

How to Develop a Professional Identity as a Grand Valley Student



Introduction



Welcome to Grand Valley State University!

Thank you for choosing Grand Valley as your home and learning institution for your journey here as an international student.



This informational instruction manual is meant to help you build skills and orient yourself to the student life at

Grand Valley so that you can effectively develop a professional identity as a student. It is important to develop a professional identity before searching for a job because skills like organization and leadership are learned through practice. This manual will give you multiple ways in which you can practice skills that will help you in your future as a professional. The first section is about getting organized. Organization is a major skill necessary in becoming a professional. The second section has to do with

getting involved on campus. Getting involved in the student life on campus will help you develop social skills necessary for networking as a professional. The third and final section is about getting involved in the specific career field you are interested in. If you get involved early on, you will make a place for yourself in that field that leads to professional opportunities you can take advantage of. If you ever have any questions about getting involved with the Grand Valley community, Padnos International Center is the first place you should go for help. Padnos is located in Lake Ontario Hall and it is there to help international students feel at home at Grand Valley. We hope that you find that this manual is a useful tool to help you develop your professional identity as a student. Good luck with your journey as a Laker!



GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY

How Do I Get Organized?

Organization is a great quality to have as a professional in the workplace, and developing organizational skills as a student will prepare you for your career early on. Taking simple steps to organize your schedule, organize your relationships, orient yourself with Grand Rapids, and prepare your résumé can make a big difference in developing organizational skills.

Build Organizational Skills

1. Record your homework daily in a planner
2. Use a calendar to make scheduling and prioritizing simpler
3. Keep separate folders for every course to develop organizational habits

Network

1. Join Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce to meet businesspeople and potential employers
2. Make a profile on LinkedIn to connect yourself to business contacts
3. Befriend classmates to practice social skills necessary in networking
4. Attend Career Center events to meet potential employers

What is Networking?

It is creating productive relationships for employment or business. It is important to engage in networking because the more people you have a relationship with, the more opportunities in business you have.



Prepare Your Résumé

1. Take a class like Introduction to Professional Writing to learn about résumés
2. Attend a Résumé Workshop event put on by the Career Center
3. Get additional help from the Career Center

Why Prepare Your Résumé Now?

Your résumé serves as a summarized reflection of you as a professional. You will need to update it regularly so you can present it to possible employers. They will determine your level of qualification for the job based on your résumé.

Know Grand Rapids

1. Take a bus downtown (Bus routes and schedules can be found at gvsu.edu/transportation)
2. Explore businesses in the area
3. Observe people at work in professions that interest you



How Do I Get Involved On Campus?

Being involved in campus life is important in developing a professional identity as a student. When you are involved, you have opportunities to meet new people and make connections that can help you network on-campus. Getting involved in student leadership will help you develop leadership skills which are necessary in professional roles.

Join Clubs

1. Go to Campus Life Night to check out all the clubs on campus
2. Sign up to receive e-mails from clubs related to the profession that interests you
3. Go to club meetings
4. Build relationships with club members to practice networking

Professional Clubs (a few out of 94)

- Advertising Club
- American Marketing Association
- Anthropology Club
- Archaeological Society
- Chemistry Club
- Economics Club
- Teachers of Tomorrow
- Seidman Investment Portfolio Organization

Know Your Professors

1. Introduce yourself formally on the first day of class to show that you respect your relationships with your professors
2. Visit your professors during their office hours
3. Study your professors' expectations



Get Involved with Student Leadership

1. Volunteer with Laker Traditions at <http://gvsu.edu/traditions/volunteer-6.htm>
2. Fill out an application online to join the Student Senate
3. Take advantage of leadership opportunities provided by the Office of Student Life

Volunteer On Campus

1. Search for volunteer opportunities that fit your schedule on the GVSU website under the Events Calendar
2. Complete volunteer work
3. Network by making connections with other volunteers and supervisors
4. Record volunteer work on your résumé

How Do I Get Involved In My Career Field?

It is important to start getting involved as a student in a career field that interests you. The earlier you get involved, the more professional opportunities there will be for you to take advantage of. Getting involved in national organizations, getting a job, and attending career fairs should help you gain focus for the career you are interested in.

Join National Organizations

1. Research organizations that relate to the profession you are interested in
2. Keep up with developments within the organization
3. Check job listings on the organization's website regularly
4. Respect others in the organization and treat them as if they are your future colleagues because they very well could be

Get an Internship or Part-time Job

1. Visit Padnos to learn about your options and opportunities with regard to internships and jobs
2. Visit the Career Center for help on finding an internship
3. Search for student employment opportunities on LakerJobs (GVSU's web-based service providing access to jobs and internships)

Attend Grand Valley's Career Fairs

1. Visit the Career Center's link on GVSU's website to find out when the fairs are
2. Research who will be at the career fair
3. Make a list of who you want to talk to
4. Dress in business casual attire

Business Casual Attire

Women

- Khaki, corduroy, twill, or cotton pants; or skirts
- Sweaters, cardigans, polo shirts, or knit shirts

Men

- Khaki, gabardine, or cotton pants
- Cotton long-sleeved button-down shirts, polo shirts, knit shirts with a collar, or sweaters
- Leather shoes and belt (tie optional)

Important:

Contact Padnos International Center before accepting any job or internship offers.



Closing



We hope you found this instruction manual helpful!

If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please visit Padnos International Center. Below are a few online resources you may also find helpful.

Career Center

<http://www.gvsu.edu/careers/>

Student Life

<http://www.gvsu.edu/studentlife/>

Padnos International Center

<http://gvsu.edu/istudents/>

