

BUILDING A CAREER IN GLOBAL STUDIES AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY



**DEPARTMENT OF GLOBAL STUDIES AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST 2018

Table of Contents

	Pages
Section I – Your Career Path	5-14
a) Careers in Global Studies and Human Geography.....	7
b) Assessing Your Personal Skills and Interests.....	10
c) Maintaining Your ePortfolio.....	12
Section II – Building a Better Resume	15-30
a) Why You Need a Better Resume.....	15
b) Internships.....	17
c) Education Abroad.....	20
d) Undergraduate Research.....	23
e) Service and Leadership.....	25
f) EXL/POCE/MTEngage.....	27
Section III – Post Graduation	31-39
a) Preparing for Professional Jobs.....	31
b) Preparing for Graduate School.....	34
c) Career-Oriented Masters and Certificate Programs.....	36
d) Substantive Gap Years.....	37
Section IV - Career Planning and Job Search	40-45
a) Plan B and Plan C.....	40
b) Professionalism: Skills and Etiquette.....	41
c) Advising and Mentoring.....	44
Section V – Resources	46-50
a) Department Resources.....	46
b) University Resources.....	48
c) Professional Resources.....	49



Section I – Your Career Path

If you only start to think about jobs, a career, and your own future a few months before graduation, you are asking for an extremely difficult path. Finding a professional job and career is itself a job, i.e., you need to work at it. A professional career does not spontaneously appear after graduation; you need to plan for and build your own personal career path. It isn't something to put off to later.

The time to start planning for **YOUR** professional career and success is **RIGHT NOW**.

The sooner you think about the type of professional career and life you want, and the skills and experiences you will need to achieve this career and life, the sooner you can start laying the basis for real personal success.

Some of your career planning happens in your courses and degree program. Some of it happens outside of classes—taking advantage of all the other opportunities available while in college. Success depends on knowing the type of career you want for yourself and what is required to break into this career path, and then using your time and effort while at MTSU to put yourself in the best possible position to succeed.

This process will take some time and reflection—reading through the information in this handbook, talking to your faculty adviser, and thinking about what you both enjoy and excel at—and so it is never too soon to get started. Planning ahead is the key to planning for personal success.

Career-- What Career? The first step in building the professional career you want is knowing what type of career you do in fact want. Knowing that 'you really like geography,' or you 'really like learning about the world,' is a starting point, but it is only a start. You need to ask yourself some really hard

questions, and don't be satisfied until you have really specific answers to these types of questions. So, ask yourself:

- What is it about global studies that you really enjoy?
- What is it about geography that you really enjoy?
- What types of careers are available that tap into these aspects of the field that you really enjoy?
- What types of skills and experiences—beyond just earning the degree—needed for these careers?
- Are there are reasonable number of jobs in these areas each year?
- What are the salary ranges for these types of jobs?
- Starting with these jobs, what are the opportunities for career advancement?

Finding answers to these types of questions will not happen spontaneously. You will need to take some time and really work at it—use the resources here, talk again and again to your faculty and adviser, talk to individual professors who work in areas where you have career interests, and think hard about what you want.

Knowing where you want to go in your own career, early in your academic years, helps you build the professional career and success that you really want.

Remember: success requires a lot more than just completing your courses. Completing your required courses and earning your degree in Global Studies or Human Geography will be essential to your professional goals, so go to class, read, study hard, and engage with the material you learn. BUT, and this is an important BUT, often very particular skills or experiences are needed to land jobs in specific aspects of the field. Maybe there are certain communication or financial skills, or relevant internship experiences that will help you get selected from among the other applicants and actually hired.

Going to classes and doing well is the **MINIMUM** needed to be successful; to improve your odds of success, you need to do more.

If you work through this handbook, you will have a good sense of what your career options are, and the types of skills and experiences that are needed to be successful. Then, you can sit down with your adviser and professors and discuss—in detail—what you can do **WHILE AT MTSU** to get the skills and experiences needed to be successful when you apply for jobs or graduate school. You can choose minors and internships and activities that will augment your classes, demonstrate you have the needed skills, and increase your chances of landing the career you want in the profession.

As an alternative to this approach, you could just wing it and hope that you happen to end up with the skills and experiences you need for your desired career, but this is probably not a great strategy.

In this section, there will be a discussion of the types of careers available to Global Studies and Human Geography students, tips and resources for assessing your own skills and interests, and advice on maintaining a personal ePortfolio throughout your time at MTSU.

a) Careers in Global Studies and Human Geography

As a Global Studies or Human Geography major, you have many options going forward. The skills, knowledge, and abilities you develop as a GS+HG major will position you to move into professional careers in the non-profit, private, and governmental sectors at both the national and international levels.

As with all things, there is both an upside and downside to the range of opportunities available to GS+HG majors:

- **Upside:** You have many options to build the professional life you want, to apply your GS+HG training to craft a professional life that is meaningful and personally satisfying. You have options to find a path that meets your professional goals.
- **Downside:** Because there are so many options open to you, finding your career path isn't a straight line. If you are a major in Accounting

or Journalism, for instance, there are pretty straight lines or paths from the major to potential employers. With Global Studies and Human Geography, you can pick and choose from a variety of career paths and professions, and this puts more onus on you to really think about what you want in your professional life. Hence, this handbook.

You want to work with your adviser, Global Studies and Human Geography faculty members, and mentors to think about your career options as a GS+HG major, but here some of the broad options are outlined.

“What are you going to do with that?”

It’s inevitable that when you tell people you are majoring in any of the Liberal Arts, Global Studies and Human Geography included, you will be asked “What are you going to do with that?.” The answer is that you will do a great deal.

- “...employers readily identify the creative, communicative and problem-solving acumen traditionally associated with liberal arts majors as the most valuable attributes of new hires.”
- “...all successful careers require critical thinking, teamwork, sensitivity to cultural, demographic, economic and societal differences and political perspectives. A liberal arts education provides this grounding.”
- A national survey of employers, across all sectors and fields, found:
 - “More than 9 in 10 want those they hire to demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity; intercultural skills; and the capacity for continued new learning.”
 - “More than three-fourths of employers want more emphasis on: critical thinking, complex problem-solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings.

Nearly a third of all Fortune 500 CEOs majored in the Liberal Arts. Majoring in Global Studies or Human Geography, and any of the other Liberal Arts, gives you the skills and opens the doors to multiple professional paths. The paths are there; you need to think and plan for the path you want to pursue after graduation.

Sources: Mark McNutt, “There is Value in Liberal Arts Education, Employers Say,” and Edward Ray, “The Value of a Liberal Arts Education in Today’s Global Marketplace.”

Global Studies. Global Studies is an interdisciplinary major, and in addition to your GS courses, you will take courses from a number of other departments. Additionally, you will participate in an education abroad experience and be exposed to a variety of cultures. Professions increasingly demand cross-cultural skills, global expertise, and interdisciplinary work.

In your major you will acquire skills and knowledge to apply to a variety of professions:

- A solid understanding of global trends and affairs, and the connections that exist across borders.
- An understanding of contemporary social and cultural dynamics.
- The ability to assess information from a multi-disciplinary perspective, which allows you to analyze and interpret events in a well-rounded manner.
- The ability to communicate and defend complex views, both orally and in writing.
- The ability to work with people from differing cultural backgrounds.

There are not many job ads that say ‘Global Studies Major Wanted,’ but there are wide-ranging jobs that demand these skills and knowledge. Common career areas for Global Studies majors include:

International Organizations	Non-Profit Organizations
Int. Non-Governmental Agencies	Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy
International Financial Institutions	Local/State/Federal Government
International Business	Travel/Tourism Business
Research Institutes	Policy Analysis Organizations
Higher Education	K-12 Education

Human Geography. Human Geography is concerned with the spatial aspects of human existence. Majors learn to think spatially about human and cultural phenomena, understanding how location, space, and scale impact human actions—from housing patterns to migration to urban transport and mobility to environmental changes to security threats to... almost all areas of human interaction.

