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5 tips to make acquiring career experience less overwhelming

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5 tips to make acquiring career experience less overwhelming

By Madison Cresswell

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For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

Whether you are a senior in high school or about to graduate from college, it is never a bad idea to gain job experience. Most professional careers require employees to have some – if not significant – experience in their chosen field in order to be hired.

What are you waiting for? The thought of doing something new might be intimidating, but if you think about it: everyone had to start somewhere! Here are five ways to gain experience, get your foot in the door and prepare for your future career.

Apply for everything. What's the best part about not getting the internship you wanted? You can apply for so many more! There really isn't a limit to the number of opportunities you can sign up for, and there are many experiences that will look impressive to a future employer; think of skills that make you marketable, like good time management, juggling multiple projects, overseeing others, etc. Finding the right opportunity may take time and effort, but it will be worth it!

Sign up on internship networks. In the age of social media, it has never been easier to find internship and career opportunities! You can make a LinkedIn account, sign up for internship listings on Handshake and Glassdoor, or even Google-search opportunities in your area. Start networking and identifying your goals by using internet resources that are openly available to everyone!

Volunteer. Not only is volunteering a great way to boost your resume, but it can be the first step to finding your future career. Volunteering can open opportunities to meet potential employers and allow you to decide on your career path. You may even find interest in something you never would have imagined!

Talk to your professors. Professors are a significant resource in finding career experiences and opportunities, especially at Ouachita. These men and women keep in contact with alumni and have personal and professional connections that could lead to a future career. Professors are always looking for students to recommend for jobs, and talking to them could be the first step to gaining the experience you are looking for.

Work within your department. Many majors offer practicum and work study opportunities within your academic department or school—or even an administrative area of campus. Taking advantage of these opportunities while being sharpened by your professors' working knowledge can be beneficial in preparing you for a career. These student work opportunities also can often be juggled easily with your class schedule, allowing you to take a portfolio and practical experiences straight into the workforce. Ask the dean of your department how you can get involved in work study or practicum and start getting that coveted experience those job postings ask for!



By Madison Cresswell, a 2021 communications & media/multimedia journalism and political science graduate from North Little Rock, Ark.