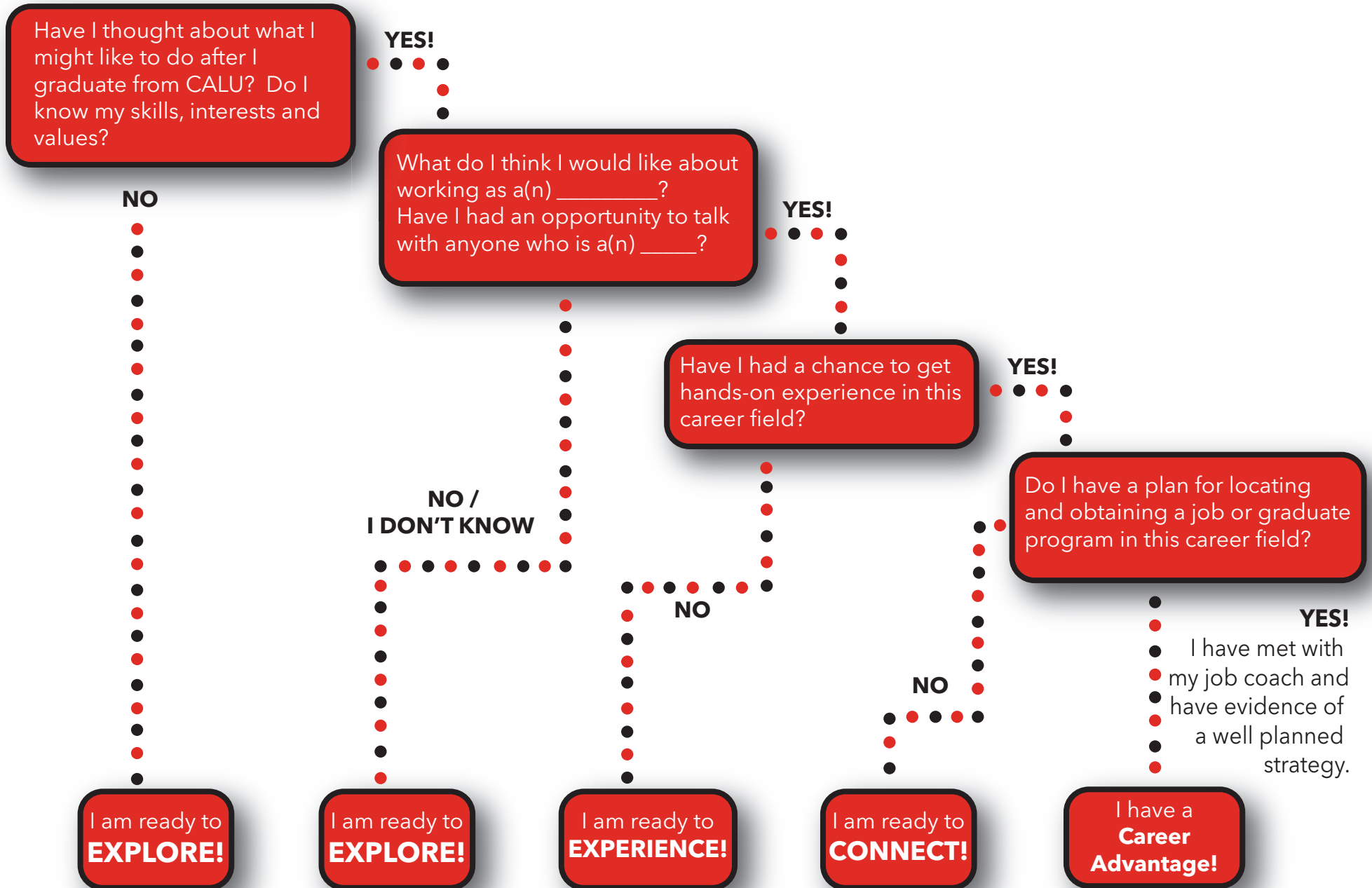


# Do I have a Career Advantage?

Ask yourself the following questions and follow the path to find out!



# EXPLORE

*Discover your interests, abilities, and work-related values.*

Because these are likely to change during your lifetime, it is important that you learn HOW to do self-assessment so that you can reassess your interests, abilities and values as they change.