In your major you will acquire skills and knowledge to apply to a variety of professions:

- A solid understanding of the spatial aspects of contemporary social, political, economic, and environmental trends.
- Analytical skills, including cultural, statistical, and geo-spatial analysis.
- Ability to synthesize different viewpoints and types of information.
- The ability to communicate and defend complex views, both orally and in writing.
- The ability to work in teams, across cultures, and in an interdisciplinary manner.

As with Global Studies, there are not many job ads that say ‘Geographer Wanted,’ but there are wide-ranging jobs that demand these skills and knowledge. Common career areas for Human Geography majors include:

Non-Profit Organizations
Urban Planning
Environmental Planning
Transportation Planning
Medical Geography
Policy Analysis Organizations

International Organizations
Int. Non-Governmental Agencies
International Financial Institutions
Local/State/Federal Government
International Business
Research Institutes

Transferable Skills. As should be clear from the previous discussions, Global Studies and Human Geography prepare students with skills that are transferable across different career paths. As noted at the start, this is exciting because it means you have options and opportunities to design and build the professional life you want and where you will thrive. But, because there are so many options, it also means you need to think—think hard—about what you want in terms of your professional life after MTSU.

b) Assessing Your Personal Skills and Interests

Thinking about your interests and motivations is a key stage in your career exploration. It can help you to formulate ideas about different job roles that could suit you and the sectors or organizations that you might like to work

in. Thinking about these things is a life-long endeavor, but, if you haven't already, you should seriously start this process now.

For example, it can be helpful to think about:

- **your personality** - what are you like as an individual? what types of roles or workplaces would suit you?
- **your abilities and skills** - what are you good at? what skills have you developed throughout your life so far?
- **your interests** - what do you enjoy doing? what kind of careers appeal to you?
- **your values** - what do you care about? what is important to you?

There are many online tools available to help you; the two following online tools will help you get started. They overlap in part, but the first tool focuses on the types of skills you enjoy and would want in a career, while the second focuses more on daily work activities.

1) Complete one or more of the [Skills Assessments](#) at Career-Wise education. It is available online for free. Select an assessment, and just follow the instructions; each is formatted a little differently, but you will receive a profile that shows where you fall on a variety of job- or career-related categories. The real value is to get you to think about the types of work activities where you have skills and interests, so you can then focus in on global studies and human geography careers that use these skills.

2) Complete the O-Net's [My Next Move](#) Interests Inventory. It is available online for free. To complete the profiler, just follow the instructions; the Interest Profiler asks you to rate 60 questions about work activities that some people do on their jobs. After you rate these questions, you will receive a profile that shows where you fall on a variety of job- or career-related categories (such as 'realistic' or 'artistic'). Then, you pick one of five 'Job Zones,' which group careers according to some level of experience, education, and training. Finally, you can see the kinds of careers that are good fits with your particular

interests and experiences. Feel free to choose different Job Zones and see what the results tell you.

After going through these materials and thinking about your real skills and interests, go back and think through how these skills and interests match up with the careers in Global Studies and Human Geography discussed above.

c) Maintaining Your ePortfolio

An ePortfolio is a place where you can upload, record, save, and organize evidence of your skills, knowledge, and activities—both in and out of the classroom. You can save papers, presentations, and videos you create, along with information on internships, study abroad experiences, conference presentations, volunteer and service work, other extracurricular activities and leadership, your work history, and any honors and awards earned. It is an electronic repository for all of the materials you may need as you graduate, market yourself, and pursue your career goals.

As you move towards your Global Studies or Human Geography degree, you will thus have a record of everything you have done, accomplished, and mastered, and you can organize it into a final portfolio to make available for potential employers. For your final ePortfolio, you can pick and choose and display the information that best markets yourself for the career you seek. The final ePortfolio can be 'published,' generating a URL that you can provide to potential employers.

Your ePortfolio can thus essentially serve as an interactive resume. By selecting your best work and accomplishments, potential employers can easily see what you can contribute. You will be able to put the URL of your final publicly accessible ePortfolio on your paper resume, homepage, or social media site. In this way, you will be able to display your presentations, link to writing and analytical samples, showcase your skills, and display your co-curricular-, volunteer-, internship-, and research-related activities.

Using Your ePortfolio. You already have an ePortfolio; all MTSU students, both undergraduate and graduate level, are automatically set up with an ePortfolio. You can access your ePortfolio using the 'ePortfolio' button at the top of the page when you enter D2L.

Your ePortfolio is separate from any particular class. After the semester ends, you will no longer be able to access to course pages, but you will always have access to your ePortfolio. You can add materials from all of your classes, as well as out of class activities, and it will all be together in one place. You will retain access to your ePortfolio for one to two years after you graduate.

You can create folders—called 'Collections'—within your e-Portfolio to organize your materials for future use. Going forward, you should create a folder for each course you take—whether in the Department or not—and store copies of your work product there—all papers, Prezi and PowerPoint presentations, videos, pictures, group project reports, and so on. You may not use a lot of this material later on when creating your final portfolio to show to potential employers, but you will have all the raw material you need organized in one place.

Look at Several Sample Final ePortfolios

There is no 'one way' to organize and display information in a final ePortfolio; you will design a layout that works for you. The goal is to have a final ePortfolio that highlights your particular skills and strengths, so they will each be a little different.

The links below are just several pages of sample ePortfolios. They are simply meant to give you a feel for what a final ePortfolio can look like. The goal is that when you are completing your Global Studies or Human Geography program and starting off on your professional career, then you will be in a position to produce something like these examples—though geared to your individual needs and career goals.

Auburn University

<http://wp.auburn.edu/writing/eportfolio-project/eportfolio-examples/>

Clemson University

<https://www.clemson.edu/academics/programs/eportfolio/gallery.html>

Middle Tennessee State University

https://elearn.mtsu.edu/d2l/eP/presentations/presentation_preview_popup.d2l?presId=147253%E2%80%8B

click on 'View Sample Presentations'

You can also create folders and upload materials from outside of any of your classes as well—copies of awards, work samples from jobs or internships, pictures and reflections on what you got out of a study abroad and/or internship and/or volunteer activities, pictures and work samples from on campus activities, etc.. So, for instance, if you attend a conference and present a research poster, create a collection for it and store a copy of the poster itself, the conference program, and some pictures of you making the presentation; if you do a education abroad trip, create a collection and store pictures and reflections there; if you volunteer with a community group, create a collection and store work samples and pictures there; and so on with all the things you do.

Working with the ePortfolio Function in D2L. If you are already pretty comfortable working with D2L, using the e-Portfolio system will be very intuitive—there will not be a steep learning curve. But, there are some brief instructions and links to how-to videos below. MTSU Academic and Instructional Technology Services maintains a page entitled ‘D2L ePortfolio Information’ with how-to documentation and videos on using your ePortfolio. The following documents and videos are available to help you learn how to use your ePortfolio.

Available How-To Documentation and Videos on Using Your D2L ePortfolio *

Document - D2L ePortfolio Learner Guide

http://www.mtsu.edu/d2lsupport/eportfolio/D2L_ePortfolio_Learner_Guide.pdf

Video – Navigation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOhMxLY7oxw&feature=youtu.be>

Video – Create a Collection and Add an Item

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7TWiiMMnn4&feature=youtu.be>

Video – Create a Presentation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTz_DddMF-M&feature=youtu.be

*: These URLs may change over time, but if you simply do a search for the title, they should still come up.



Section II – Building a Better Resume

When you graduate with your degree from MTSU, you want to be in the best position possible in order to be successful in your chosen field. You will be competing for jobs and graduate school placements with folks who have, like you, just earned their bachelors degree—from Western Kentucky State or Southern Illinois State or Western Michigan State, or East Tennessee State, and so on. Preparing for this transition now allows you to get a leg-up and ensure you stand out from the competition.

