

CHECKLIST: 10 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU GRADUATE

As you look towards the future and the start of your professional career, consider this handy, all-in-one pre-graduation checklist to help start your journey after school off right.



1 SLOW DOWN TO ENJOY THE LAST SEMESTER

It can be way too easy to start making plans for life after college before you have actually completed college! Don't let this precious time in your last semester slip by. Enjoy not having somewhere to be 40 hours a week and take the opportunities to hang out with friends at your university activities or athletic events.



2 SETTLE UP OLD SCHOOL DEBTS OR STUDENT FEES

That late fee from the parking office you've been avoiding since sophomore year? Now is the time to settle that up, get it paid (even if you firmly believe you were in the right) because you don't want to let a \$25 parking ticket or \$4 library fine on your account prevent you from graduating.



3 CLEAR OUT YOUR BOOKSHELF

If you're coming up a little short on cash to complete step 2 above, or just want to free up some space in your life, aka not transport 4 years' worth of books to your next apartment, consider clearing out your bookshelves by either selling or giving your old textbooks away. While the bookstore on campus is typically the most convenient, they tend not to pay that much for buying back books. I'd recommend checking with younger students in your major and asking if they want to buy your books. Let's say you paid \$100 for a book and the bookstore is offering to buy it back for \$20, but you offer to sell it to you a younger student for \$50. You are making twice what the bookstore was offering you and the young student is saving 50%- so it is a win, win for both of you! A great way to find younger students in your major is in student groups or LinkedIn searches.



4 ASK FOR LINKEDIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Before you complete your program and leave university for good, be sure to ask old professors, staff, other students, internship employers etc. for LinkedIn recommendations. Even the best, most engaged and active students are easy in becoming distant memories in professor's minds when teaching loads of students year in and out. So ask [Professors for recommendations](#) now and save them to LinkedIn so you have them documented forever!



5 GIVE THANKS AND SHOW GRATITUDE TOWARDS THOSE WHO HELPED YOU

As a follow up to step 4, your last semester is a fantastic time to give thanks and show gratitude to all the amazing folks that helped you in your college or university journey. As you ask for recommendations, consider giving recommendations in return. You may post a public thank you letter on your LinkedIn feed recognizing your inner circle. [Posting frequently on LinkedIn](#) is also a great way to increase your professional brand too. You could also just organize a coffee date with your favorite advisor at the campus coffee shop and say thank you. Anything to show gratitude and appreciation will be well received, so don't be shy, people love getting recognized, brag on them!



6 UPDATE YOUR RESUME AND LINKEDIN PROFILE

A few months out from graduation is the perfect time to [update your resume](#) and LinkedIn profile. If you have a job lined up after school, wonderful!, now is the time to formally announce it on LinkedIn to your professional network and start connecting with folks from your new employer. If you are still seeking a role, consider how to make use of your network to let people know how they can best support you in your job search. Lastly, update your resume with your final GPA and your completed degree information so you are ready to rock and roll in your job search.



7 PROACTIVELY JOIN YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

At most universities and colleges, admission to your alumni association is automatic upon graduation but that doesn't mean you can't be proactive and update your contact information in the alumni association's database before graduating. This could also be a great time to ask about volunteer opportunities with the alumni association, so you have a way to stay involved in the community. Joining and participating in alumni events are a great way to professionally develop, meet new people, network and of course, have fun celebrating and representing your university or college.



8 TAKE A BREAK BETWEEN SCHOOL AND WORK

If you have a full-time role lined up post-graduation, consider taking some length of time to simply relax and recharge before starting your new job. You have spent the last few months sprinting towards the finish line of college, take a day, a week or even a month to rest or do something fun for yourself before jumping into work.



9 FINANCES

The dreaded terms finances, budgeting, and savings are things you've escaped from in your college years but that's about to change. Now is the time to book an appointment with your student loan provider so you fully understand the terms, agreements, and expectations of your student loan repayment plan. As you start your new professional career, you'll also need a ballpark estimate on your monthly expenses, i.e., a budget, so you can determine what pay salary you need to consider when choosing jobs, moving into a new apartment, or buying a new car. I'd also recommend finding a good financial planner who can advise you on retirement savings and investments as you start your new professional role. Some of the best benefits to investing are based off how early you start investing so even if you can only commit \$50-100 a month to a 401k, start now!



10 SAY YOUR GOODBYES

Lastly, as you close at your college years, start saying your goodbyes, to both people and places. While you can always come back to campus, speak in classrooms as an industry expert, chat with old professors or attend the rivalry football game each Fall, you can't recreate the people and places that made your college experience special and unique to you right now, in this moment. As with step 1, take this chance to slow down, appreciate your time as a student is coming to an end and then start getting really excited about the opportunities that lay ahead for you!

Read the original post: [An All-In-One Pre-Graduation Checklist to Starting Your Professional Career](#) by [Nadia Ibrahim-Taney](#)

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