

# Transition from College to Career

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Over 1 million new college graduates (about 500 of which are UArts grads) are planning to enter the professional labor force this year in the United States. This first year on the job is an important time of transition during which new graduates begin to shape their careers.

The time right after graduation can be exciting and frightening at the same time. It is a period of personal growth as well as an adjustment to a life that doesn't revolve around semesters and syllabi. Friends you have made during the past four years will disperse across the country, so it will be important to develop a new professional and social support network while still maintaining contact with your college friends.

When you start your first professional job, you also will be meeting many new people, learning what is expected of you, and adjusting to being a worker, after having been a student for many years. While the transition can be a tough one, certain guidelines can make it easier.

In the article, *Build for the Future During your First Year on the Job*, recruiters offer a dozen tips, cited below, to help first-year employees build a strong foundation.

## 1. LEARN EVERYTHING YOU CAN ABOUT THE COMPANY:

Read all those e-mails that have corporate information, and read all the company magazines, too. Read the annual reports and study the organizational charts. Figure out what the company does and how they do it.

## 2. ASK QUESTIONS:

This world of work may be all new to you, so don't be afraid to dive in and ask people about what they do and how they do it. Individuals in your organization understand your situation and are available to help you become successful. If you ask questions, it will ease your transition from college life to work life. Asking questions also develops your understanding of company culture, technical issues, and the organizational structure.

## 3. DO LOTS OF LISTENING:

It is very important to soak in as much information as possible during your first year. What makes the most positive impression is not showing how much you know, but rather demonstrating the maturity to know how much you don't know.

## 4. SEEK FEEDBACK:

Ask your managers and a few trusted peers to comment on your performance and provide suggestions for improvement.

## 5. FIND A MENTOR:

Reach out to mentors within the company for ongoing advice and support and when you experience tough times.

## 6. VOLUNTEER FOR PROJECTS TO GAIN MORE EXPERIENCE:

A lot of new employees hold back because they are afraid to make mistakes. However, in most companies, assertiveness, drive, and work ethic will be well rewarded. Plus, you'll learn a lot by working on a variety of projects with team members.

## 7. EXPECT TO WORK EXTRA HOURS:

Eventually, you will learn who to go to get things done and this will make things easier. But, initially, you will lose lots of time just figuring out how to accomplish simple tasks. You need to start at the bottom and work your way up. Hard work will be appreciated.

## 8. GET TO KNOW PEOPLE INSIDE & OUTSIDE OF YOUR DEPARTMENT:

You will come in contact with a variety of people, and they will be helpful contacts as you work your way through the organization. Meet as many people as you can and learn about their role within the company. You never know if you will be working for them one day.

## 9. SEEK OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Take advantage of the professional training & networking opportunities offered to you. This will help you advance through the organization of your choice and in your career.

## 10. BE NICE TO EVERYONE:

Administrators and other staff can have influence beyond what their titles would indicate. Don't get wrapped up in all the office politics. Be friendly and do a good job.

## 11. TAKE THE LONG-TERM VIEW:

Think of your career as a marathon, not a wind sprint. Most of us will have to work for 30 years or so, and the first year is just a small part of your career. Take one step at a time.

## 12. HAVE FUN:

Look for a job in an environment that is both challenging and enjoyable at the same time. Work doesn't have to be dull.

Source: [http://www.jobweb.com/Resources/Library/workplace\\_Culture/Build\\_for\\_the\\_Future\\_198\\_01.htm](http://www.jobweb.com/Resources/Library/workplace_Culture/Build_for_the_Future_198_01.htm)