

mystory

CENTER FOR VOCATION AND CAREER

Know Yourself
Explore the Possibilities
Prepare for Your Future

Dear Student,

What a year this has been! Maybe one of the most challenging you've experienced, one which may end up defining your generation. Grit, compassion, perseverance, creativity, empathy. Just a few of the traits I expect we'll see in you as a result of the pandemic, the racial unrest, and a contentious election.

Thinking about the future would be easy to ignore in this environment, so congratulations on taking this important next step. Through this curriculum, you'll learn to develop self-awareness, explore possibilities, and discover more of the person you are becoming—more of the person God is creating you to be. My hope is that you'll become better equipped to make decisions for a lifetime and be ready to take your next steps with boldness, even in times like these.

myStory is just the beginning of your vocational journey. Our goals for you include:

- **Learning** how to see yourself clearly. What you love. The skills you have and are developing. The values that are important to you as you think about your future career options and life choices.
- **Exploring** the many possibilities for serving in God's kingdom. There is so much work to be done, in so many different roles and industries, it's nearly impossible to know them all.
- **Telling the story of** the unique contributions you will make in all the vocations you choose.

The reality is you will never truly finish the work you've started in this curriculum. You will always be in a process of becoming. Instead, we hope you will return to it over and over as you add details to the blueprint that is and will be your life.

Through this reflective work we believe you will be equipped to make choices that allow you to shape your life in congruence with your interests, your skills and competencies, and your unique personal values so that you are able to serve Christ and His kingdom in all the vocations you pursue.

Buckle up, your journey is just beginning!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dee Pierce". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dee Pierce
Director | Center for Vocation and Career
Wheaton College

My Blueprint (1.1)

Preparing for the future is multi-layered and sometimes messy. At the Center for Vocation and Career, we've created a basic Blueprint to help you structure your effort and time as you navigate your vocational journey. You'll note that some layers are larger than others, and this is intentional. Building a solid base now will ultimately help you land well later.



FAITH: First, your belief in and commitment to God will infuse and undergird every area of your life. You look different as a Christian—and you should! Understanding and believing that our lives have purpose will impact the subsequent pursuit of our vocation.

KNOW YOURSELF: Self-awareness is foundational when thinking about your future. Examining your short and long-term priorities, as well as your interests, skills, competencies, strengths, and values sets you up for meaningful work. Think of this as building your “vocational hypothesis.” This is where you’ll want to exert most of your initial effort, and you’ll return here often as you explore and prepare, adding new layers from the learning you’ve done along the way.

EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES: Exploration is the primary means to gain clarity around what you will *actually* enjoy doing, rather than what you *think* you will enjoy doing—start testing that vocational hypothesis! To do this well, first spend time getting to know yourself and then try something out. Discover what you like (and are skilled at), as well as careers you could see yourself in via internships, networking, and informational interviews. The Wheaton alumni network is a great place to start here.

PREPARE: Preparation includes assembling all the tools you’ll need to articulate who you are to potential employers and graduate schools, as well as developing necessary skills. Spending time here will help you tell your story well through resumes/CV, cover letters, personal statements, and interviews.

LAND: Landing well requires that you articulate what you have learned in these other layers, while also understanding how to maximize your job or grad school search and stay organized in the application process. And remember: this isn’t a one-and-done thing! The Blueprint is a framework to help you again and again, not just for your first job, but for your second and third and forth...

Common Missteps

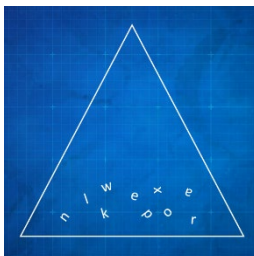
We must intentionally go through this process. Spending too much or too little time in any of these areas can distort your Blueprint.



Some students step into a direction because of external expectations or motivators but haven't really evaluated if or how that direction aligns with their own skills, interests, values, and strengths. It's possible to land jobs this way, but in neglecting the critical role of KNOW and EXPLORE, it's easy to end up in a role that doesn't fit. **Tip: if you're here, try to spend more time in KNOW and EXPLORE, to ensure where you're headed makes sense.**



Students are sometimes focused on their self-awareness but don't take action. They may know themselves well but haven't taken the necessary step of doing something with that information. These students might equate academic excellence as synonymous with *career preparation*. They are generally less excited about *career exploration*. **Tip: if you're stuck in KNOW, take a step forward and test out an EXPLORE activity.**



Sometimes students feel stuck from taking any action. They are faced with mountains that feel too steep to climb; moving forward on their vocational journey feels insurmountable. **Tip: if you feel stuck here, start with a manageable spot: KNOW yourself.** Navigating life's circumstances could also be the priority for you right now instead, and that's ok too. We'll be here when you're ready. You are not alone in this journey!



Activity: Your Blueprint

Reflect on the following questions and choose 2-3 to respond to below:

- How is the Blueprint similar or different to your own impression of career preparation?
- Where do you see yourself in this process? How have you been spending time/energy?
- What most energizes you about your vocational journey and what's most intimidating?
- Which elements of each layer feel most important to you and your own story?

My Theology of Vocation (1.2)

What is a 'Vocation'?

