

Designing Your Alma Venture

What is the first step toward your Alma Venture? Begin by considering what type of Venture experience will help you answer the big questions about your life's work and prepare you to move confidently toward the life that you want. What experience will be the best fit for you, helping you take your Alma experience to the next level?

Remember - you don't have to figure this all out on your own! Engage early and often in conversations about your Venture planning – from your first semester on campus. Key members of your planning team include: your academic advisor, the Career and Personal Development team in the Center for Student Opportunity, your favorite professor(s), family and friends who know you well.

Log into **Handshake** to schedule an appointment with Carla Jensen, or a member of the Career and Personal Development team to discuss your Alma Venture planning.

How would you answer these questions?

- How do you hope to make a difference in the world?
- What kind of questions or challenges are the most energizing for you?
- What do you know about your personal, professional and academic goals? What type of experience will help you combine or further explore these goals? (If you are still exploring, **PathwayU** can help you explore your interests, strengths, values, and connect these with potential majors and career paths.)
- Will a summer, semester or full-year experience work best for you? What will align best with your course schedule and your personal and extracurricular commitments? Consider discussing this with your academic advisor.
- Do you want your experience to be local, elsewhere in the U.S., or international?
- What is the cost associated with the experience(s) you are interested in? For example, what is the cost of living in that location?
- Do you want to get academic credit for your Alma Venture? Depending on the experience you choose, it may or may not be credit-bearing.

Once you have an idea of the type of Alma Venture you want, here are some steps you can take now to secure the experience that is right for you:

The Path to a Clinical Experience

1. Students who have had the type of experience you are interested in will be a great resource. Ask them how they identified their clinical experiences and what the experiences were like.
2. Talk to your professors and your academic advisor. Let them know that you are interested in clinical experiences.
3. What are your academic and career goals? What type of clinical experience will help you connect the two?
4. Polish your resume and know how to write a great cover letter. Make an appointment with a **Career Peer** for a one-one-one resume development or review session. For your cover letter, see the **Writing Center** in the library for cover letter review
5. Consider obtaining your Certified Nursing Assistant Certification or other certification to allow you more hands-on patient contact.

The Path to Your Dream Internship

1. Polish your resume and know how to write a great cover letter
2. Know yourself—and your search criteria. For example, what type of internship will help you connect your academic and career goals? What is the geographic scope of your internship search? Will you seek academic credit for your internship?
3. Develop an internship search strategy. This may include: meeting with career and personal development staff in the **CSO**; **networking**; searching for opportunities on **Handshake**, the Alma College online job posting site; and attending Career EXPLO (fall), and other career events.
4. Put in the time—searching for a job (or internship) can be a job itself! Make it a priority to network, reach out to employers, submit applications and follow up. You may need to submit lots of applications before you find the right internship—don't get discouraged!
5. Interview with ease—because you are prepared and practiced. Do your research online before an interview. What do you know about the potential

employer? Can you find the interviewer on LinkedIn? Schedule a mock interview with a Career Peer in the CSO.

The Path to Off-Campus Study or Spring Term

1. Consult with off-campus study staff and resources on **Handshake**.
2. Browse **Alma-Approved on the Off-Campus Study website**
3. Know your goals and priorities:
 1. **Consider your goals, priorities and budget for off-campus study**
 2. Talk to your academic advisor—make sure the program(s) you are considering won't delay graduation
 3. See the faculty advisor for the off-campus program(s) of interest
 4. Talk to your family, friends and Alma students who have participated in the program(s) of interest
4. Start the **Off-Campus Study Registration & Application process** (start the process about a year before you want to go.)

The Path to a Research Experience

1. Talk to other students who have had research experiences. Ask them how they identified their research opportunities and what the experience was like
2. Talk to your professors and your academic advisor. Let them know that you are interested in research opportunities.
3. Make sure you are making a good impression with your professors in class—their recommendations will matter!
4. Polish your resume and know how to write a great cover letter
5. Use the web to explore research opportunities at Alma College and beyond and apply for opportunities of interest (e.g. consider applying to the National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates)