

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Career Services Center (CSC) at the University of Balamand (UOB) is to help students achieve their career goals by offering information and advice, scheduling workshops, and providing resources that are customizable, user-friendly, educational and fun, specifically selected and tailored to help them succeed.

Therefore, the Career Services Guide (CSG) is designed to assist students, throughout their university years, to manage their career building process.

The CSC includes information and tips provided to help students improve their career building skills (verbal communication skills, non-verbal communication skills, planning goals, experiencing career interests, and building professional network). It presents ideas and strategies to make students' career planning as successful as possible. The CSC invites students to use these resources from the first day they enroll at the University, until after they graduate.

The CSC is located in Zakhem Building, ground floor, room 001 and can be reached by phone 06 930250 ext. 7801 or 7802, or by email at **career.services@alamand.edu.lb**.

Working hours are Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Fall/Spring schedule) and Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Summer schedule).

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CSC

The Career Services Center offers students and alumni proper career guidance by providing them with the right type of coaching and mentoring. The CSC aims to offer students assistance to develop career management skills and job search skills that will help them in their academic and career endeavors. One of its major events is the Annual Career and Internship Fair that hosts various companies and provides an opportunity for students to meet with company representatives and submit their resumes for internships and job vacancies.

The CSC organizes also professional workshops and seminars (leadership, public speaking, CV writing, cover letter writing, interview tips, time management, career search strategies, goal setting, etc.). The center also schedules recruitment seminars, success stories, round table discussions and career related focus groups.

Moreover, the center organizes the Annual Community Fair which hosts local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to promote opportunities for students to get involved in community service projects and programs.

The CSC updates students and alumni with current job postings and opportunities on the following link: <http://www.balamand.edu.lb/Offices/AdministrativeOffices/StudentAffairs/CareerServices/Pages/Announcements.aspx>

CAREER PLANNING PROCESS

Usually, sophomore and junior students think that career planning begins in their senior year, or once they graduate. On the contrary, the career building process begins from the first day they enroll at the University and continues throughout their years of study and sustains during their professional life.

This guide helps students to set up directions and offers tools for:

1. Identity Construction
2. Competencies Management
3. Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

A typical timeline of activities to reach these competencies would be as follows:



1. Identity Construction

The identity construction includes knowing yourself, identifying your strengths, weaknesses, potentials and opportunities. The CSC assists students in:

- Getting involved in OSA activities and in community service activities to develop their interpersonal skills, discover their interests and broaden their communication networks.
- Becoming skillful in professional communication: building or updating their CV, writing a cover letter, writing professional e-mails, answering phone calls, conducting online or in-person job interviews and updating their social media profiles
- Searching techniques for internships, part-time and full-time jobs.

2. Competencies Management

After building a career oriented identity, the student is advised to focus on skills and qualities that best match his/her career goals. The CSC assists students in outlining the technical and soft skills associated with each major.

Some examples of focused skills are: Problem solving, strategic planning, oral communication, conducting focus groups, data analysis, formulating a questionnaire, work ethics, innovative thinking, marketing strategies, branding, social responsibility, entrepreneurial thinking. The CSC organizes interactive focus skills sessions to practice mainly communication skills, and to receive individual feedback from experts.

3. Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Work integrated learning leads to alignment of teaching and learning. WIL aims to provide students with a real work environment through the student work program, volunteering and community service, internships, and exploring opportunities (job search).

- ***Student Work Program:***

Student Work Program offers students, mainly those in financial need, on-campus jobs which would allow them to earn income that will be deducted from their tuition fees and at the same time would help them achieve both professional and personal development skills. The Student Work Program office is located in Zakhem Building, first floor, room 118 and can be reached by phone at 06 930 250 ext. 3911, or by email at studentwork@balamand.edu.lb.

- ***Volunteering and Community Service:***

The Career Services Center takes the initiative to introduce students to volunteering and to interacting with the community. To this end, the CSC bridges the gap between NGOs and students. Note that NGOs sometimes offer internship and job opportunities on a full-time and part-time basis.

What is Volunteering?

Volunteering is involvement that individuals take on themselves for the welfare of their neighborhood, society or country, without expecting financial reward. It can be

done at the individual level or through engaging in institutions or organizations (NGOs often) that welcome such volunteers.

It can have a positive impact on the choice of your career track through, for example:

- > Discovering abilities you may have been unaware of.
- > Finding new openings that fit your individual interests.
- > Reorienting your career in the future by making contacts that help you find a paid job after you graduate, thus gaining experience that can be added to your CV.

Why Volunteer?

Volunteering is a vital way to make a difference in this world. Helping out may give you the opportunity to gain new professional skills, enhance those you already have, and then share them with others. Furthermore, volunteering helps you communicate with people who may differ from you in age, abilities, disabilities, and other respects. This benefits you in gaining self-respect, confidence and leadership qualities. Most employers greatly value people who can lead. There is no doubt that volunteering will make you feel empowered to change things and create the kind of community you want to live in.

Can Community Service Get You into a Job?

Most job applicants believe that experience and education are the main factors valued in a CV. However, what they don't know is the fact that recruitment officers also take "Community Service" very seriously. This is because a candidate involved in community service should have developed leadership skills, should be of good character and, most importantly, should stand out. Any institution is proud to have such a person on board.

How to Become a Volunteer?

There are several NGOs and organizations that offer opportunities that will match your interests. You can start by researching organizations in your neighborhood and others listed in media and social media, or you can consider clubs at the University that have volunteer programs in their mission statement. Above all, you can visit the Community Fair organized annually by the CSC. On that occasion, students are encouraged to meet representatives from invited organizations and get to know about their goals, mission, and the services they offer.

Added to that, UOB has also a SEED (Service Experience Education through Doing) program related to community service. For further information you may contact the SEED office (seed@balamand.edu.lb, ext. 2311).

- **Internships:**

Internships allow students to gain relevant experience in a particular career field. Internships provide great opportunities for transferring from the University to the career market and help students develop and maintain a strong professional network for the future.

Internships are prerequisites for graduation. Students are requested to check with their advisor the earliest possible before consulting with the CSC and before starting to apply for companies.

Most companies request CVs and applications for internship opportunities at least six

months ahead of time. The CSC guides students through their search for internship opportunities. Students should apply by mid-year (February) to secure an opportunity in their field of study.

Why Seek Internships (even if not a prerequisite)?

- > Practical learning is the most effective way to obtain employment after graduation.
- > Approximately 85% of interns receive a job offer from the parent company.
- > It is a recruiting strategy for employers.
- > It gives students the opportunity to acquire new skills and apply what they learned in the classroom in “real life situations”.
- > Building self-confidence.
- > It is a way to explore career options, likes and dislikes
- > It is a way to communicate (socially and professionally) and develop career network.

How to Seek Internship Opportunities?

- > Review resources available at the CSC.
- > Check out the classified ads on and off campus (Social media, LinkedIn, media...)
- > Consult with faculty members, alumni and professionals in your field of study.
- > Visit Job Fairs (many employers attending might have internships to offer).
- > Attend recruitment seminars and career-related workshops.
- > Visit the Annual Career and Internship Fair organized by the CSC.

- **Exploring opportunities - Job Search**

The CSC guides students from the day they enroll at the University how to explore career opportunities before they graduate. A major event organized by the center is the Annual Career and Internship Fair. This large-scale event offers students and alumni the chance of interacting with local, regional and international employers and know more about their company and available opportunities. The Annual Career and Internship Fair is organized during the spring semester. Students should refer to the CSC to know more about it and to be prepared for professionally communicating with industry representatives and exploring employment prospects.

Why visit the Career and Internship Fair?

- > Explore internship and employment opportunities
- > Directly communicate with industry representatives and see the sights of the market
- > Ask for professional advise
- > Submit a CV

What to do before the Career and Internship Fair?

- > Visit the Career Services Center to know more about companies and how to communicate professionally.
- > Prepare a CV and print multiple copies
- > Get the list of participating companies and identify those to target
- > Prepare a sentence to introduce yourself to companies’ representatives

What to do on the day of the Career and Internship Fair?

- > Dress professionally
- > Ask for business cards from companies' representatives for future follow up
- > Ask questions to explore potential jobs
- > Avoid walking in groups, so you have the opportunity of individual communication

What to after the Career and Internship Fair?

- > Review the information you gathered
- > Follow up with companies' representatives you communicated with
- > Be prompt in sending additional information about yourself, or filling an online job application in case you were asked to do so