classroom.

**Career Exploration Stage (early to midway through academic program)**

* Identify and research careers based on the results of your UMA CareerLink search.
* Compose a list of 15 possible career titles by looking through The [Occupational Outlook Handbook](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/) and UMA's program brochures.
* Conduct informational interviews with people working in the career fields you find interesting.
* Test the waters by searching for part time, summer or internship positions that would provide exposure to different career areas.
* Attend career fairs and career planning workshops to gain exposure to the job search process.
* Write a resume and review it to see what other experiences you might need to obtain the job of your dreams.
* Review newspaper and online job ads, job information on academic department bulletin boards and descriptions of graduate programs to see what fields/jobs you are attracted to.

**Career Decision Making Stage (midway to nearing completion of academic program)**

* Now is the time to be collecting as much information as possible about possible work settings and job descriptions.
* Start to reduce possible career fields or job titles to a manageable number.
* Talk with your faculty advisor about your career goals and options for networking within your career field.
* Try to find an internship or volunteer at a work site to see if you would like to pursue that career further.
* Consider whether you want to attend graduate school and take or prepare for the appropriate entrance exams. Use [Gradschools.com](http://www.gradschool.com) to research graduate programs.

**Job Search Stage (nearing completion of academic program)**

* Finding a job can take 6-9 months. It can take longer if you are hoping to find a job in one limited geographical area.
* Develop your own sense of what you would like from a job and formulate 2, 5 & 10-year professional goals.
* Attend a [job search workshop](http://www.uma.edu/careerplanningworkshops.html) and/or a [resume writing workshop](http://www.uma.edu/careerplanningworkshops.html).
* Develop a professional resume targeted for each job type for which you might apply. Plan to be able to update or change each copy to only include skills or experiences being sought by the potential employer.
* Use UMA CareerLink to find jobs related to your major, and that you find interesting.
* Identify people who could serve as employment references for you and ask them if they would be willing to serve as a reference and/or write a reference letter.
* Meet with a counselor to develop a job search strategy and have your resume reviewed.
* Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job.  Job contacts exist everywhere.
* Join any professional associations in your career field of choice. They often produce publications that list jobs in that field. Ask your faculty members for names of associations for the field in which you would like to find a job.
* Participate in as many career fairs as possible. Maine students are invited to participate in career fairs offered by most colleges in Maine. For a current list of career fairs in Maine, please visit the [Maine College Career Consortium website](http://mainegrads.org/job_fairs.html).
* Practice your job interviewing techniques.  Schedule an appointment with a career counselor to do a mock interview.
* Apply for jobs.  Check on-line job listings and UMA CareerLink. Many students try to decide on a career without proceeding through a conscious career development process. Some students, for example, start by writing a resume without giving adequate thought to what skills they want to sell on the resume and to whom they will be selling those skills.
* In addition, finding a job takes time and energy. If you want a job upon graduation, plan to start your search 6-9 months before graduation. Following a time line helps you avoid the trap of waiting until your last semester as a student to begin the career development process. Being well prepared should make your job search less stressful.