Section 1 noted that successfully completing the courses for your degree is the minimum needed to be successful. Successfully passing courses and completing your degree is truly essential for all of you to be eligible for the careers you want; it ensures you will be in the pool of applicants being considered. Beyond this, though, you want to be one of those selected out of the pool of applicants—you want to actually land that professional job, land a spot in grad school, land a spot in law school. You want to do things that make you stand out in the field of applicants.

This section will start with a discussion of why you absolutely need to build a better resume for your own success, and will then move through the opportunities and types of things you can do while at MTSU to build the resume you need.

a) Why You Need a Better Resume

To understand why you need to build a better resume, consider the situation outlined in the box below.

**Put Yourself in the Shoes of a Personnel Director
Hiring an Entry-Level Professional
(or graduate school admissions committee)**

You need to hire a new 'Assistant Director' of a local non-profit or global NGO, and you advertise for applicants. The job ad calls for a cover letter and resume, a college degree in global studies or human geography, some course work relevant to the organization, and three letters of recommendation. After a few weeks, you have 60 applications, and you need to whittle it down to 3 or 4 people to bring in for an interview.

You go through the 60 applications and find that 15 simply don't meet the requirements—their degree is in some other field entirely, or none of their course work is relevant, or they only have one letter of recommendation. These 15 applications go into the 'NO' file (or trash can) immediately.

Taking the remaining 45 applications, you go through them again in more detail, looking at their gpa's, the quality of writing in the cover letter and resume, and the strength of the letters of recommendation. Doing this, you can cut the pool in half, adding to the 'NO' file the 25 applicants with very low gpa's and/or poor writing and/or letters of recommendation that raise serious red flags.

You are now down to 20 applicants, and they all have the right degree and all have a solid gpa and all have solid writing and all have good letters of recommendation. In other words, they all meet all of the primary job requirements—they are effectively tied. But, you do not have the time or resources to interview 20 people. You have to select 3 or 4 from among the 20.

How?

How do you select the handful to interview when they are all tied on the primary qualifications? You can flip a coin, or you can look for secondary factors that stand out in the application files (remember, you haven't met any of these people, you are looking at their files). What kinds of things would make some of the applicants stand out from the others?

- Maybe one successfully completed a professional internship—and thus you know this applicant knows how to work in a professional office (the others might too, of course, but you can't tell from their application file).
- Maybe two studied abroad somewhere—and thus you know that these applicants are a little daring and resilient and can deal effectively with new circumstances and cultural differences (the others might too, of course, but you can't tell from their application file).

- Maybe one proposed and completed an independent research project—and thus you know this applicant has some initiative and time management skills (the others might too, of course, but you can't tell from their application file).

These are probably going to be the four people you bring in to interview, and one of them will be the new Assistant Director.

Doing well and earning your degree will get you into the pool of twenty above, but the 'other things' will get you selected out of the pool for an interview. You want to be one of those selected out of the pool.

There are many opportunities to do 'other things' here at MTSU—some within our Department and some at the University level—that will help you build a better resume, and make you stand out and be more competitive and more successful after you earn your degree.

No one can do all of these things; there is only so much time available in a day or a week or a semester. But, you should always be doing something. Every semester. Every year.

b) Internships

The Department offers two internship courses—GS 3300: Global Studies Internship and GEOG 4572: Internship in Cultural Geography. As students find good placements, the Department works with them to set up the courses on an individual basis. Internships allow you to do several things, each important:

-1- You Can Apply the Concepts and Theories from Your Classes. Internships give you an opportunity to see and apply the ideas discussed and learned in class in the field directly.

-2- You Can Test Run a Couple of Different Career Paths. Internships let you try a few different career paths, get a first-hand sense of what the work and career is like, and know you are on the right path for personal success.

-3- You Can Gain Practical Work Experience. You will be working in a professional setting in your preferred career path, and will gain experience with the skills needed—research, report and memo writing, working with the public and clients, and so on. The more experience the better when you are interviewing for positions in a couple of years.

-4- You Can Gain Professional Experience. Beyond specific work skills, you gain proven experience simply working in a professional setting. Potential employers worry whether recent graduates understand professional dress, etiquette, and so on; successful internship experiences demonstrate to them that you know and understand professional behavior.

-5- You Can Establish Valuable Contacts. In an internship, you will meet co-workers and clients who are in the career path you are interested in pursuing too. This is networking 101; you meet, talk to (and hopefully impress) folks, and they can be very helpful down the road with career tips and advice, job leads, potential letters of recommendation, and additional contacts.

Yes! You Can Do An Internship Abroad Too. Today, study abroad programs include options for internships abroad, public service work abroad, and field research. You can find exactly the type of experience YOU want and will benefit from the most. MTSU, for instance, is affiliated with ISA Service Learning, which offers structured internship and service learning opportunities year-round, in a variety of fields, yielding valuable personal and professional experience. ISA allows you to combine going abroad with an internship experience and civic engagement. ISA offers overseas internship programs in Latin America, Europe, Asia, and North Africa. If you are interested in this type of hands-on, internship experience overseas, look at the ISA web site and talk to MTAbroad in Peck 209.

Where Can Internships Fit In Your Program? All internships give you credit toward your degree and are graded. There are several places where internship credits can be applied to your degree, so talk to your adviser about what option is best for you. Every degree in the Department has some elective hours, and these can be used for internship credits. Additionally,

outside of your major and minors, you have some general elective hours, and they can also be used for internship hours. Finally, MTSU also offers a minor in Political and Civic Engagement (POCE), which automatically builds twelve credit hours into your program for internships and other forms of experiential learning. The POCE minor is discussed in sub-section 'f' below.

Is One Internship Enough?

Dr. Tom Denham

"To be quite blunt about it: No.... the number of graduating students who had at least three internships doubled from 2003.... Today, the question is not, "Have you done an internship?", but rather "How many internships have you done?"... Employers are demanding more of college graduates. They rank internships the second most important quality in a candidate behind communication skills, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers. The more internships, the more it will help you better prepare for the demands of a global workplace...

Several internships will help you to better crystallize your job interests and abilities. The more internships you have the more prepared you will be to make an informed decision about your future. Otherwise, you may base this important decision on your idealize perception of what the field will be like. It provides you an opportunity to try out a new industry, employer or job...

The key to staying competitive is summarized by my simple formula: $E + E + e = E$. It represents Education (GPA) plus Experience (Internships) plus your extra-curricular activities equals Employment... Everyone graduates from college with a degree, but not everyone graduates with experience."

Source: <http://blog.timesunion.com/careers/is-one-internship-enough/907/>

How Do You Locate An Internship Placement? You need to do a little legwork to locate internship placements that are in the career areas where you want to gain experience. First, think about the type of experiences you want, then:

- Talk to faculty members in Global Studies and Human Geography about ideas and possibilities.

- Talk to your adviser about ideas and possibilities.
- Talk to Ella Weaver, the Internship Coordinator for the College of Liberal Arts, about ideas and possibilities.
(<http://www.mtsu.edu/liberalarts/internships/index.php>).
- Reach out to people in the field and ask for ideas.
- Google area businesses, government agencies, and non-profits, call, and ask.

Once you have located a good placement—one that offers the experiences you want and that wants you—contact the Department and we can make arrangements from there.

c) Education Abroad

Studying abroad is extraordinarily valuable, increasingly easy at MTSU, and something you and every student should aim to do. There are tremendous benefits and almost no downsides to studying abroad, so....**GO!**

There is great big world out there. Going abroad gives you a rare opportunity to expand your horizons, understand a different culture, better appreciate your own culture, and build independence and confidence and initiative and communication skills. Most students who go abroad find the experience life-changing, and something they would never trade away. For all reasons, employers, graduate schools, and law schools value study abroad. An education abroad experience is a requirement for Global Studies students, but is valuable for Human Geography and students in all majors.