We often think of questions like “What does God want me to do?” or “How do I know if this is what I’m supposed to be doing?” when thinking about vocation; a common worry may be “What if I choose the wrong major or career path?”



Activity: My Own Understanding of Vocation

Take some time to reflect on your current understanding of vocation by responding to 2-3 of the questions in the space provided.

- In your own words, how would you define ‘vocation’?
- What are some vocations you deeply respect, and why?
- Who has most strongly influenced your views on vocation and calling?

God’s Calling

Most of us have wondered at one time or another if we are doing what God wants us to do (such as when choosing a college). Perhaps this is the first time you are considering whether God has called you to some specific path in life. The questions above are important ones that come out of a healthy desire to have meaning and to respond to God’s call. Yet these common questions can also reveal a critical misunderstanding about vocation, and may cause unnecessary stress along the way.

Jerry Sittser, author of *The Will of God as a Way of Life*, explains this frequent misinterpretation:

For some reason we assume God has opinions about everything. I'm not sure God does. God might remain silent because he has nothing to say. His silence might mean little more than 'Fine, you can be an accountant or a teacher, move to Orlando or stay in Chicago, marry Sam or remain single. It doesn't much matter to me. I'll bless you either way.'...God's will is like several trails leading to the same goal. We can take any one of them to arrive at our destination. It is a waste of time and energy to try to make the 'perfect decision' (assuming that there is such a thing), if all the alternatives are good ones."

Sittser’s words are challenging but important to heed. To often, we think about God’s calling as one path that we must find. Many of us think about God revealing our calling in life in a similar way as the Apostle Paul: we hope to have Jesus appear to us and give us specific instructions on what to do with our life. This thinking can lead to paralysis or fear as we anticipate and wait for God’s instructions.

Not surprisingly, God rarely speaks directly about our callings. We are not the Apostle Paul, but many of us can identify with his apprentice, Timothy. God also had a plan for Timothy but it was never explicitly delivered to him at one point in time: Timothy’s background, the godly counsel he received, and the circumstances he found himself in all contributed to the shaping of his life and vocations.



Activity: Respond to Sittser’s View

In light of these encouraging words about vocation, spend some time reflecting on the following questions and respond below:

- Do you agree or disagree with Sittser’s views about vocation? Why or why not?
- Do you feel more freedom or more stress when the common “one right career” mindset goes away and multiple career options open up for the future?
- Does Sittser’s reinterpretation of calling open up any additional career paths for you to consider? Why or why not?

A Canvas, Not a Bullseye

As Christians, we truly have a unique opportunity to build the church and benefit society worldwide. There are lots of ways we can do this, from the marketplace to the church, from the boardroom to Broadway. There isn’t just one “holy” job that is acceptable to all Christians.



Sometimes we can think about God’s will for our futures as a bullseye, and we need to hit the center of that bullseye as we make decisions about what we will do. It feels like we must hit that mark perfectly. And failing to do so could feel like disappointing God Himself.



Rather than thinking so narrowly about God’s will for us, what if we think about God’s will for our futures as more of a canvas. Yes, it has edges or borders that we shouldn’t stray beyond. There are obviously certain choices we could make about our future that wouldn’t align with God’s will for us. There are some boundaries.

But you also have quite a bit of freedom as you make decisions about your future. Yes, God has gifted you in certain ways. You have skills that He has given you the opportunity to acquire. You have developed a set of values and preferences around your personal and professional interactions. And you have some things that really interest you, and other things...not so much.

Though it might be easier if God would just tell us what to do, that isn't typically how God works. Sittser says it like this, "We might wish that God would tell us exactly what to do, where to go, and how to choose. Yet Jesus only requires that we make sure our heart is good, our motives are pure, and our basic direction in life is right, pointing toward the 'true north' of the kingdom of God." To love God and people is our primary calling—one we all share.



Activity: A New Vocational Lens

Watch this chapel message from [Bethany Jenkins](#). Hopefully this video and Sittser's reinterpretation of calling are encouraging to you! Spend some time reflecting on the following prompts and respond to 2-3 of them in the space below:

- Has your understanding of vocation changed at all from your answers at the beginning of this section? In what ways is it the same or different?
- Do you tend to view God's will as more of a bullseye or more of a canvas? Has that perspective shifted at all?
- Throughout this process of exploring and preparing for your vocational journey, how will your personal faith impact your decision-making?
- How can you continue to intentionally foster your relationship with Christ amidst your current vocations as a student, friend, intern, teammate, etc.?

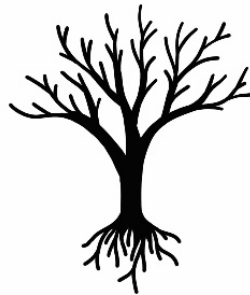
My Vocation Tree (1.3)

Fortunately, a good understanding of the theology of vocation can bring freedom and hope to the difficulty of important life decisions. Rather than playing hide and seek with God about His will for our lives, we can live in the freedom that He will delight in us—regardless of our careers—as long as we are seeking after Him in the process.

As Christians, we all have multiple vocations. As we live these out, it is helpful to think about how our love and pursuit of God impacts our vocational journey. Our primary calling is to love God and love people. Beyond that we all have secondary callings as well, which are unique to us.