Question and reflect on your likes, dislikes, and any choices regarding career options or major you have made.

What kinds of things do I enjoy doing so much that I would want to do them in a job every day?

What are my strongest skills?

What are my hobbies/interests?

What did I like (or dislike) about a past job (full-time, part-time or summer)?

What do I think I would like about being a \_\_\_\_\_ or majoring in \_\_\_\_\_?

What is important to me in a job or career (i.e. helping others, making lots of money, having creative freedom, being in a position of influence)?

If there are certain careers I would not like, what is it about those careers that I think I would not like?  
(Analyzing My “dislikes” may help me to see what might be appealing instead.)

**IF IT IS DIFFICULT TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, THINK ABOUT WHICH OF THE ACTION STEPS TO THE RIGHT YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP YOU GAIN YOUR CAREER ADVANTAGE.**

**IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE READY TO MOVE ON TO STEP 2 - EXPLORE!**

## Action Steps:

- » Meet with your Career Coach in the Career & Professional Development Center to talk about your interests, abilities and values as they apply to the world of work. Schedule your appointment via Handshake at [calu.joinhandshake.com](http://calu.joinhandshake.com).
- » Complete the FOCUS 2 interactive career assessment online to find majors and careers that are a good fit for your interests, abilities and values. Use the access code “vulcans” to log in after you create your FOCUS 2 account.
- » Register for XCP194 - Career Planning, a one-credit course to help you explore your career interests and goals.
- » Attend the Student Organization Fair to explore opportunities to get involved in campus activities. Think about which activities interest you the most, and what skills you would like to gain or develop through those activities that will help you in your job or career.
- » Register with OrgSync online at <http://sai.orgsync.com/> or by contacting Student Development & Services at (724) 938-4515. Be sure to track your Career Advantage activities on OrgSync!

# EXPLORE

*Learn information about careers that interest you.*

You will explore career options throughout your life, so it is important to learn HOW to do this.

Actively explore the world of work by reading about careers and talking to people in those careers. This way, you learn about what those careers are actually like and can make informed choices regarding your major and career options.

Have I had an opportunity to read about careers that interest I?

Have I had an opportunity to talk with anyone who is working in the jobs/careers that interest me (informational interview)?

Have I had an opportunity to observe (job shadow) people in these careers?

Did I look at a variety of occupations before deciding that I want to be a(n) \_\_\_\_\_?

Doing informational interviews and job shadowing can:

- » Help to make an occupation "come alive."
- » Give me current information about the career field.
- » Help make future job interviews seem less threatening.
- » Help me to make contacts that will be valuable in the future.

Talking with people in a variety of occupations may help me to learn more about occupations I never knew about, and may expand My career options.

**IF IT IS DIFFICULT TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, THINK ABOUT WHICH OF THE ACTION STEPS TO THE RIGHT YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP YOU GAIN YOUR CAREER ADVANTAGE.**

**IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE READY TO MOVE ON TO STEP 3 - EXPERIENCE!**

## Action Steps:

- » Talk with alumni and other professionals working in careers that interest you. This is an "Informational Interview." Use Handshake or the CALU Career Network on LinkedIn, and your network of family and friends, to identify professionals with whom you could speak.
- » Observe a professional at work! Meet with your Career Coach to learn how to set up a "Job Shadow" experience. Schedule your appointment via Handshake at [calu.joinhandshake.com](http://calu.joinhandshake.com).
- » Research careers using web sites such as "What Can I Do with My Major" located in the Resources section of Handshake.
- » Enroll in UNI200, the one-credit Career Readiness course, to investigate careers via informational interviewing, develop a resume and interviewing skills, and learn job search strategies
- » Volunteer or get involved in student activities and organizations to explore career options and to enhance your skills.
- » Update your OrgSync online at <http://sai.orgsync.com/>. Be sure to track your Career Advantage activities on your transcript!
- » Begin to develop a resume using the Career Resource Handbook in the Resources section of Handshake and other resources available on the Career & Professional Development Center web site.
- » Target electives to increase marketability; consider a minor related to your interests.