Study Abroad Today Can Be About More Than Taking Courses. Study abroad programs have traditionally involved taking university classes while living in another country and culture. And, there are still many opportunities to do this—if it is what you want. Today, however, study abroad programs also include other options, such as internships abroad, public service work abroad, and field research. You can find exactly the type of experience YOU want and will benefit from the most.

What Research Shows about Study Abroad Students

While available statistics on study abroad might still be limited, there are some notable studies on study abroad and careers, learning, and academic performance. Here are some of the more remarkable findings.

97%	of study abroad students found employment within 12 months of graduation, when only 49% of college graduates found employment in the same period. That means they were twice as likely to find a job. Among study abroad alumni, 90% landed a job within 6 months.
25%	higher starting salaries: that's how much more study abroad students earn than those college graduates who do not study abroad. A British study found their study abroad graduates out-earned their peers by 17%. This equates to approx. \$7,000 annually for US students and £3,120 for UK students. Maintaining this earning advantage translates to earning an extra \$567,500 over one's career in the US.
90%	of study abroad alumni who applied got into their 1st or 2nd choice grad school.
84%	of study abroad alumni felt their studies abroad helped them build valuable skills for the job market. A second study confirms this at 85%.
80%	of study abroad students reported that study abroad allowed them to adapt better to diverse work environments.
70%	of study abroad alumni claimed that because of study abroad they were more satisfied with their jobs.
59%	of employers said study abroad would be valuable in an individual's career later on with their organization.
34%	of study abroad alumni claimed that study abroad helped them choose their career field.
100%	greater improvement in GPA post-study abroad. Student GPAs tend to rise as they approach the completion of their undergraduate degree. Students who studied abroad saw their GPAs rise twice as quickly.
19%	more likely to graduate: that describes how study abroad participants are more likely to graduate than non-participants by six years. Even at four years, study abroad participants are 15% more likely to graduate based on a UC San Diego study. UT Austin and Georgia data show a similar trend.

Source: <http://studyabroad.ucmerced.edu/study-abroad-statistics/statistics-study-abroad>

As mentioned above under 'Internships,' MTSU is affiliated with ISA Service Learning, which offers structured internship and service learning opportunities year-round, in a variety of fields, yielding valuable personal and professional experience. ISA allows you to combine going abroad with an internship experience and civic engagement. ISA offers overseas internship programs in Latin America, Europe, Asia, and North Africa. If you are interested in this type of hands-on, internship experience overseas, look at the ISA web site and talk to the MTAbroad Office in Peck Hall 207.

How To Arrange an Education Abroad Opportunity: MTSU makes going abroad very easy. The MTAbroad office is right down the hall from the Department in Peck 207. Programs are available to go almost anywhere you might want to go in the world. And, there are dedicated scholarship funds available to help you go abroad. Go talk to the MTAbroad staff about all the opportunities available to MTSU students, where you would like to go and when, and scholarship information.

Where Can Education Abroad Fit In Your Program? All education abroad opportunities can give you credit toward your degree. There are several places where internship credits can be applied to your degree, so talk to your academic adviser beforehand about where the study abroad credit hours can apply in your program. Additionally, outside of your major and minors, you have some general elective hours, and they can be used for study abroad hours. Finally, MTSU offers a minor in Political and Civic Engagement (POCE) minor, which automatically builds twelve credit hours into your program for experiential learning, including education abroad. The POCE minor is discussed in sub-section 'f' below.

d) Undergraduate Research

As a Global Studies and Human Geography major, you have the opportunity to become an independent researcher and take part in original intellectual work. Nothing shows potential employers and graduate schools your mastery of key skills and the ability to act independently than completing your own research. You have multiple opportunities to craft and conduct research on your own ideas, and to both present and publish your work.

The MTSU Undergraduate Research Center

MTSU maintains an Undergraduate Research Center (<http://www.mtsu.edu/urc/>) to promote undergraduate research and help you fund and present your work. There are three URC programs you should be familiar with:

- 1- Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity Grants (URECA).** Rather than earning credits for your research, you can apply for a URECA grant and be paid up to \$3,500 for your research project (plus supplies and travel).
- 2- Travel Support to Present Research.** If you have completed a research project and want to present your work at a regional, national, or international conference, these grants are available to help you do so.
- 3- Scholars Week.** Late every fall, students can submit short abstracts of their work-- either an independent research project or work completed in a course—for presentation at Scholars Week the following March. Scholars Week is a week-long and campus wide opportunity for students to present a research paper or a research poster in a low pressure environment, gaining both valuable experience and a line on their resume.

With undergraduate research, you work on a topic and project of your own design over the course of one or two semesters. You will work with a faculty mentor who works in the same general area; the mentor provides guidance and feedback, but the research is YOURS. Taking the opportunity to pursue your own research ideas offers many benefits. By participating in undergraduate research you will:

- Develop a one-on-one mentoring relationship with a faculty member;
- Clarify your academic and career interests and goals;
- Acquire knowledge in your field that transcends classroom study;
- Enhance critical skills in communication, independent thinking, creativity and problem-solving; and,
- Enhance professional and academic credentials to support your applications for scholarships, awards, jobs and entry into graduate and professional schools.

Research, in short, helps you learn how to apply the concepts learned in class and demonstrate to others that you have the skills and independence to act on your own ideas.

There are other research opportunities you can take advantage of:

- Each Spring semester, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology hosts the Undergraduate Social Science Symposium (<http://www.mtsu.edu/urc/>). This is open to all students in the social sciences, very much including Global Studies and Human Geography. You can present research papers on a panel, and/or present a research poster.
- The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds a large number of Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs) "An REU Site consists of a group of ten or so undergraduates who work in the research programs of the host institution. Each student is associated with a specific research project... Students are granted stipends and, in many cases, assistance with housing and travel." In other words, REUs are summer opportunities to work at another institution around the country, in a very prestigious program, and be paid quite well for the experience. REUs are highly competitive, but they are amazing opportunities for high performing students. You can search the REU site (https://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.jsp); the site is continually updated, but most projects start getting posted in late fall. Click on a general area and then all specific projects in that area are listed, with considerable detail on the majors and skills they are looking for, and how to apply.

You can be published. There are now a substantial number of undergraduate journals where you can submit your work for publication; your submissions will only be in competition with those from other undergraduates, and it is an excellent opportunity to learn about the publication process and build your resume.

- MTSU publishes an undergraduate journal, *Scientia et Humanitas*, open to all majors, and you can submit your work for consideration. See <http://mtsu.edu/scientia/>.

- The MTSU Honors College maintains a listing of other undergraduate journals available around the country and world. See <http://capone.mtsu.edu/hcevents/journals.html>.

e) Service and Leadership

Being actively involved in organizations, both on and off campus, is a valuable component to your career development. These activities show potential employers your passions, commitment, organization, and leadership abilities. These are attributes most employers are looking for, in all fields.

Whether on campus or off, leadership is important. It is better to take a leadership role in one organization than be a member of ten. Agree to organize group events, assume an office in the organization, and so on. These types of activities both build your skills and demonstrate a lot more to potential employers.

MTSU Student Organizations. There are literally hundreds of student organizations at MTSU, and many of them are relevant to global studies and human geography. There are organizations that deal with local issues related to poverty, immigration, education, and much more, and organizations that deal with human rights, development, and a wide range of global issues. Joining, participating in, and possibly leading some of these organizations ties you into areas of personal interest and gives you hands-on experience in leadership, planning, and management, i.e., it helps build a better resume.

The Student Organizations and Service office (<http://www.mtsu.edu/sos/>) can help you get involved and answer any question. There is an Organizational Directory that lists all MTSU student organizations alphabetically and by category, and provides a short description about what each group does, and contact information. Just scroll—there are a lot, so it will take some time—and locate groups that interest you to contact and get involved. See: <https://mtsu.campuslabs.com/engage/Organizations>.