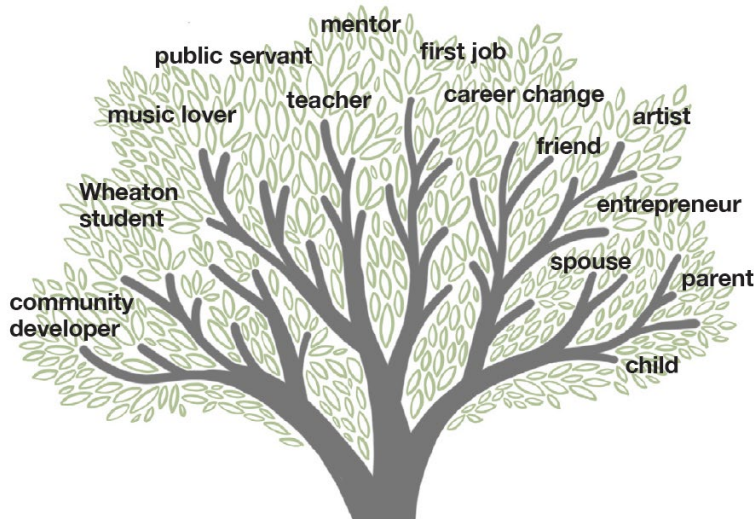
Deepening love for God naturally results in holy service to others



Failure to seek a deepening love for God can make growth less

This image of a tree can be a helpful way to visualize this multidimensional theology of vocation. The roots of the tree symbolize our deep love of God. The leaves represent what happens when we live out our lives while loving God. Jesus says in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.” Deepening love for God equals deepening roots and therefore more fruit.

If we think about having multiple vocations at one time, we can see how the branches represent those multiple callings. One person’s tree might look like this:





Activity: Your Own Vocation Tree

As you examine your own life, reflect on the following questions and respond below:

- What callings do you have? What activities and roles has God already given you? Write down the callings you most identify with below.
- How have your callings and vocations changed or shifted in the past year or two? Which ones seem more important to you now, and how are you intentionally pursuing and nourishing these callings?

As you think about the ways God has equipped you for the future, the interests and skills you already have and those you will develop, you can imagine a tree that is filled with many opportunities to live out your callings in God’s kingdom. In fact, sometimes the challenge is actually finding the time to do them all!

During your myStory experience, continue to bring to mind the impact of this intentional foundation of your faith on your vocation and career: your faith will inform and inspire your vocational journey! Wherever you are in this process, know that we in the CVC are here for you and praying for you.

Scripture for reflection:

But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when the heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

My Self: Priorities (2.1)

One of the commonly overlooked parts of Know Yourself is to consider your own set of vocational priorities. Interests, skills, and values are critical parts of the process, but **starting by recognizing your priorities will help you determine what the rest of the process should look like, especially when facing times of economic uncertainty.** Now is the time to recognize your unique circumstance and the specific things that really matter to you so that you can take them into account as you plan.

Questions to Consider

- How quickly after graduating do you need to secure employment?
- How critical are medical insurance or other benefits?
- How much salary do you need to make to achieve your goals (e.g., savings, paying off loans, rent, buying a home, etc.)?
- How necessary is grad school to your career aspirations? If it is, when (i.e., immediately after undergrad vs. later in career)?
- What other people do you need to consider when making your plans—do you have family or friends you would like to live close to or a significant other to plan around?

****NOTE:** This is not an exhaustive list! Each person’s priorities are different—what are some other unique aspects of your situation that will affect your career planning?

Keep Your Priorities in Mind

As you work through myStory and the other layers of the Blueprint, don’t forget about these priorities; they may shape or impact your plans. For example, if you are considering grad school as part of your desired career path, but also need to quickly pay off loans for undergrad, you may want to explore positions that don’t require a graduate degree right away to enable you to spend a couple years paying off debt and saving for your next degree.



Activity: My Priorities

Reflect on the following questions and choose 1-2 to respond to below:

- Read through the “Questions to Consider” above and write down a few of your own priorities specific to your own situation. Which stand out to you as most important?
- How might your unique priorities impact your career exploration or planning?
- How have your priorities shifted over the past year?

My Self: Interests (2.2)

Understanding more about yourself—your interests, strengths, skills, and values—is foundational to your career exploration process. Skipping it might save some time initially, but if you don't take the time to build this necessary foundation of self-awareness now, you may miss out on key factors to help you move forward into a fulfilling career in the future.



Activity: What Energizes You? What Are You Better At Than Most?

To get started, reflect on the following questions and write your answers in the chart below:

- What three topics energize or interest you?
- What three things are you better at than most?

What Three Topics Energize or Interest You?	
1.	
2.	
3.	
What Three Things Are You Better At Than Most?	
1.	
2.	
3.	



Not sure what you're interested in? Or interested in everything? Try this:

[Career Explorer](#) and [MyNextMove](#) are free online assessments that can help you focus your interests by suggesting different types of jobs that may appeal to you most.

