Experience

How can I differentiate myself?
It’s time to take your experience to the next level! Increase your marketability and uniqueness through acquiring real world, relevant experience. This is also the time to develop and enhance your professional “brand.” In other words, what do YOU have to offer to a prospective employer or graduate school? If you’re not thinking of pursuing a career in a field traditionally related to your major, research the field(s) you’re considering. Think about how your academic background will prepare you for making unique contributions to your field of interest.

What constitutes “relevant experience?”
- Employers and graduate schools are looking for candidates with relevant experience, yet every professional field is unique. Do research and talk with professionals who share your interests to know what type of experience is valued in your targeted field.
- Determine and take action toward gaining experiences that will help you grow personally and professionally – an internship? Leadership position on campus? Research? Studying abroad? Service learning?
- Visit the Internship Center to learn about excellent opportunities for workplace experience.

What professional competencies are important?
- Think creatively about how your experiences, major, and the skills you’re demonstrating might be transferable to your targeted field.
- Practice communicating your career brand in writing (resume) and verbally (mock interview) with a career coach.
- Utilize drop-in hours or schedule an appointment to receive personalized feedback.
- This is so important: expand your network and connections with professionals in your field, Messiah alumni, and at other campus and Career Center events. Continue doing informational interviews!
- Continue to fill out your electronic portfolio using Messiah’s eportfolio template in Google Sites. Include artifacts such as papers, projects, research, and other accomplishments from your classroom work and out-of-class activities.

What tools and resources will help me get connected professionally?
- Attend job and graduate school fairs throughout the year. Start early; remember, you don’t have to be in the job-seeking phase to attend!
- Connect with professional associations and conferences in your field. Ask your faculty members for referrals.
- Develop “networking cards” with basic contact info and a summary of your goals and qualifications. Have these available as you meet new contacts who may serve as critical resources in the future.
- Stay on top of current events, trends, and hot topics in your field through journals, magazines, and the news.
- If you’re considering graduate school, read through the Grad School Planning Guide. Also, attend events such as the Personal Statement Workshop, Practice Admissions Exams, and Graduate School Luncheon.

Reflection Q’s
- What specific experiences are highly desirable in my targeted field?
- Have I “tested out” my area of interest to know it’s a good fit?
- Can I articulate the skills that will be marketable to my target?
- What type of leadership position might I consider?