Why Should You Join Student Organizations?

There are many reasons why one should join a student organization. Some help you with career, some help you with social skills and some help you with personality development. **Networking:** The easy and best way to network with students who have similar interests is joining a student organizations. It can help you with you career, hobby or anything that you are passionate about.

Social Skills: As a student you want to learn how to talk to other people from different cultures and countries. As an international student, it is your opportunity to build some social skills.

Professional Experience: If you join professional chapter student organizations, you will get exposed to lot of professional career and help you build professionally. For instance, if you are a marketing major, joining American Marketing Association will help you get a feel of your professional career.

Leadership Skills: If you become part of the executive board, you take up the responsibility or challenge to be a leader and you learn what it takes to be a leader. The schools help you by giving you training and instilling those good leadership skills.

Alumni Networking: Student organizations usually try to bring in alumni and ask them to share their experiences. It is a wonderful opportunity for you learn from seniors who have graduated and get connected to them. It helps you with job search and mentoring. I got my internship through alumni networking.

Organization and Management Skills: Many of us are not familiar how an organization works and how to manage everything. If you are on the executive board you get to learn how fund raising works, how finances work, how to market for event, How to work as a team. It helps you in the long run for your job or if you are opening your own business.

Source: <http://redbus2us.com/8-reasons-why-should-you-join-student-organizations-in-us-universities-how-many-to-join-what-kind-of-student-organizations-to-join/>

If there isn't an organization that you would like and think is needed, but doesn't yet exist, it is pretty easy to create whatever organization you want on campus. See the Guidelines to Register a New Organization (<http://www.mtsu.edu/sos/register-org.php#>).

Community Organizations. Community involvement is an essential value in a free, open, and democratic society. Students who get involved in the community while in college report deep satisfaction and a deep sense of purpose, and are far more likely to be active in their communities after college too. In short, you grow as a person. Public service also brings immediate personal benefits, allowing you to demonstrate professional habits, boost your resume, and build important contacts.

There are many opportunities for you to gain experiences and do valuable volunteer work in the community. There are vast numbers of community groups working in nearly all areas of interest—a little time with a phone book and Google will turn up many opportunities in areas that interest you.

Additionally, the MTSU EXL program has developed partnerships with nonprofit organizations in the area and maintains a Database of Volunteer Opportunities. The database simply requires your Pipeline username and password to use, and is available at: <http://www.mtsu.edu/cgi-bin/users/webprod/EXL/EXLLogin.cgi>. The database can be viewed in various ways and is very easy to use. It offers a direct way to connect with community partners. The database can be sorted by the type of services provided by each organization as well as by the various learning opportunities available and relevant areas of study for each volunteer position.

f) EXL/POCE / MTEngage

MTSU offers a number of avenues whereby you can gain valuable experiences outside of the traditional classroom. These include the Experiential Learning program, the Political and Civic Engagement minor, and the MTEngage program.

Experiential Learning (EXL). MTSU believes in the value of applied knowledge, and through the EXL program, students, faculty and local businesses and organizations find valuable ways to interact and encourage collaboration between MTSU and the community, merging classroom knowledge with real-world work environments. Experiential Learning will provide you with hands-on experience in and outside the classroom.

EXL Courses in the Department

To earn the EXL designation on your diploma, you need to complete 16-18 credit hours in EXL designated courses. These can be completed across all of your course work, but it is made easier by the fact that our Department has a number of courses that are regularly offered in an EXL format. Engagement, you will meet a lot of the EXL programs requirements in the process.

Some or all of the sections of the following Department courses are offered with EXL designation.

GEOG 4360: Cultural Geography

GS 2010: Introduction to Cultural Experiences

GS 3000: Globalization

GS 3010: Field Experience and Study Abroad

GS 3040: Contemporary Migration: Global Trends, Local Implications

GS 3050: Globalization Through Film

You can take individual EXL courses or, as an **EXL Scholar**, you will have an EXL designation on your diploma and will receive an EXL Scholars certificate. EXL gives you the opportunity to give back something to the community and, in turn, that experience will benefit you personally and professionally.

Among the benefits of the EXL program: sample a career field / hone skills and apply theories / broaden career horizons / network in the field / gain professional work experience / increase self-confidence / enhance resume / possibly get a job offer.

For detailed information on the EXL program, read through the material at the Experiential Learning Homepage at <http://www.mtsu.edu/exl/>.

"What Should I Minor In?"

This is a near universal question students ask their advisers at some point. There is no one answer that applies to every student, but:

- College is about more than building a career; it is also about a full and good life. So, if you have a passion—"I want to work in X field, but I've always been fascinated by... learning Chinese... or painting... or history... or something"—use one of your minors to pursue your passion. This is a good thing.
- If you know exactly the career you want and there is a minor that would obviously help you achieve it—say you are a Human Geography major and want to be an urban planner, a minor in Urban Studies makes sense—you should go in this direction with your minors. Simply talk to GS+HG faculty about these types of career-relevant minors.
- If, like many or most students, you do not fall into either of the two previous groups, you might seriously consider minoring in Political and Civic Engagement. The Political and Civic Engagement minor is the same number of credit hours as other minors, but allows you to combine internships, study abroad, independent research, and pre-professional courses for a minor that offers you practical experience using what you have learned in your courses.

The Political and Civic Engagement Minor (POCE). Students always understand the value of internships, study abroad, research, and pre-professional courses (i.e., all the things discussed here in Section II of this handbook) to explore career options, develop skills and experience, and land jobs. But, they also often have a hard time fitting them into a program with all of their General Education, major requirements, and requirements in their minors. The minor in Political and Civic Engagement, however, provides space for these types of experiences directly in your 120 credit hour program. With the POCE minor, these valuable experiences are an integral part of your educational program.

With a POCE minor, you take two of three courses in organizing and campaigning, choosing from among Democratic Participation and Civic Advocacy, NGOs and Non-Profits, and Political Campaign Management. Beyond this, with the remaining twelve credit hours of the minor, you can

mix and match the types of experiences and skills you want, combining a mix of internships, study abroad, community based research, and pre-professional courses.

The POCE minor is administered by the Department of Political Science and International Relations, but it is available for majors from all departments. For details see: <http://www.mtsu.edu/politicalscience/minors.php>.

MTEngage. The MTEngage program challenges students to use integrative thinking and reflection across multiple contexts and educational experiences. Students develop an ePortfolio that showcases their integration of knowledge, skills, and abilities gained during their time at MTSU. MT Engage fosters a culture of engaged learning and integrative thinking, enhancing student satisfaction and improving reflective thinking, personal and professional development, and effective communication.

MT Engage is an opt-in program for students with no additional cost. See the details at: <http://mtsu.edu/mtengage/whatisMTEngage.php>.



Section III – Post Graduation

a) Preparing for Professional Jobs

"Looking for a job is a job in itself" may be an old adage, but it is truer today than ever. If you want to graduate and land a good professional job, you will need to work at it. All too often, faculty members meet students in the final semester and ask "what are you going to do after graduation?" and the response is something like "Well, I guess I will start looking for a job." Starting your job search after graduation is not a good plan. You need to spend your years at MTSU working toward this goal, and do the things each year that will dramatically raise your chances for real success.

From: *How College Students Can Prepare to Be Job Ready*

"Before graduation, students need to know that a college degree might get you in the door for an interview and increase your earning potential, but it's only part of the employment equation. To land the job, employers aren't only looking at what you know; they want to know what you can do. After all, they have a big pool to choose from..."

According to data collected in a recent *Forbes* article, 88 percent of employers are looking for a cultural fit in a prospective employee, rather than a particular skill set. The vast majority of employers aren't asking the applicant if they have mastered their company's systems, but rather: Does this person exude professionalism? Are they excited about the company? Are they confident? Do they crave challenge? Will they self-motivate and self-monitor? Do they have the potential to become an asset to the company?... for students, these skills are largely developed through experience in real life learning labs -- such as a part-time job, an internship, volunteer work, and campus activities..."

