

UNL Principles for Connecting Undergraduate Learning with Career Preparation

These principles were collaboratively developed by faculty and staff members participating UNL's Quality Initiative Project: "Exploring Learning and Career Preparation within the Undergraduate Major." This project engages UNL faculty and staff in conversations about how curriculum, advising, and mentoring within each undergraduate major prepares students for academic and career success. We recommend these principles to ensure that all UNL undergraduates have opportunities to meaningfully connect their coursework with co-curricular and career experiences that help them to attain their personal and life goals.

Expectation

UNL commits to provide all undergraduates opportunities for career exploration and professional development. All undergraduate programs should promote the integration of learning in majors with career and life goal preparation.

Preparation

All UNL undergraduates should have opportunities that help them to identify, evaluate, and select from a wide array of career exploration and development experiences. Examples might include coursework or co-curricular experiences that teach undergraduates how to do the following:

- Self-assess interests, abilities, and strengths related to major choices
- Identify and assess skills and expertise needed for particular careers
- Organize a job shadowing or informational interview experience
- Connect to networks within a career field through peers, faculty, alumni, etc.
- Select from varying experiences (paid vs. unpaid internships, service learning, education abroad)

Participation

All UNL undergraduates should participate in experiences that enable them to connect their undergraduate learning with career and life goals. Examples might include:

- Internships (paid/unpaid, credit/non-credit)
- Leadership positions in student organizations
- Job Shadowing
- Career Fairs
- Alumni networking
- Research experiences (capstone projects, theses, UCARE, etc.)
- Part Time Jobs

Reflection

All UNL undergraduates should have structured opportunities to reflect on, analyze, and assess their learning both during and after participating in career exploration and development experiences. Examples might include:

- Logs or journals that record daily observations
- Evaluations of work, learning, and personal development outcomes
- Portfolios with analysis of sample work products
- Debriefings with a Career Development Professional
- Follow-up conversations with faculty and advisors

Articulation

All UNL undergraduates should be able to describe and articulate the value of their undergraduate learning and career exploration and development experiences in terms of career-relevant skills that employers, graduate schools, and others desire. Examples might include:

- Writing cover letters, resumes and curriculum vitae
- Participating in Interview Prep and Mock Interviews
- Building peer, alumni, and professional networks
- Establishing appropriate social media profiles (e.g. LinkedIn)