

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS CAREER GUIDE

This career guide will showcase steps to continue to grow in your professional development. It will outline various ways to get experience and utilize that experience moving forward into industry or graduate school.

Part 1: GETTING EXPERIENCE

What is experience?

Your career development begins with experience. Experience is any situation where you gain a skillset (customer service, communication, problem-solving, etc.). Experience can include, but is not limited to:

- * Internships
- * Research
- * Volunteering
- * Academic Projects
- * Personal Projects
- * Part-Time Positions
- * Leadership Roles

NOTE: As an undocumented student, you may have a variety of experiences that do not fit into these traditional categories such as caretaking, fieldwork, etc. Be sure to discuss these with your career counselor!

How do I find experience?

Career Services specializes in helping students find experience.

- * **Make an appointment with a Career Counselor:** A Career Counselor is trained to discuss your interests, skills, values, personality, and challenges to help you narrow down what types of experiential opportunities fit you best. Talking with a counselor will help you solidify your career goals and navigate any changes in those goals.
- * **Search for opportunities on Handshake:** Handshake is UCSB Career Services' exclusive job and internship searching tool. You can narrow your search by industry, position type, and location through the Advanced Search feature.
- * **Visit our Career Resource Room:** Our Career Peers can help you find specialized handouts and information for local, national, and international experiential opportunities.

While utilizing the above services, also remember to utilize your own network. Your network consists of:

- * Friends
- * Family
- * Family Friends
- * Faculty at UCSB and Previous Institutions
- * Mentors
- * Alumni
- * Coworkers and Supervisors (current and previous)

Connecting with individuals who have gone through similar experiences and have navigated hiring processes with and without DACA would have an abundance of ideas and strategies for gaining experience and employment moving forward. You can find these individuals by connecting with the Undocumented Student Services Coordinator, attending UCSB undocumented student alumni panels/events, and at population-specific conferences (i.e. UC National Summit on Undocumented Students, UndocuGrad Conference). Often times, these conferences provide student discounts and you can reduce the cost significantly by volunteering at the conference as well.

What experience is best?

Any experience that allows you to continue to gain interpersonal and technical skills while learning more about the job function and field is good experience. Experience is not deemed better if it is paid vs. unpaid. Thinking about your current career goals could help you determine what experience is best for you.

For example, if you are considering attending graduate school, research, volunteer, and leadership experience could help shape your application; while if you are planning to go into an industry-specific full-time position post-graduation, internships and academic/personal relevant projects could showcase your skillset.

How do I fund unpaid experience?

As an undocumented college student, you may also have many stressors. Here are some resources that could help provide additional sources of funding to alleviate financial burden:

- ★ **UCSB Office of Financial Aid:** The Office of Financial Aid website (www.finaid.ucsb.edu/scholarships) provides links to multiple scholarships offered by the university, departments, private sources, and a section specifically devoted to undocumented students.
- ★ **UCSB Career Services Internship Scholarship Program:** This program awards \$1,500 scholarship for students participating in an unpaid experiential learning opportunity to help offset the potential financial hardships. The program opens the first week of Spring quarter and recipients are notified early May.

Part 2: PURSUING INDUSTRY CAREERS

How do I disclose my status?

As an undocumented student, it is a common stressor when to disclose your status to an employer. The first hurdle typically comes when filling out an application and you get to the question “Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?”

- ★ If you currently have DACA status, you are able to answer that question with a simple “yes” and move through the traditional hiring process without ever needing to discuss your immigration status.
- ★ If you do not currently have DACA status or any other work authorization status, it poses multiple areas in which your status may come into question. These situations are discussed below.

When do I disclose my status?

When answering questions on an application, UCSB Career Services advises all students in providing information that is true and honest. Forging documents or committing document fraud could have lasting effects. If you find yourself in this situation when applying to internships or career positions, meet with a career counselor to discuss different strategies to speak with employers. If comfortable, you could disclose early to an employer and create a discussion about how to fill out an application and be seen as a candidate without committing document fraud.

Once all application materials are received and you move through the traditional hiring/interview process, the next time your status will need to be discussed is during offer acceptance.

If you have an offer for an internship, you could ask the employer to not be paid for the internship and find other means of funding (see section above).

If you have an offer for a post-graduation full-time position, you could discuss the potential of being hired as an independent contractor (see more information below). Some employers may be unfamiliar with hiring independent contractors; when having these discussions be sure to do your own research into the process and consult with an employment lawyer if necessary.

Do I have to disclose my status?

In any of these situations, you are never mandated to discuss your status. To discuss strategies around disclosing status and seek support during this process, please talk with a career counselor and the Undocumented Student Services Coordinator. Both are committed to support students during stressful and uncomfortable conversations.



What is independent contracting?

According to the IRS, an independent contractor is a self-employed person who produces a specific type of work product in a determined amount of time where the payer (or employing agency) has the right to control or direct only the result of the work and not what will be done or how it will be done. Independent contractors typically do the same type of work multiple times for different clients, rather than working continually for one employer. When filing for employment with a company, an independent contractor can use a Social Security Number or an Independent Taxpayer Identification Number which can be obtained regardless of immigration status. Some examples include tutoring, promotions, child-care, and construction.