# EXPERIENCE (Sophomore and Junior Year)

Test out careers by gaining hands-on experience.

Learning HOW to find opportunities for gaining experience is a skill that will help you throughout your life.

Become an active learner to develop the skills needed to be successful in your life and career. Seek opportunities to gain experience and develop skills through your classes, through hands-on experience, and through extracurricular activities and organizations.

Have I had a chance to get any experience in the career field(s) that interest I; for example, a part-time job, internship, Cooperative Education, service-learning or volunteer work?

Doing internships, Cooperative Education, service-learning, career-related volunteer work or part-time jobs are ideal ways to gain experience before graduation.

Employers generally favor students who have had experience related to the field for which they are applying.

No matter what My major is, career-related experience can give me an "edge" over students who do not have experience in their area of interest.

**IF IT IS DIFFICULT TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, THINK ABOUT WHICH OF THE ACTION STEPS TO THE RIGHT YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP YOU GAIN YOUR CAREER ADVANTAGE.**

**IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE READY TO MOVE ON TO STEP 4 - CONNECT!**

## Action Steps:

- » "Test-drive" career opportunities and gain career-related experience through the Cooperative Education program (Co-op), internships, service-learning, career-related summer jobs and volunteer work.
- » Visit Handshake to upload your resume and search the online postings for Co-op positions, internships, and other career-related jobs.
- » Get involved! Take on leadership positions in student activities, organizations and volunteer groups that can help me to develop your skills and interests (e.g. Emerging Leaders, Student Government, Peer Mentor program, departmental clubs, CUTV).
- » Attend a networking event or career fair to practice your networking skills.
- » Do a practice interview in the Career & Professional Development Center before you go to a job fair or have an interview.
- » Meet with prospective Co-op and internship employers in your career field at Events (e.g. WestPACS), on-campus interviews and information sessions, listed in the Events section of Handshake.
- » Update your OrgSync online at <http://sai.orgsync.com/>. Be sure to track your Career Advantage activities on your transcript!

# CONNECT (Junior and Senior Year)

*Learn how to pursue your career goals and build connections for career and professional success.*

Learning HOW to conduct a job search or explore opportunities for further education are skills that will benefit you throughout your life.

Learn effective job search strategies and how to implement them. Conduct an active, not a passive, job search. Determine if further education is needed to prepare you for your intended career field. Identify possible graduate or professional schools and plan a strategy for applying to them.

Do I have a plan for locating and obtaining a job in this field?

Do I know the most effective job search strategies?

Do I know how to develop and utilize My personal and professional network in My job search?

Do I know how to effectively articulate My skills and experience on my resume, at a job fair, and in a job interview?

It is important to start planning for the job search early in My senior year (even earlier for the graduate school process).

**CONGRATULATIONS! IF YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY ANSWERED ALL OF THE QUESTIONS LISTED THROUGHOUT THE HANDOUT, YOU HAVE A CAREER ADVANTAGE!**

## Action Steps:

- » Meet with your Career Coach in the Career & Professional Development Center to develop job search strategies and to “fine-tune” your resume, cover letter, portfolio and interviewing skills. Schedule your appointment via Handshake at [calu.joinhandshake.com](http://calu.joinhandshake.com).
- » Visit Handshake to update your resume and search the online job postings.
- » Sharpen your interviewing skills by participating in a practice interview in the Career & Professional Development Center. Check out other interview prep resources listed on the Career & Professional Development Center web site.
- » Develop networking relationships. Ask your Career Coach, professors, advisors and family for networking contacts. Use Handshake and join the Cal U Career Network on LinkedIn to identify CALU alumni with whom you can network.
- » Participate in on-campus interviews, employer information sessions, job and career fairs, and other networking events listed under the Events link on Handshake.
- » Search for jobs on Handshake and other job search sites.
- » Discuss applying for graduate school with your professors or Career Coach. Take the GRE, GMAT, LSAT or the appropriate graduate admission test for your chosen field of study. Use the grad school resources listed on the Career & Professional Development Center web site.
- » Update your OrgSync online at <http://sai.orgsync.com/>. Be sure to track your Career Advantage activities on your transcript.