



BEGINNING GUIDE TO CAREER SUCCESS

2026-27

You are about to embark on a journey filled with innovation, creativity and discovery. Believe it or not, now is the best time to start planning for your career (we're totally not kidding)! Engineering Career Services—ECS, for short— is your partner in this process. And wherever you are in your education, we offer tons of relevant resources and opportunities to help you explore potential majors and career paths, develop your career skills, connect with industry professionals, and more.

At ECS, you can take advantage of:

- Individual advising appointments
- Engineering major and career exploration courses, workshops, events and drop-in advising
- Resume and cover letter reviews
- Job search strategies
- Interviewing and mock interviews
- Negotiating and evaluating job offers
- Workshops and industry events
- Career fairs
- Our internship and co-op program

We'll help you navigate all of these!



Engineering Career Services
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

What should I do first?

We encourage you to focus on three key areas: Career skills, building experiences, and major and career exploration. Read on, learn more, and get going!



Career skills

From Day 1 as an engineering student, it's important that you start building your professional toolkit and developing career skills that can enhance your future goals. Here are some skills to get you started:

- Write your resume
- Create your Handshake profile
- Practice interviewing



Building experiences

In this area, strive to get involved and do engineering "stuff." Participate in internships, research projects, and extracurricular activities. These experiences not only deepen your understanding of the things you're learning in class, but they also help you learn about engineering as a whole—and ultimately, they'll help you stand out to recruiters. Here are a just a few examples of how you can build experiences:

- Join a student organization
- Get engineering work experience
- Volunteer
- Be an undergrad researcher



Major and career exploration

One way you can find the engineering major that's right for you and your goals is to explore a wide range of majors and careers. Doing that little bit of "homework" now will help you better understand the nuances of different engineering disciplines and the career paths they offer.

- Attend the Career Fair
- Attend industry panels and events
- Canvas Course – Exploring Engineering Careers
- Network with other students, faculty, and employers

Simple steps you can take throughout your first semester

Start your career development journey and learn about the resources and opportunities available to you!

Think about your areas of interest and learn more about engineering majors and careers. Check out the Canvas course, Exploring Engineering Careers and review the major/career exploration module.

Get ready for the spring semester: Update your resume and Handshake profile during winter break to include new experiences.

Maintain your momentum in the second semester.

Move forward and build on a strong foundation you established during the beginning of your journey!

Attend E-Bash to explore College of Engineering student organizations and clubs.

Tuesday, Sept. 1
4:30–6:30 p.m.
Union South/Wendt Commons Plaza

Attend ECS workshops to learn how to navigate the career fair, create your resume, resume reviews, use Handshake and more.

Career Fair prep week: Sept. 8–11

“Being involved in extracurricular activities has allowed me to develop communication skills that were valuable when I first started my internship. The projects I have completed in the club I am in were also great for supplying talking points during interviews.”

—Nuclear engineering student

Learn more about majors and careers: undecided, thinking about different engineering majors, or need more in-depth information about a particular major? Then here is the event for you and a chance to interact with faculty and students within each major.

Majors Exploration Night
Tuesday, Oct. 13
6–7:30 p.m.
Engineering Hall

Schedule an advising appointment with an ECS career advisor. Both in-person and virtual appointments are offered. (You can book this through the Starfish app in MyUW.)

Build a professional resume. You will need a professional resume to apply for internships, co-ops, research, and other work experiences. Your resume will be an integral factor as you eventually apply to full-time roles. It is important to learn how to create a safe, reliable, and readable resume for people and Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS).

Start to build connections: Attend at least one Engineering Career Services industry event during the semester and connect with an employer or recruiter. (Make sure you read the engineering student newsletter and ECS emails for details.)

Are you building a network? You can also create a LinkedIn account to have an on-line presence. Join the LinkedIn group – Hire a Badger Engineer.

Think about ideas to keep building quality experiences that help you become a competitive candidate for an internship or co-op experience. Consider taking on a leadership role in a student organization, getting involved with a project, exploring undergraduate research, or planning other relevant experiences.

Develop an understanding of a behavioral interview and begin to learn how to articulate your competencies like communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and technical skills.

Add Big Interview to your myUW and explore the platform including the category: Interviews – Practice Sets. You can also schedule a mock interview with ECS.

Review your Handshake account activated at SOAR and update your profile to 100% completion. Use Handshake to learn more about companies attending the Career Fair and actively use Handshake to research internships, or co-ops to learn more about job opportunities and employers.

Attend the UW-Madison Engineering & STEM career fair—a great chance for you to connect and chat with employers, learn more about job roles and careers, and find internships, or co-ops.

Sept. 14–17
11 a.m.–5 p.m.
Engineering campus

Get involved during the semester: Attend at least one student organization meeting to connect with the organization.

“Students who are involved in activities outside of the classroom set themselves up for opportunities to gain experiences in leadership, conflict resolution, presentation skills, planning and time management, hands-on problem-solving, real-world application of classroom theory, and getting them out of their comfort zone. These are all items that are difficult to replicate in a classroom setting, but they are all very important to employers when looking for high-performing employees.”