The Bottom Line: All of the things discussed in this handbook do **ACTUALLY MATTER!**

Preparing, Year-By-Year: The work involved in a successful job/career search is more intense in your junior and especially senior year, but there are things to do now too.

Your Freshman Year

- a) You want to think about your interests, think about possible careers, think about what skills and experience you already have, and think about the skills and experience you will need by the time you start applying for jobs in your senior year.
- b) You want to start your ePortfolio, collecting papers, projects, presentations, and work samples that you can use later on to demonstrate your skills and experiences.
- c) You want to start a resume, one that can be added to and modified as your skills and experiences expand each year.
- d) Take advantage of University Career Planning Services and meet with a career counselor.

Your Sophomore and Junior Years

- a) These are your primary years to fill any gaps in your current skills and experiences. If you need practical experience in a professional office, or leadership experience, or supervisory skills, and so on, this is the time to utilize internships, study abroad, independent research, and pre-professional activities and student organizations to fill these gaps. You can't do this all at once, but you can gradually build and expand your skills and experiences over these two years.
- b) As you meet people in your internships, when abroad, when doing research, in pre-professional activities, start to network—people you can reach out to later for advice and tips and leads.
- c) Update your resume every semester.
- d) Add new papers, projects, presentations, and work samples to your ePortfolio every semester.

Your Senior Year

- a) Start seriously putting together a list of potential employers, public, private, and non-profit. Work with your faculty adviser and the Career Development Center.
- b) Finalize your resume; use the services offered by the Career Development Center.
- c) Finalize your ePortfolio. Up to now, you have been collecting information on your skills and experience, and now you can create a final portfolio with a url that you can include on your resume and allow potential employers to see—you can sell yourself. You can create several permutations of your portfolio, targeted to different types of employers and jobs.
- d) Practice writing good cover letters.
- e) Learn and practice interview skills using the services at the Career Development Center.
- f) Line up good reference letters.
- G) Start applying for positions several months prior to your graduation. Follow up with each, and always send thank you messages to anyone who takes the time to speak with you or interview you.

The MTSU Career Development Center

"The Career Development Center is a comprehensive Center serving all departments and colleges of MTSU. Our mission is to provide innovative technology, resources, and programs that educate and engage students in a targeted, self-directed job search process and create opportunities for students and employers to connect."

They provide a lot of services to help you be successful.

USE THEM

b) Preparing for Graduate School

Graduate programs come in different forms, but when people say they are "planning on going to grad school," they usually mean they want to go into a Ph.D. program, and this is the focus here. In the next sub-section, career-oriented masters and certificate programs will be addressed; these are also graduate programs, but their focus, purpose, and duration are very different than Ph.D. programs.

Ph.D. programs are essential for anyone interested in an academic or university career. They can also be a valuable preparation for careers in government, think tanks, advocacy, and non-profit or non-governmental organizations, but most Ph.D. students are aiming for an academic career.

Should You Pursue a Ph.D. Program? Ph.D. graduate programs are not places to go to hide out in order to avoid the job market. Make sure that your reasons for pursuing a Ph.D. are clear. Things to consider:

- Is a Ph.D. consistent with your career goals?
- Ph.D. programs are much more focused than undergraduate degrees, and require you to have an in-depth understanding of your interests and goals prior to even applying; have you thought about the subfield and specific issues that interest you?
- Ph.D. programs are heavily focused on theories and research; are these your interests and areas of strength?
- Ph.D. programs typically take five to six years to complete; can you make this commitment?
- Have you talked to several faculty members (who all have a Ph.D. and been through the process) about the points above?

Finding Ph.D. Programs That Are a Good Fit For You. First, think about, talk to faculty, and decide which subfield(s) interest you the most. Second, get actual or practice GRE test scores. Then with your GRE and GPA scores in mind, start identifying the programs that are strongest in the areas you are interested and where you have a competitive chance of getting accepted.

There are a great many online resources to identify Ph.D. programs in various areas related to global studies and human geography. Additionally, of course, talk to faculty about good programs.

Once you have put together a list of possible programs, start looking at their websites—check out the areas of specialization of the faculty. Are there some who share your interests? Have you read any of their work or have a sense that you might find their ideas stimulating? In a Ph.D. program you will be specializing much more than you did as an undergraduate, so it is important to pick a program where there is a community of scholars who focus on your areas of interest. Most students apply to about a half dozen graduate programs.

Theory and Research Matter

Again, Ph.D. programs focus on theory and research, and, thus, as an undergraduate potentially interested in pursuing a Ph.D., these things matter.

A) Read global studies/human geography research. Textbooks have a role to play in many classes, but they summarize original work and are not a substitute for reading the original work. Your first year or two in a Ph.D. program will be much smoother if you have read more original works and research articles.

B) Do undergraduate research of some kind; go back and review what was discussed in Section II on undergraduate research opportunities. Doing some of your own research and presenting it will help you know if it is something you enjoy and show admissions committees some tangible evidence that you have interest and skill at research.

How to Pay for a Ph.D. Program. Ph.D. programs are expensive, but you won't (shouldn't, really) pay for it. If you were to take out loans to pay full freight for a Ph.D. program, it is very unlikely that the higher earnings from having the Ph.D. would pay off the costs; it would not be a financially sound decision.

Graduate schools only accept a limited number of applicants, so if they accept you and really want you, they will put together a financial package to

make it possible. Most go through a Ph.D. program with an assistantship, which covers tuition and fees and offers a monthly stipend to live on (not luxuriously, but eat and have a roof over your head) in return for work as a teaching or research assistant.

Aim to attend the best program you can get into in your area of interest where they will pay you.

c) Career-Oriented Masters and Certificate Programs

Often, people think the only graduate education option as Global Studies or Human Geography majors is to go into a Ph.D. program, but there are many graduate options for people who want to work as practitioners and specialists in the field.

Many schools offer 1 or 2 year career-oriented programs. These programs are much more targeted, practitioner-oriented, and shorter than Ph.D. programs. These programs are less theory and research oriented, and aim to equip people to work as high-level specialists in some aspect of the field. Building on your undergraduate degree, you can get a specialized certificate or masters degree in environmental policy or health care policy or international human rights or homeland security, or.... many other areas relevant to global studies and human geography.

Some people enter programs such as these immediately after completing their undergraduate degree, to hone a specialty and enter the field at a higher level. Others take an entry-level professional position and after a year or two complete a program like these, in order to advance and move up in the field.

Because these are shorter and practitioner oriented, the admission criteria are generally lower for these programs than for Ph.D. programs, making them accessible for far more students.

Finding Career-Oriented Programs. Finding appropriate career-oriented masters and certificate programs requires you to do some digging; there are hundreds of such programs available, but they are less visible than Ph.D. programs, so you need to search them out.

All such programs relevant to Global Studies and Human Geography majors cannot be listed here in one place—there are too many and they are too varied. Below are just a handful of examples, simply to give you an idea of what is available and what these programs look like:

- University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Geography Masters Program
<https://geography.utk.edu/graduate/masters-program/>
- CUNY School of Professional Studies Certificate Programs
<https://sps.cuny.edu/academics/certificates>
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Certificate Programs
<http://uwm.edu/cie/academics/certificate-programs/>
- San Jose State University Certificate Programs
<http://www.sjsu.edu/urbanplanning/programs/certificateprogram/>

These are just examples—there are scores and scores of options available. If you are interested in these types of career-oriented programs, search for ‘masters programs in...XXX,’ and ‘certificate programs in...XXX.’ Most importantly, talk to your adviser and Global Studies and Human Geography faculty.

d) Substantive Gap Years

Instead of directly pursuing employment or graduate school after graduation, some students choose to engage in a gap year program. A gap year is an opportunity to gain professional or personal experience, accomplish goals, and/or explore one's interests in the year following graduation.

