

Career Planning for College Students

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Want to get a good job after college? Use these tips to jump-start your career while you are in school.

Most students go to college to get a degree and to gain the skills employers want so that they will receive job offers when they graduate. Getting good grades is not enough to impress most employers. Students that follow the strategies listed below are more likely to be better prepared to promote themselves to employers.

Visit your college career and placement services.

Don't wait until your final days in college to visit your school's career center. Most colleges offer assistance in choosing majors, finding internships, locating employers seeking applicants in specific degree programs, exploring graduate school, and preparing for job search. Take advantage of the assistance your program or college offers to add "real world experience" to your resume.

Assess yourself.

Employers want to know why you are a good fit for their company. Take time now to learn how your skills, values, interests, and personality preferences influence your career choices. Use assessment tools from your college career services or free online assessment tools. What you learn about yourself will help prepare you for interviews and make resume writing easier. You'll also make better decisions while in school, including choosing a major and coursework.

Explore careers related to your degree.

Don't wait until you are graduating to think about the workplace. If you haven't already, research careers related to your major or program. To help plan your career path, conduct several informational interviews with people who work with or hire people in your desired career. Ask them if your degree program and extra-curricular experiences have prepared you for the requirements employers expect.

Participate in career activities.

Potential employers expect job candidates to have related skills and experience, not just coursework, a good G.P.A., and other school achievements. To set yourself apart from other recent graduates, participate in internships, mentoring programs, and other work-based learning experiences. You can also participate in career-related volunteer opportunities, or part-time or summer employment related to your chosen career.

Position yourself.

Use the information gained from your career and employer research to make the most of your school experience. Join a career-related student group, professional associations, or other groups that can help you to form your network, including online career-related groups. When possible, choose school projects related to trends and topics in your desired career.

Be a success in the workplace.

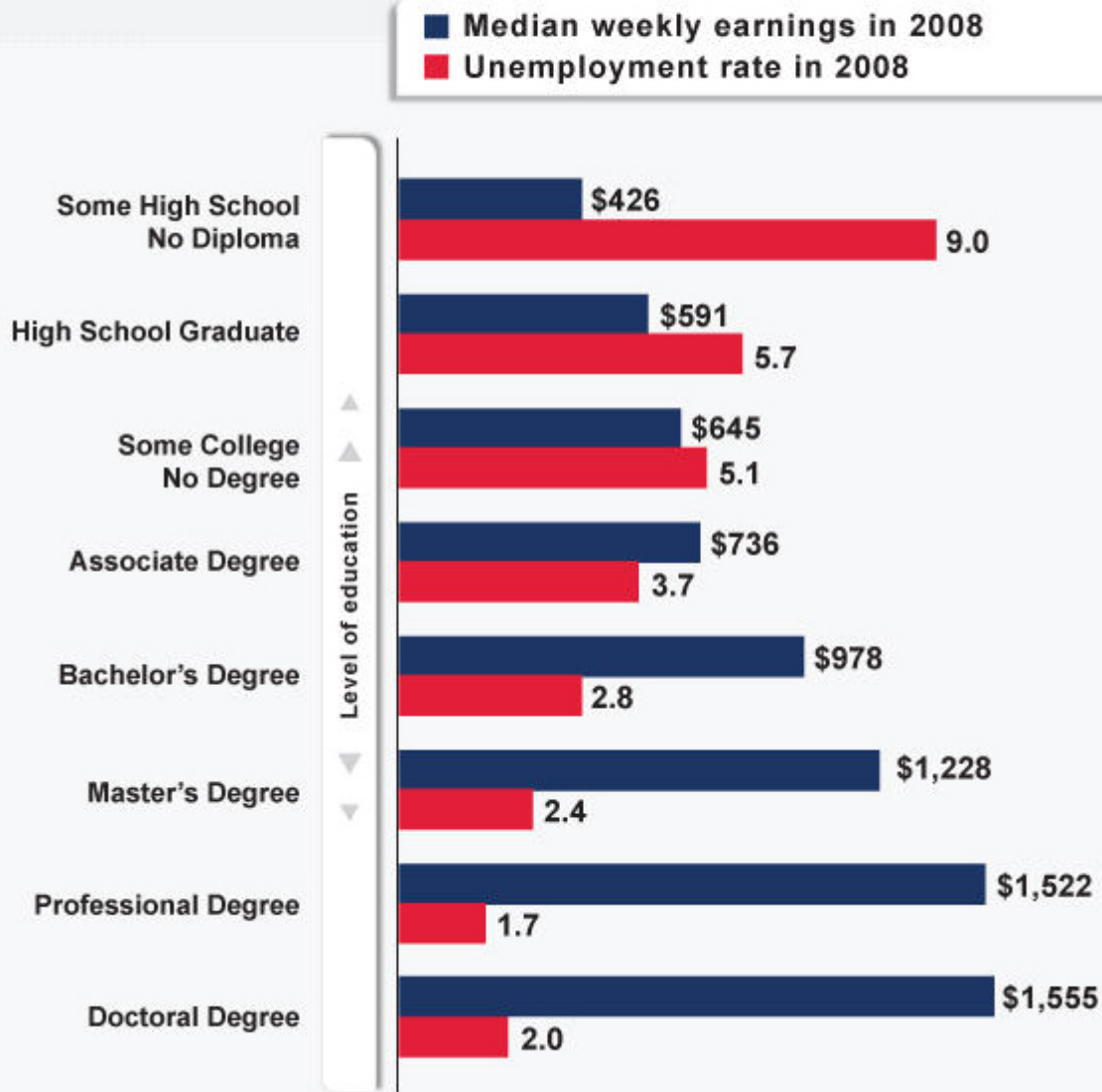
No matter what type of employment or volunteer experience you do while in school, take it seriously. Follow these tips to succeed at work now, and you will develop work habits that will benefit you after you graduate.

Appreciate the benefits of college.

Higher education pays off. Increasing your skills is more than just a trendy thing to do — it's a way to boost your earning power and employability throughout your career.

More Education Means More Money

You will earn more if you have more education. You will also be less likely to become unemployed. A survey from 2008 shows that average earnings grow from \$426 to \$591 per week, just by earning a high school diploma. Getting a college Bachelor's degree increases average earnings to \$978 per week. More education pays off in higher earnings.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics