



Career Guide for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum

Career Exploration

If you are uncertain of your career interests, consider the following:

GET A JOB, INTERNSHIP AND/OR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Why? This will help you narrow down career options, learn work ethic and professionalism as well as build your network.

How? 1. Attend an internship fair during the fall or spring semester. Visit the [Career Center](#) for the dates.
2. Schedule a career advising appointment using [Hire-A-Redbird](#) to learn more about gaining experience.

JOIN A REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATION (RSO)

How? Visit the [Dean of Students Office](#).

CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS AND/OR JOB SHADOWING

How? 1. Learn more about the purpose of informational interviews and job shadowing in the Career Center's [Career Resource Guide](#).
2. Schedule an appointment with your career advisor using [Hire-A-Redbird](#) to strategize informational interviews and/or job shadowing.

USE FOCUS TO IDENTIFY A CAREER ALIGNED WITH YOUR INTERESTS AND SKILLS

How? Use [FOCUS](#), an online assessment tool available from the Career Center.

EXPLORE DIFFERENT OPTIONS

- Visual thinkers: Industrial design, computer hardware, graphic arts, photography, auto mechanics, animal trainer, veterinary technician
- Pattern thinkers: Computer programmers, engineers, physicists, chemists, musicians, math teachers, computer coders
- Verbal thinkers: Journalists, library science, specialty retail, writers

How? Schedule a career exploration appointment with a career advisor using [Hire-A-Redbird](#) to discuss possible career options.

Career Readiness

Here are some tips to get ready for your career and job interviews.

NETWORK

How? Attend InstaCareer during fall or spring semesters and/or the Diversity Employer Expo during spring semester. Visit the [Career Center](#) for the dates.

GET A JOB, INTERNSHIP AND/OR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Why? You will make mistakes in your part-time jobs, internships and volunteer experiences. Learn from these mistakes.

How? 1. Attend an internship fair during the fall or spring semester and/or the [Part-time Job Fair](#) during the fall semester.
2. Schedule a career advising appointment using [Hire-A-Redbird](#) to learn more about fairs and how to prepare.

CREATE A PORTFOLIO FOR YOUR POSITION

How? Schedule an appointment with your career advisor using [Hire-A-Redbird](#) to learn more about the purpose of portfolios.

DEVELOP A DATABASE OF COMPANIES YOU PLAN TO APPLY TO

How? Create a database with target company names, contact names, instructions for applying, and a place to record dates of applications and follow up efforts.

Before the Interview

PRACTICE INTERVIEWING

Why? Practicing can lessen your nerves about the interview and help you improve your responses.

How? 1. Practice using [Interview Stream](#).

2. Schedule an appointment with your career advisor using [Hire-A-Redbird](#) to get help with how to prepare for an interview.

RESEARCH THE COMPANY'S WEBSITE FOR USEFUL INFORMATION

Why? Being familiar with the products and/or services they offer, and knowing how the company is organized will allow you to be specific in your interview.

PREPARE 3-5 QUESTIONS FOR THE EMPLOYER

Why? It shows that you prepared for the interview and researched their company.

How? See sample questions for employers in the interviewing section of the Career Center's [Career Resource Guide](#).

PREPARE YOUR RÉSUMÉ

How? 1. Visit the Career Center for assistance with your résumé during [drop-in hours](#).

2. Schedule an appointment with your career advisor using [Hire-A-Redbird](#) to set up a résumé review.

During the Interview

ARRIVE EARLY TO YOUR INTERVIEW

Arriving fifteen minutes early will ensure that you will be on time.

DRESS FORMALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY

Clothes should be clean and ironed.

How? Review the "Dressing for the Interview" section of the Career Center's [Career Resource Guide](#).

BRING ADDITIONAL COPIES OF YOUR RÉSUMÉ TO THE INTERVIEW

You can print it on free résumé paper at the Career Center.

FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS

Strengths you may possess may include a tendency to be logical, having an encyclopedic knowledge, being highly skilled in a particular area, being honest and direct, using novel ways of thinking, and having a superior memory.

STAY FLEXIBLE IF THE INTERVIEWER IS LATE

This is common. So if this should happen, stay calm.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR VOCAL QUALITY AND VOLUME

How? Keep your voice volume moderate and speak clearly. Practice using [Interview Stream](#).

INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND SHAKE HANDS

How? Look people in the eye and smile when introducing yourself and shaking their hand. Practice with your friends or family.

PAY ATTENTION TO BODY LANGUAGE

How? Make eye contact, sit up straight and face the interviewer. In addition, match your facial expression with the tone of the conversation and smile. Practice using [Interview Stream](#).

After the Interview

THANK THE INTERVIEWER FOR THEIR TIME

How? Send a thank you note or email. State your interest in the position you interviewed for and refer them to your contact information for any additional questions they may have.

Disclosing Disabilities To Employers

You are not required to disclose a disability at the time you apply for a job, even if you need a workplace accommodation later. Consider if you will need any accommodations by reading the job description carefully and identifying any tasks that may require an accommodation. Review the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) websites that offer more information about accommodations. The EEOC enforces Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. If you need an accommodation schedule an appointment with a career advisor to strategize how to disclose your need. It's up to you to determine the best time; there is no right answer. For example:

- **Pre-interview:** Particularly helpful if you have a visible disability or if you'll need accommodations for your interview. Also, if you have had a long-term chronic illness that may explain a gap in work history.
- **During interview:** If you feel comfortable, educate the employer during the interview on the disability. Relay that it will not prohibit you from successfully completing job tasks. You can address your disability while answering interview questions, such as elaborating on your adaptiveness, flexibility, teamwork or challenges.
- **Post-interview:** If you've been offered the job, be open about what accommodations you may need.

References:

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- Grandin, T. (2016). Temple talks... about autism and the older child: The worlds leading expert on autism shares her advice and experiences. Arlington, TX: Sensory World, a proud imprint of Sensory Focus, LLC.
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- Rowe, J. M. (2017, February 1). [Autism Spectrum Disorders on the Rise](#).
- Johnsen, B. (2012, February 1). [Disclosure of a Disability in a Job Interview](#).