Gap years can range from a number of different experiences, including a career-oriented position within a company to expand career development, a year of travel abroad to build cultural knowledge, or a financed research project of one's own design. Gap Year Programs can involve work in the U.S. or abroad in a wide variety of fields such as teaching, advocacy, community development, health care, immigrant services, social work, or sustainable

development. Programs frequently emphasize philosophies of service to others, peace and justice, enhancing international relationships, and/or "the road less traveled."

Gap years can be taken between high school and college or between college and career/law school/graduate school. Gap Years originally started in the United Kingdom in the 1970's as a way to contribute to the development of the students through an extended international experience. Gap Years came to the United States in the early 1980's and now embody every manner of program and opportunity imaginable, both domestically and internationally, all with the shared purpose of increasing self-awareness, learning about different cultural perspectives, and experimenting with future possible careers.

Why a Gap Year? There are a number reasons to consider taking a gap year. Maybe you want a break from formal schooling before moving on to a Ph.D. or career-oriented masters/certificate program. Maybe you want to explore additional career options before finalizing your career plans. Maybe you want to gain new experiences. Maybe you are graduating in December and your graduate program doesn't begin until the following September, and you want to do something meaningful in the interim.

These short-term experiences can help you explore a potential career path, gain experience and credentials that could contribute to graduate or professional school, develop cognitively, socially, and emotionally, and connect with professionals in areas of potential interest. In some cases, these short-term experiences will turn into longer-term professions.

Planning a Gap Year. A gap year is not simply 'bumming around' for a six months or a year after graduation from MTSU. As defined by the American Gap Association, "A Gap Year is a structured period of time when students take a break from formal education to increase self-awareness, challenge comfort zones, and experiment with possible careers. Typically these are achieved by a combination of traveling, volunteering, interning, or working. A gap year experience can last from two months up to two years and is taken between high school graduation and the Junior year of their higher degree." The key word in this definition is "**structured**."

You want to participate in a gap year program, whether it involves work, an internship, service, or travel, which helps you explore and/or develop career

relevant experiences. This takes some time and planning. There are a great many gap year organizations and programs available, as a simple Google search will demonstrate. The Department does not endorse any specific programs, but as a way to just get started in looking at program options, examine some of the larger organizations and then move on from there. You might look at:

- Gap Year Association: <https://gapyearassociation.org>
- Center for Interim Programs: <http://www.interimprograms.com>
- GapYear.Com: <https://www.gapyear.com>



Section IV - Career Planning and Job Search

a) Plan B and Plan C

Most of the discussion in this handbook is geared toward your 'Plan A'—the career you want the most. And, you do want to be focused on this, because it is what you most want to do with your professional life. But, it is crucial to have some contingency plans too. Sometimes, Plan A doesn't materialize:

- maybe your GPA might not prove strong enough to get into the type of graduate program you want
- maybe family concerns might prevent a relocation
- maybe there might be a glut of applicants for the particular job you want the most

Lots of things can happen, and you don't want your career to be immobilized if something prevents 'Plan A' from materializing right after graduation. So, you want to give some real thought to your 'Plan B' and 'Plan C' right now.

What Else Would You Be Happy Doing? Think about what other career paths would still be meaningful and purposeful and make you happy in the event your 'Plan A' doesn't materialize. Something like "I really want to earn a Ph.D. and pursue an academic career at a university, but I could also be happy working as a public policy analyst or urban planning." Or, "I really want to go to law school and work in immigration law, but I could be happy working on immigration policy or running an immigrant rights non-profit."

Your 'Plan B' and 'Plan C' might be closely related to your 'Plan A'—as with the immigration policy example above—or in a very different aspect of global studies or human geography. You want to think about these alternative plans now, and start to plan for them now.

Planning For Alternatives. Once you have alternative careers in mind, take a piece of paper and draw three columns, one each for your 'Plan A,' 'Plan B,' and 'Plan C.' Under each, list the types of skills and experiences needed to get started after graduation, and then look at the areas of overlap and the areas where the columns are different.

To the extent that the skills and experiences overlap, as you prepare for your 'Plan A,' you will also be effectively preparing for your alternative careers too.

To the extent that they differ—and there will almost certainly be some differences—think about all the opportunities at MTSU discussed in this handbook, and what you might be able to do be better prepared to pursue your alternative careers if needed in the future.

Again using the example above, if you mainly want to work in immigration law and law school doesn't happen for some reason, having taken courses on immigration policy issues and doing an internship at an immigration related non-profit will put in a solid position for one of your alternative paths. Plan for these things now so that they are there when you might need them.

b) Professionalism: Skills and Etiquette

Moving from schooling into a professional career—whether in government, business, international organizations, or non-governmental organizations—demands professionalism to succeed. Across all of these areas of employment, there are some common expectations in terms of behavior and professional etiquette.

Good professional etiquette indicates to potential employers that you are a mature, responsible adult who can aptly represent their organization, agency, or company. Not knowing proper etiquette could damage your image, prevent you from getting a job, and jeopardize personal and business relationships.

Below, are just quick bullet points covering the main areas of professional etiquette.

When an employer invites you to an event:

- Be on time.
- RSVP whether you are able to attend or not.
- Do not cancel without a good reason.
- Dress with care; clarify appropriate attire.
- The person who extends the invitation pays the bill.
- Place your nametag on the upper-right side of your clothing.
- Avoid inappropriate language.
- Learn to discuss any topic including those that do not interest you.
- Tell jokes only if they are appropriate.
- Always send a thank you note within 24 to 48 hours.

How to introduce people:

- Introduce the most important person first.
- Introduce a younger person to an older person.
- Introduce a peer in your own company to a peer in another company.
- Introduce a nonofficial to an official person.
- If you are not immediately introduced, introduce yourself when appropriate.
- Responding to introductions—shake hands, make eye contact, and say “hello” or “nice to meet you.”

When you are at an employer reception and do not know anyone:

- Be the one to start the conversation.
- Look for a shared or common interest.
- Be a good listener; ask open-ended questions.
- Avoid controversial or unsuitable subjects.
- Make sure that your cell phone will not interrupt the conversation.
- Don’t gossip or preach.
- Avoid fidgeting and extreme nervousness.
- Smile; shake hands firmly; have good eye contact; send out positive signals.
- Don’t repeat; don’t ramble; modulate your voice.
- If all else fails, bring up the weather.

Dining with success:

- Place your napkin onto your lap immediately; if you leave your chair, place your napkin onto your chair not onto the table.
- Silverware is used from the outside moving in.
- Once a utensil is used, it should not rest on the table again.
- Keep purses, brief cases, cell phones, keys, etc., off the table.

- Food, condiments, etc. are passed in a counterclockwise direction around the table.
- Do not stack your plates after you've finished your meal.

The Most Common Etiquette Mistakes:

- No advance preparation
- Inappropriate dress or grooming; unprofessional image
- Late arrival
- Negative body language or poor posture
- Dishonesty
- Lack of self-confidence
- Inability to communicate strengths
- Embarrassing dining skills
- Poor telephone or Netiquette skills
- Failure to follow up or express gratitude

Email Etiquette:

While we may be unguarded in our tone when we email friends, a professional tone should be maintained when communicating with prospective employers and while on the job. Additionally, use an email address that would be considered professional. For example, 'selfiequeen1988@gmail.com' or 'numbaonestunna@yahoo.com' would not be considered professional. Create an email address that identifies who you are (e.g., 'firstname.lastname@gmail.com') or use your MTSU email address.

Use email wisely, and you will shine; use it improperly, and you will be seen as immature and unprofessional. Try to be succinct in getting your point across—then end the email.