For more information about independent contracting, see the [Life after College: A Guide for Undocumented Students](#) published by Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC).

What if I want to start my own business?

If you have an entrepreneurial spirit, you can start your own Limited Liability Company (LLC) as a worker cooperative of individuals who are both workers and owners of the business. There are additional fees and taxes associated with an LLC. For more information about LLC's, see the [Life after College: A Guide for Undocumented Students](#) published by Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC).

Where can I get help with application materials?

For assistance preparing your application materials (resume, cover letter, etc.) or navigating the hiring process, come by Career Services to make an appointment or stop by for our drop-in hours (M – F; 11am – 4pm).

Part 3: PREPARING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

What kind of graduate school is right for me?

When considering attending graduate school, there are many factors that affect which school is the right fit for you. For instance, what type of degree do you want to receive?

- ★ **Master's programs** are typically a 2-3 year commitment geared toward increasing your knowledge and experience in a certain area (i.e. counseling, education, and business).
- ★ **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programs** range between 5-7 years and are focused on deeply increasing your knowledge in one area to research and teach in academia (at a university-level) or to perform a specific task in an industry environment.
- ★ **Professional school programs** help prepare students for careers in specific fields and can range from 1-3 years. Examples include medical school, law school and education programs.

Determining which type of program best suits you is your first step in finding the best graduate school.

Below are some additional questions to ask yourself regarding other factors:

- ★ **Academic requirements:** What is the GPA requirement? What is the program's average GPA? Does my GPA meet the requirement or is it close to their average? Have I completed all of the prerequisites required for the program? Do you need to take the GRE, MCAT, LSAT, or any other entrance exam?
- ★ **Experience requirements:** What are the experience requirements for the program? Have I completed and documented those experiences? If your academic history doesn't qualify you as a strong candidate, taking some time to gain experience in the field could boost your application.
- ★ **Ally communities:** Does this university have resources for undocumented students? How easy is it to find support on campus through a form of an Undocumented Student Services office? What student organizations are available to find support? Some examples include Pre-Health Dreamers, Dream Bar Association, and Graduates Reaching a Dream Deferred.
- ★ **Cost:** What types of financial aid are available to me? Does this program or university offer scholarships and/or assistantships to offset the cost of graduate school? Do they provide a full-ride offer for undocumented students?

How do I pay for graduate school?

Paying for graduate school could be the greatest stressor when deciding or accepting to go graduate school. Funding from the program may depend on which type of program you apply to. For instance, Ph.D. programs oftentimes are fully funded by the institution since they are a longer commitment of time, while Master's programs are rarely fully funded. However, there are additional sources of funding that could help alleviate or satisfy the cost of graduate school.

- ★ **Fellowships/scholarships:** Private and institutional scholarships could be available for undocumented students. Some are even exclusively open to undocumented students. Be sure to check with your institution about what may be available to you. Educators for Fair Consideration have also published a list of scholarships and fellowships from 2014 that do not require proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency (http://e4fc.org/images/E4FC_Grad_Scholarships.pdf). Fellowships may have restrictions in regards to immigration status.
- ★ **Assistantships:** Many graduate programs will offer assistantships which allow students to work on-campus as research assistants (RAs) or teaching assistants (TAs). You've probably worked with these graduate assistants in your course labs or lectures. If you have DACA status, you qualify to work as graduate assistant where you are paid and could also receive a stipend to cover the cost of tuition. This gives you experience in that field while also being able to financially support yourself.
- ★ **Private loans:** Depending on restrictions with each banking institution, you may be able to receive private loans. Large student loan amounts could require a co-signer, however, some banks may allow a small private loan without one.

What if I have more questions?

UCSB Career Services offers a variety of services tailored towards graduate school applications (personal statement critiques, graduate school mock interviews, recommendation letter strategies, etc.). Come see a career counselor to discuss these various aspects of the application process and develop a game plan tailored towards your needs.

CAREER SERVICES OVERVIEW

Mission

To educate and empower all students and recent graduates to prepare for and pursue success.

Services

Appointments:

- ★ General career appointments
- ★ Mock interviews
- ★ Assessment intakes/interpretations
- ★ Personal statement critiques

Drop-In Hours: 15 minute appointments with a counselor. Monday – Friday; 11am – 4pm in the Career Resource Room

Career Events:

- ★ Career & Internship Fairs
- ★ Employer info sessions
- ★ Targeted workshops & panels
- ★ Graduate & Professional School Day

Online Services:

- ★ Phone/Skype appointments while you are on break or away from Santa Barbara.
- ★ **Handshake** – UCSB's exclusive internship and job posting website.

Alumni Services:

- ★ Access to all events and appointment services for one year post-graduation.
- ★ Access to Handshake for 12 months post-graduation.

Hours, Location, & Contact Information

Career Services
Building 599 (Pink building across from Storke Tower)
(805) 893-4412
Open: 8am – 4:30pm
career.sa.ucsb.edu

Maddie Foster, Career Counselor
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