Unpacking Your Past, Present, and Future

To better discover and articulate your interests, it may be helpful to think about your past, present, and future, and identify how your interests have manifested themselves in different seasons of your life. Below are several sets of questions to help get you started. Through this process, you may find more clarity on where you'd like to be or what you'd like to do.

Struggling with your answers? This can be a great section to work on with close friends and family to gain their input as well.



Activity: Reflecting on the Past

Reflect on the following question, and write your responses in the space below:

- When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- What tended to come naturally to you? What were some things that others seemed to struggle with that came easily to you?



Activity: Synthesizing the Present

Reflect on the following questions, and choose 1-2 to respond to below:

- What do you enjoy doing so much that you may even lose track of time?
- Who are some of the people most influencing your career direction?
- Who are the people you admire/follow closely? Who would you pattern your life after? How are you alike/different from these people?



Activity: Projecting into the Future

Reflect on the following questions, and choose 1-2 to respond to below:

- What would your dream job be?
- What problems do you want to solve? What would you choose to build or create?
- If time, money, or prestige weren't a factor, what would you choose to do?
- In 20 years, what do you want to be known for? What would you want to be remembered for?



Activity: Digging Deeper

Reflect on the following questions, and write your response in the space below:

- Do you see any patterns or themes in your answers above?
- Are you surprised by any of your responses?
- Share your thoughts with your friends/family. What did they add?

My Self: Strengths (2.3)

The Gallup *CliftonStrengths* assessment helps measure the presence of your [natural talent](#) across 34 general themes. Talents help us better understand who we are: they describe us, they influence our choices, they explain why we are better at some things than others, and they help us filter our world. Your natural talents become strengths through refinement, coaching, intentional use, and development—in short, with practice.

A **Talent** is a natural capacity for excellence; a naturally recurring pattern of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied.

A **Strength** is the ability to consistently produce a positive outcome through near-perfect performance in a specific task.

While it's true knowing your *CliftonStrengths* won't point you directly toward a particular job, they can say a lot about the kinds of roles and work environments that might be appealing to you, and will help you continue to build your self-awareness. Strengths can also reveal insights into your skills and natural talents, like conducting research, working with large groups, or connecting one-on-one.



Don't Know Your Top 5 Strengths?

Fill out [this online form](#) to receive a discounted *CliftonStrengths* assessment code.

The Four Domains of Leadership

Gallup has outlined [four domains of leadership](#). Each of the 34 Strengths falls into one of these domains. It's important to note that there aren't just a few Strengths that are considered 'leadership' traits—*they all are!* Learning about your unique makeup helps you start to intentionally exercise and develop your leadership talents and hone them into leadership Strengths.

Executing Strengths help get things done: can catch an idea quickly and help make it a reality.

Influencing Strengths influence others: can reach a broad audience and get people on board.

Relationship Building Strengths create groups that are greater than the sum of their parts.

Strategic Strengths help with decision-making: can find creative ideas to complex challenges.

As Christians, we understand that "[we are all parts of one body](#)." Everyone (and every Strength!) has a unique role within the Body of Christ. When we create space in our homes, our church, and our work for each person to operate within their Strengths, we affirm that we are stronger as a diverse body than we are as individuals alone.



Been there, done that?

Explore [Gallup's YouTube Channel](#) and [podcasts](#) for more great *CliftonStrengths* content.



Let's chat about your Strengths

Your Career Coach can also be an excellent resource to help you learn more about your unique Strengths and how they might play into your own career journey.

Now, let's think about how your unique Strengths influence your life!



Activity: What Are Your 5?

Write down your top 5 Strengths and [read about your Strengths](#) on Gallup's website. Then spend some time thinking about ways you've seen each of your Strengths in action.

	What Are Your 5?	How do you use this Strength in your daily life?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		



Activity: Digging Deeper

How do you see your top 5 *CliftonStrengths* at play in the following areas? Choose 2-3 prompts to respond to below:

- The way you work with others
- How you manage the things you are responsible for each day
- What motivates or energizes you
- How you think about and process information

My Self: Competencies (2.4)

You've got to know yourself to tell your story. To tell your story well, you need to know your audience: employers. Even if you're headed to grad school right now, someday you'll be talking to an employer. One of the main things employers listen for when you tell your story is: *what have you done well?*

What is a competency?

A competency is the **application** of skills, knowledge, and experiences enabling you to efficiently and successfully complete a task. It captures the **“how”** you choose to manage a task and perform it well.

8 Career Readiness Competencies You Need to Land

Below are eight must-have, non-negotiable career readiness competencies that ALL employers want in their new hires, identified by the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#):

- ❑ **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Identify and analyze complex problems and propose creative solutions based on current and obtained facts, knowledge, and data.
- ❑ **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build productive and effective relationships with colleagues and customers with diverse cultures, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints.
- ❑ **Communication:** Exchange information, thoughts, ideas, and opinions clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside the organization.
- ❑ **Technology:** Understand and leverage new and existing technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.
- ❑ **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** Understand and appreciate the importance of diverse perspectives and demonstrate consideration for individual, community, and organizational viewpoints; value differences in race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.
- ❑ **Self-Awareness:** Identify and articulate skills, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired; develop goals for personal growth and professional success; self-advocate for development opportunities in the workplace; be mindful of other perspectives as it relates to your journey.
- ❑ **Professionalism/Work Ethic:** Display personal accountability and effective work habits, understand impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image; demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior.
- ❑ **Leadership/Initiative:** Leverage strengths of others to achieve common goals, manage own emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

Become a Storyteller

How do you demonstrate to employers that you're competent in these key career readiness areas?

