SOAR Contact Process for Students

SOAR is designed to link Ashland University students with alumni of AU in order to allow students to explore potential career fields and develop professional networks. Students who are linked with alumni learn about potential careers by conducting informational interviews. Please know it is not your SOAR Mentor’s responsibility to find you a job or secure an interview for you. However, SOAR will be an invaluable tool in your career exploration and networking process.

After you have registered...

1. Draft or Update your Resume
   Having a developed, updated resume will introduce your SOAR Mentor to your abilities, skills, and experiences. In addition, special fields may have different resume styles and your SOAR Mentor may be able to help you update your resume. Please bring your resume to the initial meeting with the SOAR coordinator.

2. Draft an Introductory Email to Your SOAR Mentor
   Sending an email to your Mentor is a great way to begin the conversation! Some things to consider adding to your email include:
   - An introduction of yourself as an Ashland University student
   - Your name, major, and potential career field
   - Your purpose for contacting them
   - Share with them that you are exploring a career where they indicated they could assist, and that you are seeking their expertise
   - Establish a time when you could contact them to schedule or conduct an informational interview
   - Thank them for their participation in the SOAR program and let them know that you appreciate their involvement in SOAR

   It is also important to include a resume and explain that the purpose in doing this is to introduce your abilities, skills, and experience.

3. Schedule the Informational Interview
   When contacting your SOAR Mentor to schedule an informational interview, there are guidelines that you should follow:
   - Confirm that they have received your email and resume
   - Declare your purpose for contacting them. Let them know that you are in the process of exploring a career in a field where they indicated they could assist and that you would like to ask them some questions
   - Ask if they would be willing to schedule an informational interview time. When deciding on this time, select a time mutually convenient for both of you. It is important to be considerate of your SOAR Mentor’s busy schedule

4. Conduct Informational Interview
   Informational interviewing is the process of gathering information through personal contacts. If you are looking to break into a career field, change jobs or careers, or move to a new geographical area, informational interviewing may be very helpful to
you. With an informational interview, you are only seeking information and advice – not a job or internship. Great networks can develop from informational interviews. Jobs/internship opportunities often result from networks.

The specific questions you ask during an informational interview will depend on what information is most important to you. Questions may center on job responsibilities, work, environment, advancement, and job security. The following are possible questions to ask:

- What is a typical day like?
- What do you like most about your job/career field?
- What types of challenges occur in your field? In your position?
- What is a typical career path in your field?
- What college courses are helpful for this field?
- How did you get into this field of work?
- What types of skills and/or training are needed for your job?
- What types of advancement opportunities are available in this field?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving my resume?
- Is there any other information you believe would be helpful to me as I move closer to graduation?

5. **Send a Follow-Up Thank You Letter**
It is important for you to express your appreciation for the time and information given to you by the SOAR Mentor. Within 48 hours of the informational interview, dependent on the way you have been communicating, send a thank-you letter or email expressing your gratitude.

6. **Complete the SOAR Assessment!**
As a SOAR participant, you are expected to complete the Ashland University SOAR assessment that is sent to your Ashland email account. Your feedback will help us expand the effectiveness of the program.

**Be sure to update your mentor as well as the Career Services Center of your progress!**

The mission of the SOAR program is to provide an opportunity to connect current students who are exploring career options and alumni who are seeking a career change with Ashland University graduates or friends of Ashland University whose professional knowledge and achievements would contribute significantly to the career exploration process in a mentoring capacity. Participation in SOAR is voluntary. All SOAR participants are expected to report unprofessional behavior immediately by calling the Executive Director of Career Services at Ashland University at 419.289.5064. By requesting to be a part of the SOAR Mentor Program, you are agreeing to follow and adhere to the instructions given above.