General Email Guidelines

- Use a meaningful subject header—one that is appropriate to the topic.
- Be professional. Address the person as Mr., Ms. or Dr. unless told to call them by their first name previously, and definitely verify the correct spelling.
- Sign your email with your full name.
- Be brief and don't overload the employer/admissions personnel with lots of questions.
- Ditch the emoticons and abbreviations like J/K or LOL, which are best reserved for family and friends.
- Don't use strange fonts, wallpapers or multicolored backgrounds.

- Avoid using slang.
- As with everything in the job search, proofread and check spelling.

In conclusion, when you're dealing with employers, there is no such thing as an inconsequential communication. Your emails say far more about you than you might realize. If you are sloppy and careless, a seemingly trivial communication will stick out like a sore thumb.

Thank People

Throughout the job search (and in life, really), **THANK PEOPLE!** People are going to answer your calls, answer your emails, give you tours of facilities, interview you, take you to meals, etc. Always thank them—in person, like you mean it, and/or with a follow up note or email within 48 hours.

c) Advising and Mentoring

Good advice and mentoring are important to everyone as they prepare for a successful career. At multiple points in this handbook, you have seen the phrases "talk to your faculty adviser," and "talk to a career counselor." It is very hard to navigate everything that is involved in career planning and preparation, law school applications, grad school applications, and a job search without any help. Advising and mentoring really matter.

When Should You Talk To Your Faculty Members? Seriously, the correct answer is "often." Your College adviser is an excellent resource when you have questions about course scheduling, substitutions, problems in courses, and so on. With career issues, though—types of internships that will be useful, undergraduate research, possible grad programs, and so on—Global Studies and Human Geography faculty are a better resource. This may seem trite, but it is true: NO student has ever had a problem because she/he talked to their professors too often, but LOTS of students have faced entirely avoidable problems because they didn't talk to their professors enough.

Career Counselors. MTSU provides you with a large, active Career Development Center with career counselors who can help you examine potential careers, and help with interviewing skills, resume and cover letter writing, personal statements, and much more. They are there for you, and you should meet with them and use their services often.

The Value of Professional Mentors. An important step in pursuing your dream career is to find someone who already works in that field who can offer guidance and advice as you proceed. Believe it or not, this is not as difficult as it might sound. A career mentor is someone who voluntarily provides career advice and assistance; mentors can help you set career goals, resolve difficult problems, and make sound career decisions. The relationship with your mentor is ongoing and your mentor can guide you throughout your career. A mentor can be indispensable both when you're starting out and when you're moving up the career ladder.

Why would they want to help you? The answer is easy: people like helping other people! And, by asking a prospective mentor for help, they are being told they are admired for what they do, their career is in demand, and their experiences and insights are valuable to others. Not everyone will see it this way, but once you start asking, you'll be surprised how receptive people are.

Mentors are in the field you want to be in, i.e., they have successfully made it through their undergraduate program and successfully managed a job search in your chosen field, and/or got into and through graduate school. They have first-hand experience doing the things you want to do. If you can tap into their experiences for advice and tips and insights, you should.

Tips for Finding a Good Mentor:

- Research the field and find out about the people who are in it.
- Create a list of people who seem like good fits with you
- Start contacting them slowly at first—a polite and formal email, for example—and see who responds. Note: If the person is slow to respond, or gives vague answers, perhaps it's not a good time for them to be a mentor. Don't take it personally!

Try to form a relationship, and get to know their personalities even as you try to exhibit yours. Like so many other things, when you find the right mentor, you'll know it.

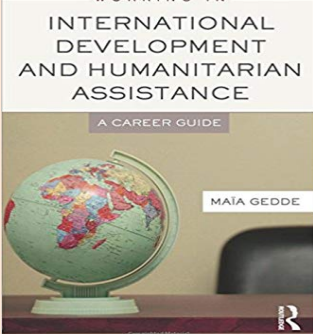
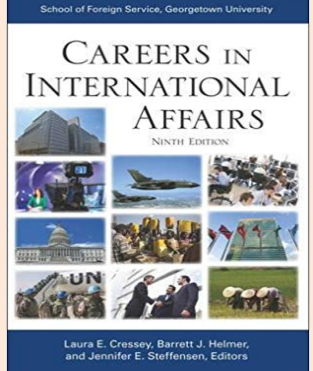
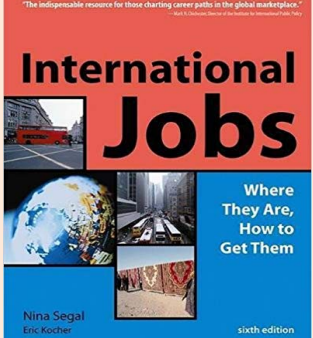
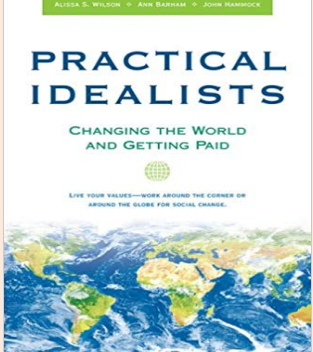


Section V –Resources

a) Department Resources

The Department maintains a lending library of career planning materials. The following are available for you check out and use—just stop by the main office in Peck 203.

	<p>Practicing Geography: Careers for Enhancing Society and the Environment.</p>
	<p>Choosing a Career in International Development: A Practical Guide to Working in the Professions of International Development.</p>
	<p>Get Ahead by Going Abroad: A Women's Guide to Fast-Track Success.</p>

	<p>Working in International Development and Humanitarian Assistance.</p>
	<p>Careers in International Affairs.</p>
	<p>International Jobs: Where They Are, How To Get Them.</p>
	<p>Practical Idealists: Changing the World and Getting Paid.</p>

	<p>Go Global: Launching an International Career Here or Abroad.</p>
	<p>Working World: Careers in International Education Exchange and Development</p>
	<p>The Nonprofit Career Guide: How to Land a Job that Makes a Difference.</p>

b) University Resources

MTSU provides a number of offices and services to help all students plan their careers and gain the skills necessary for a successful job search. You should take advantage of these opportunities.

- Career Development Center
<http://www.mtsu.edu/career/>
- Resume and Cover Letter Guide
<http://www.mtsu.edu/career/resource-resumewriting.php>

- InterviewStream: Record Practice Interviews
<http://www.mtsu.edu/career/intstream.php>
- GoinGlobal: International Jobs
<http://www.mtsu.edu/career/goinglobal.php>
- College of Liberal Arts: Internships
<http://w1.mtsu.edu/liberalarts/internships/index.php>
- College of Liberal Arts: Scholarships for Study Abroad and Internships
<http://w1.mtsu.edu/liberalarts/documents/FirstTennesseeBank.CLAIternshipAwardsFall.2018.pdf>
- MTSU Education Abroad
<http://mtsu.studioabroad.com>
- MTSU Student Organizations and Service
<http://www.mtsu.edu/sos/>
- Experiential Learning (EXL)
<http://www.mtsu.edu/exl/>
- MTEngage
<http://mtsu.edu/mtengage/>

C) Professional Resources

- American Association of Geographers (AAG)
<http://www.aag.org>
- AAG: Career and Professional Development Resources
http://www.aag.org/galleries/jobs-careers-files/Careers_resources_overview.pdf
- AAG: Preparing for a Geography Career
http://www.aag.org/cs/jobs_and_careers/preparing_for_a_geography_career/preparing_for_a_geography_career_overview

- AAG: Guide to Geography Programs in the Americas, 2016-2017
http://www.aag.org/galleries/guide/20162017_Guide_to_Geography_Programs_in_the_Americas.pdf
- Geojobs.biz
<http://geojobs.biz>
- Global Job and Internship Guide
<https://www.ucis.pitt.edu/global/content/global-job-internship-guide>
- Global Studies Association
<https://globalstudiesassoc.wordpress.com>
- Global Studies Association of North America
<http://www.net4dem.org/mayglobal/>
- GradSchools.com – Geography Graduate Programs
<https://www.gradschools.com/programs/physical-sciences/geography>