Through telling stories. Think about experiences you've had where you used these competencies—what problems did you solve, what goals did you accomplish, what people did you lead?

Practicing telling these kinds of stories is one of the best ways to prepare for when you start talking to employers, especially through resumes, cover letters, and interviews (Check out the [Accomplishment Statements](#) section from our [Resume Guide](#) for more storytelling tips).



Activity: Competencies Brainstorming

Explore how your past experiences can illustrate your competencies, and think about what future experiences might help you sharpen new ones. Fill in the charts below with 4 to 6 competencies and think about the stories you can tell, the competencies you've already begun to master, and discover opportunities where you can grow (a few examples are included).

Competencies I Have

Competency	Stories I can tell about this competency
Digital Technology	At my remote internship last summer I learned SQL and HTML to manage the company website and database. I also curated the company's social media presence on Instagram and saw an increase of 150 followers.
Leadership/Initiative	In my role this year as Editor-in-Chief of the Wheaton Record, I am tasked with managing a team of senior editors, copyeditors, and photographers, as well as helping cast the vision for the future of the newspaper, leading to a more unified and effective team.
Professionalism/ Work Ethic	As a certified nursing assistant in the cancer unit, I sought to serve patients in a timely manner according to their appointments and needs. I also remained calm, kind, and empathetic when patients received upsetting news or went through painful post-op procedures, resulting in greater patient care.

Competencies I Want to Develop

Competency	Where and how will I learn/develop this competency
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	I realize that the majority of content I am exposed to and consume is created and produced by people from my own ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic background. I want to intentionally seek out and expose myself to voices and experiences that are different; I will read content from 5 unique authors whose perspective and experience is different from my own.
Oral Communication & Digital Technology	I still get very nervous when giving presentations, so I want to have video calls with 5 alumni who speak publicly in their roles and get their advice. I will also try to speak publicly in low-pressure situations more often, like speaking up in class and volunteering to give parts of virtual group presentations.
Critical Thinking & Digital Technology	I plan on learning AutoCAD and SketchUp at my internship at a local architecture firm. Once I learn to use these programs, I hope to utilize them appropriately to identify and solve problems, and provide relevant solutions to my boss and clients.

My Self: Skills (2.5)

In addition to the eight competencies listed in the previous section, employers are also looking to get a sense of your specific skillset. Learning to recognize, develop, and articulate your skills is a key part of knowing yourself.

What is a skill?

A skill is a **specific learned activity** and can range widely in terms of complexity. Microsoft Excel, time management, HTML, conflict resolution, and Mandarin Chinese are all skills. They focus on the “**what**” in terms of the abilities you have to perform a function or activity.

Which skills will I need?

Unlike the eight career readiness competencies, there isn’t necessarily one set of skills that all employers are looking for; skills that contribute to academic success may differ from skills that contribute to success at work. Many jobs will teach you the specific technical skills you need to succeed in your role. Showing that you are teachable and eager to learn is a great starting point.

As you think about skill development, start with ones that fit well with your strengths, the way God has created you. (See section 2.3 of myStory for resources to identify your natural strengths and talents.) Then, consider which skills are necessary for the kinds of work you are interested in. Remember: you will learn new skills in every role. **Maintaining a posture of teachability is critical to success.**



Activity: Skills Brainstorming

Review the tables of success skills and hard skills below on the next two pages. The lists aren’t exhaustive, of course, but it’s a place to start! Highlight the skills you have, click through to learn about some of the ones you’re not familiar with, and brainstorm a couple of your own to fill in the blanks. Questions to consider as you think about your skills:

- What tasks do I find easier to do than those around me?
- What tasks do I tend to readily take initiative to accomplish?

After going through the lists of skills, spend some time reflecting on the ones you highlighted or wrote down. What themes or patterns did you notice? Which skills did you see that you’re most eager to start developing?



Activity: Interested in learning new skills or sharpening existing ones?

Check out [LinkedIn Learning](#)! LinkedIn Learning is an online learning platform with thousands of video training courses on just about every job skill you can think of. Wheaton provides all students with FREE access to this incredible tool.

Spend some time exploring the website and take note of which video courses most interest you. Write down 2-3 skills you could start developing through LinkedIn Learning:

Success Skills

Success skills, are subjective skills that are much harder to quantify than hard skills. Also known as "soft skills" or "interpersonal skills," success skills demonstrate your ability to relate to and interact with other people. Success skills are often harder to teach on the job than hard skills; many employers are especially interested in certain success skills (like time management), sometimes over hard skills (like specific software programs) for which they can more easily provide training. See examples below:

Accuracy	Evaluation	Patience
Active Listening	Facilitating Group Conversations	Perceptiveness
Business Storytelling	Flexibility/Adaptability	Persuasion
Clarity and Concision	Goal Setting	Planning
Communication	Handling Confidential Information	Positivity
Compliance	Honesty	Prioritization
Confidence	Humility	Problem Solving
Conflict Resolution	Identifying Measurable Outcomes	Public Speaking
Creativity	Influencing	Punctuality
Critical Thinking	Integrity	Receiving Feedback
Customer Service	Interpreting	Resilience
Decision Making	Investigation	Restructuring
Defining Expectations	Leading Meetings (even Virtually!)	Risk Assessment
Delegation	Management	Sales
Delivering Feedback	Mentoring	Strategic Planning
Diagnosing	Motivating	Stress Management
Drive	Negotiation	Teachability
Emotional Intelligence	Networking	Teaching
Empathy	Open-Mindedness	Teamwork
Enforcing Boundaries	Optimizing	Time Management
Ethics	Ownership/Commitment	Work Ethic

Hard Skills

Hard skills (often called technical skills) are specific, learned abilities that are easy to quantify. Typically, you'll learn hard skills in the classroom, through books or other training materials, during an internship, or on the job. The hard skills you'll use (and even how you'll use them!) will vary from company to company, and even from different roles in the same company! Below are some examples:

Accounting Methods	Editing/Proofreading	Premiere Pro
Administering Injections	Event Planning	Processing X-Ray Films
Administration	Facility Management	Project Management Applications
Amazon Web Services	Filming	Prospecting
ArcGIS	FinalCut	Python
Asana	Financial Recording	Qualitative Analysis
Asset Management	French	Quantitative Analysis
Auditing	German	R
Banking	Google AdWords	Realistic Drawing
Benchmarking	Google Analytics	Research Methods
Billing	Grant Writing	ROI Calculations
Blogging	Graphic Design	Salesforce
Brand Management	Hand-Eye Coordination	Scheduling
C++	Handling Instruments	Sculpture
Case analysis	HTML	Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
Cataloging	HubSpot	Social Media Management
Charting	Illustrator	Spanish
Chinese	InDesign	Speech Writing
Coding for Medical Claims	Java	SQL
Cognos Analytics	MailChimp	SurveyMonkey
Cold Calling	MATLAB	SWOT Analysis
Composing Music	Mechanical Repair	System Administration
Conducting Music	Microsoft Excel	Tableau
Constructive Drawing	Music Production	Taking Blood Pressure
Copywriting	Patient Intake	Technical Writing
Data Visualization	Photography	Trello
Database Management	Photoshop	WordPress
Digital Radiography	Predictive Modeling	Writing IEPs

My Self: Values (2.6)

It's surprisingly easy to make a decision that does not align with your values. We often don't realize the number of factors we care about in a work setting until we are already there! It's unlikely one role will fit every one of your preferences, so try to identify which of your workplace values are non-negotiable and which are more flexible. Keep in mind that there is no one "right" answer, it's about what's important to you. Your values may change throughout your career, so pay attention to your preferences and adjust your workplace expectations along the way!



Activity: Imagine Going to Work

Picture yourself working. What does your workspace look like? Who are you working with? What does your typical day look like? What is the workplace culture like?



Activity: Your Values Spectrums

Whether we resist structure or flourish with routine, it's important to know what rhythms of work feel empowering to us. Use the buttons below to mark where you would fall on the spectrum of these values within the workplace.

Pace of Work



Fast-Paced

Slow and Steady

Working Style



We're All in This Together

Lone Wolf

Place



Downtown & Skyscrapers!

Give Me Wide Open Spaces!

Upward Mobility



Ready to Climb that Ladder

No Ladder? No Problem!

Family & Friends



We'll Catch Up Later...

Family Time is Sacred Time

Work Hours



Nights and Weekends? No Problem.

Gotta be Home by 5

Creativity



There is Always a Better Way...

If It's Not Broken, Don't Fix It!

Salary



Six-Figure Salary, Please!

I'm Young, Scrappy, and Hungry

Variability of Work



Every Day is Different

I'll Have the Regular

Feedback



Early and Often

Once a Year is Fine with Me

Internal Mobility



This is My Dream Company

This is My Dream Job

Workplace Flexibility



Remote Work? Yes Please!

I Gotta Be in the Room Where It Happens

Commute



Ten Feet Down the Hall

Train Time is Transition Time!

Dress Code



My Tie is Fly

Socks & Chacs

Independence



A Boss? No Thanks!

Could Someone Tell Me What to Do?



Activity: Prioritize Your Values

From the list above, write down your top three non-negotiables. How might these workplace values inform your decision about your next destination?



Activity: Your Values at Work

Reflect on some of your own experiences in different workplaces (e.g., a part-time job or an internship). What about the workplace culture, your working style, or your team most aligned with your values? What things didn't align? What did you learn about yourself?

Tip: Consider coming back to this chart as a 'tie-breaker' if you have a few different opportunities you are trying to compare. See how they match up to your workplace values. As you gain experience in different work environments, pay attention to how your preferences change!

