



Career Development: A Parent's Guide

Parents are a valuable part of the career exploration process. Here are some tips that can help your cadet make the most of their time at VMI and leave with a fulfilling career:

1. **Pay attention to the timeline.** When cadets first matriculate into VMI, their focus should be on adjusting to their new environment and academics. **GPA does matter**, with some employers having GPA requirements for internships and jobs. After breakout, preparing for their future career can take on a more involved role.
2. **Listen.** Many cadets focus solely on what they are doing immediately after graduation. Where they would like to be 5 years after graduation? Will this career path/ position get them to that 5-year goal?
3. **Encourage your cadet to visit the Office of Career Services after breakout.** Resume creation and review, individual career planning, interview preparation, and cover letter development are some of the resources that we offer. The earlier they visit the office, the earlier we can build a relationship with and start assisting them.
4. **Summer internships are a priority.** Internships allow cadets to explore potential career options prior to graduation, giving them related work experience and a better understanding of their potential career field. It is also an opportunity to build their network, gain reputable references, and develop related skills. Internship applications can open up to a year prior to the internship start date, and some close in early fall, so it is recommended that cadets start preparing as early as possible.
5. **Recommend a resume.** Resumes are a vital career tool, but one that often is put on the backburner. Having a well-written resume ready to share will help them be prepared when a last-minute opportunity comes up.
6. **Encourage leadership roles.** The mission and vision of VMI includes building cadets into citizen-leaders. Support your cadet in taking advantage of the many leadership opportunities VMI has to offer.
7. **Emphasize experience.** Along with internships, summer employment, study abroad, volunteering, and research build skills that employers are looking for in potential employees.
8. **Networking.** Networking is not only helpful when searching for a job, but also for learning more about their field and creates connections that may provide support as they start their careers. Early networking, through VMI events, LinkedIn, or family connections will benefit your cadet throughout their career.