—Recruiter, Milwaukee Tool

Start to think about NACE competencies: The National Association of Colleges and Employers identifies these as the core competencies employers value from college graduates. As you reflect on your own skills, what steps are you taking to build these competencies during your college career to prepare for a successful transition into the workforce?

EXPLORING ENGINEERING CAREERS

2026-2027

CANVAS COURSE

SELF-ENROLL/NO CREDIT

LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Utilizing Your Handshake Account
- Resume Building
- Career Fair Information
- Major & Career Exploration
- Interviewing
- And other career topics

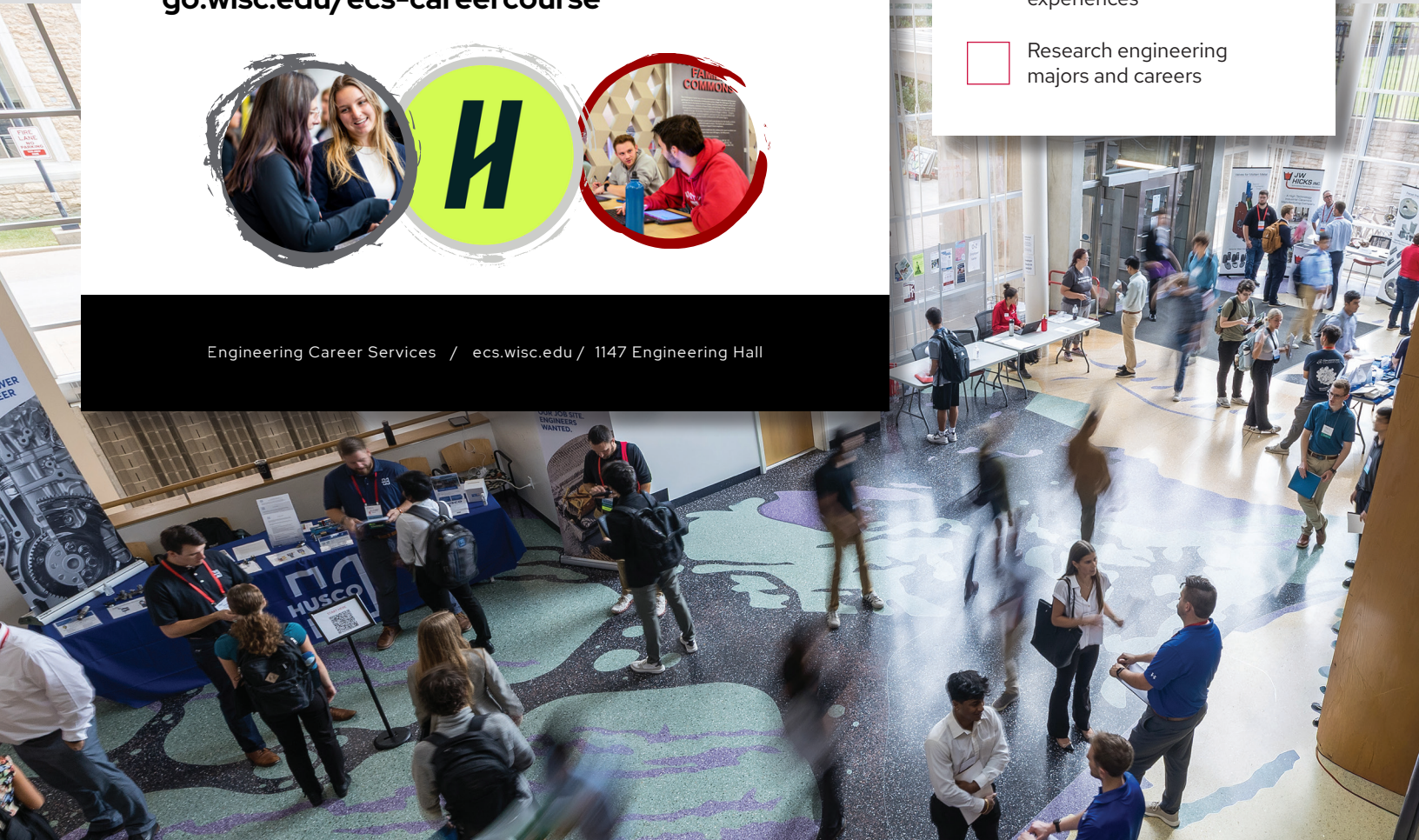
go.wisc.edu/ecs-careercourse



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What should you accomplish by the end of your first year?

- ☐ Build a resume
- ☐ Use Handshake, complete and update your profile
- ☐ Attend a career fair (or two)
- ☐ Attend at least one industry event
- ☐ Get involved with at least one activity to build your experiences
- ☐ Research engineering majors and careers



Engineering Career Services
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

1415 Engineering Drive, Madison WI, 53706
ecs@engr.wisc.edu
(608) 262-3471



ecs.wisc.edu