My Exploration (3.1)

Your vocational journey begins with you—your understanding and development of your skills, values, and interests—but it doesn't end there. Exploring the ways God can use you in His kingdom comes next. There are many ways to begin exploring career options. Here are some we recommend:

- **Internships**—The most effective way to explore a career is to do it. An internship requires only a short-term commitment, and you'll discover whether you like the field, build your professional network, and your resume will get a boost too!

Internships are the number one way students land jobs in today's marketplace. Whether they receive an offer from their internship employer, develop key new skills, or gain credibility with other employers, an internship is a must-have element in every student's vocational journey. [Explore available internships on Handshake](#).

- **Informational Interview**—Ask someone in the field to share their experience with you. Ask lots of questions about job activities, education, necessary skills, and what a typical day looks like. You can learn a lot just talking to someone about their own experience.
- **Part-Time Jobs**—Many students find that, in addition to making a little money, they learn a lot about the type of work they like to do, the work environment that fits them, and if a particular field is of interest. [Explore available part-time jobs on Handshake](#).
- **Talk to People**—People love to talk about what they do. Start with your personal network, identify someone in a career you're interested in, and ask them about it! [LinkedIn's alumni search](#) and [WiN](#) are great ways to connect with other Wheaties about their jobs.
- **The Google Test**—Curious about an industry or career field? Spend 20 minutes Googling trends about that industry or job and read recent articles. Do you find yourself getting bored or are you genuinely interested in learning more? This can be a clue of if a field is worth exploring further. Plus, you will start to sound like an industry expert!
- **Online Research**—Unsure of where to start? The reality is you aren't going to know every possible job out there. Thankfully, there are lots of online exploration tools to help you find careers to consider based on your interests and skills. Here are a few to check out:
 - [Career Explorer](#): a free assessment which lists jobs that align with your interests/skills.
 - [MyNextMove](#): a site run by the US Department of Labor with some great job-search resources and information on job outlooks, salary data, necessary skills, and more.
 - [Vault](#): a career exploration site with info on industries and jobs in over 400 career fields.

EXPLORE is often the trickiest part of the Blueprint—but it is vital to everyone's vocational journey. Sometimes it's helpful to talk with a trusted friend, family member, or mentor to process together what you've been learning about yourself and start making an exploration plan.

Our team can help you do just that. [Come to Drop-Ins](#) or [schedule an appointment on Handshake](#).

Connecting with Alumni

One of the best ways to Explore is to learn from other Wheaties! The CVC provides many opportunities for you to engage with alumni to explore careers. Here are a few we recommend:

- ❑ **Career Communities**—These small groups are focused on a specific industry or affinity group and meet regularly with alumni throughout the year to share networking advice, insights from their career field, and practical action steps for your own vocational journey. [Sign up here](#).
- ❑ **Taco Tuesdays**—These virtual events feature a panel of alumni who share their real-life experiences in a particular industry or functional role. Be on the lookout for information about upcoming **Taco Tuesday** events for this year. See the events list on [Handshake](#).
- ❑ **Internship Database**—Wondering what sorts of internships past Wheaton students have had? Look no further. [This searchable database](#) has over 1500 examples of real internships of recent alumni. Filter by company, location, or major to get ideas for your own internship!



Activity: My Exploration Plan

Now that you've got some ideas of how you can begin exploring, it's time to make a plan. Brainstorm some action steps you can take to begin your vocation exploration. Questions to consider as you think about your exploration plan:

- What jobs or career fields interest me? How can I begin learning more about them?
- When should I do an internship? What organizations would I like to intern with? What would I like to learn as an intern?
- Who do I know who might be able to tell me more about their experience in an informational interview?
- How can the CVC help? When should I meet with my Career Coach?



Activity: Debriefing My Exploration

Exploration experiences, whether student teaching, scientific research, or a paid or unpaid internship, are all valuable in helping you develop your career readiness competencies, skills, and interests. And they will help you understand your values.

Reflect on one of your recent exploration experiences and process through what you've learned from it by completing the chart below.

My Exploration Experience:			
	What I liked	What I wished was different	What I think that means
The People: Demographics of the employees (genders, ages, ethnicities, beliefs, etc.), the leadership of the organization, my supervisor, my peers, etc.			
The Work Culture: Structured or flexible, a lot of supervision or a lot of freedom, mission and values, inclusivity, independent or social, the dress code, etc.			
The Work Environment: Remote or in-person, flexibility of hours, work setting, noise level, lighting, layout, etc.			
The Tasks: Computer work, meet with people, market research, data analysis, product testing, etc.			

Tip: Save a copy of this chart and use it after each of your exploration experiences!

My Preparation (3.2)

Now that you've built a solid foundation by developing your self-awareness and understanding your priorities, interests, skills, competencies, and values, you are well-equipped to navigate the next few steps necessary to effectively land. Let's dig in to Prepare!

First, it is crucial to **prepare a healthy mindset** about your Landing timeframe as you're considering what you need to do to Prepare. A senior's Prepare timeline will look very different from of a first year or sophomore who's still early in the Know or Explore stage. Of course everyone's timeline is different, but it's never too early to begin thinking through the tools you'll need to effectively articulate your skills and experiences to employers or grad schools, and to start building your own Preparation Plan.

It is difficult to plan and prepare during times of uncertainty but putting in the work to do so will set you up for success by maximizing your energies later in the process. Employers will notice too!

Your Preparation Toolbox

There are multiple Preparation tools you'll need to take the next steps on your vocational journey, and the CVC has assembled a library of guides and resources to help you understand some of these tools. Here are our recommendations (Click the links to view their respective resource page on Handshake):

- ❑ **Resume**—A resume is a tailored summary of your skills and experiences, and is often the first introduction most employers will have to you. [Check out our Resume Guide on Handshake.](#)
- ❑ **Cover Letter**—A cover letter is your chance to highlight key experiences from your resume and show why you'd be a good fit for the job. [Check out our Cover Letter Guide on Handshake.](#)
- ❑ **Interview**—An interview is your chance to show an employer you have what it takes to do the job and that you'll be a good fit for the organization. Practice and preparation are *critical* for making a good impression, especially in today's new world of video interviews. [Start practicing by using Big Interview, an interactive interview tool.](#)
- ❑ **LinkedIn**—LinkedIn is a professional networking social media platform that more and more employers are using to find and evaluate potential employees. Creating a compelling LinkedIn profile page can help you tell your story and really set you apart as a desirable job candidate. [Learn more about LinkedIn in the Networking Resources on Handshake.](#)
- ❑ **Handshake**—Like LinkedIn, Handshake is another place employers will look to find compelling candidates for open positions. Make sure your profile is complete and public to leverage this channel as well. [Learn more about Completing Your Handshake Profile.](#)
- ❑ **Drop-Ins**—Meet virtually with a CVC Ambassador or Career Coach for a quick 10-15 minute conversation about resumes, cover letters, LinkedIn, or other career topics. [Learn more about Drop-Ins.](#)
- ❑ **Industry Recruiting Timeline**—Every industry recruits a bit differently. This recruiting timeline resource can help you generate reasonable expectations for the industries you're interested in (though remember, times have changed recently, which may affect this). [Check out the timeline.](#)



Activity: My Preparation Plan

Now that you’ve got some ideas of how you can prepare, it’s time to make a plan. Come up with some action steps you can take to get ready for the next step in your vocational journey. Questions to consider as you think about your Preparation plan:

- What tools do I already have? What do I still need (resume, cover letter, LinkedIn, etc.)?
- What stories should I tell?
- Am I ready to interview? How can I be preparing?
- How can the CVC help? Should I meet with my Career Coach or go to Drop-Ins? What Handshake resources can I use?
- When should I have some of these things ready? What deadlines can I set for myself?

Building Out Your Experiences and Skills

Remember: the various storytelling tools listed above can only take you so far—it’s hard to articulate your story to potential employers if you don’t have a story to tell! Employers want to see that you’ve put in the effort to learn new skills, gain professional experiences, take on leadership roles, step outside your comfort zone, and *remain resilient* even in the face of unprecedented times.

Consider everything you’ve already done or might do during your time as a student—classes and major projects, part time jobs, internships, study abroad programs, clubs/sports teams, volunteer/ministry opportunities, campus publications, and leadership positions. What skills and competencies have you developed/do you still need to develop? When and how will you do these things? How will these experiences overlap with your Exploration experiences and Preparation planning from above?



Activity: Map it Out

With these ideas in mind, take some time to map out how you’ll fit all of your experiences in during your time at Wheaton using the chart on the next page. A few questions to consider:

- How will you spend each of your summers—internships, study abroad programs, part time jobs, ministry opportunities? What are alternative or remote options?
- Which semesters will you pursue on-campus jobs and/or programs like HNGR/WiC?
- When do you need to start researching and applying for full-time jobs/grad schools?
- If your plans fell through due to COVID-19, what did (or will) you do instead?

NOTE: If you’re already well into your time at Wheaton, fill in the chart with what you’ve already done and consider what other experiences will best prepare you for your next steps.

Mapping Out My Time at Wheaton

Fall Year 1	Spring Year 1
Summer Year 1	
Fall Year 2	Spring Year 2
Summer Year 2	
Fall Year 3	Spring Year 3
Summer Year 3	
Fall Year 4	Spring Year 4

Tip: Return to this chart regularly to update it with your experiences and prioritize what you pursue next.

My Landing (3.3)

Well done!

You've taken some big steps in your vocational journey through the reflective work of myStory.

It is our goal to equip you with the tools you need to design your own Blueprint and work through this process, not only here in college, but also after you leave. The Blueprint is not meant to be a one and done, but rather something you will do again and again throughout your life—learning to do it well now will give you the confidence to navigate the twists and turns of your own career journey in the future.



We are told throughout Scripture that *God cares for us*. Just as He cares for the lilies in the field, just as He feeds the birds in the air, so your Heavenly Father will care for you—and *all* the details of your life. God has created you for good work and will use you mightily wherever you end up!



Activity: My Calling

What do I understand about my “calling” having completed myStory? Where can God use me in His world for now? What good work might I do as a student? As a recent graduate?

The Center for Vocation and Career's vision is that all students would develop a plan for life after graduation, have the tools necessary to implement their unique plan, and be provided ample opportunity to execute their vocational plan, as we educate them as whole persons who build the church and benefit society worldwide.



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