

Students engage late, and unevenly. Opportunity doesn't wait.

Helping Students Build Advantage Before Opportunity Arrives

Experience compounds.

Starting early gives small wins time to compound.

Earlier engagement. Uneven access. Limited time.

Career Services teams already understand the importance of career readiness. The challenge is helping more students act earlier, use available resources, and keep moving between appointments, workshops, career fairs, and recruiting cycles.

Students engage at different times

Some start in the first year. Others arrive after a missed internship or recruiting cycle.

Opportunity is uneven

Not every student gains an internship, leadership role, or professional network on schedule.

Experience is under-translated

Useful work is often completed without artifacts, metrics, stories, or references.

Staff time is finite

High-touch advising can't be the only way students make progress.

AI changes the signal. Polished application language is easier to produce. Nearly 90% of employers say they look for evidence of a student's ability to solve problems when reviewing resumes.¹ Credible Proof still comes from doing the work.

What about the other six?

Roughly four in ten currently enrolled bachelor's students have completed an internship.² The goal isn't to replace internships. The goal is to help every student keep moving forward.

1. NACE, *Job Outlook 2025* (Nov. 2024).

2. Gallup, "Four in 10 College Students Have Had Internship Experience" (Aug. 16, 2023).

Students don't need the same next step.

Career Services professionals see different immediate needs every day. GradPlanHQ treats those needs as practical professional-development jobs, not personality types or fixed tracks.

Find a starting point

Figure out where to begin and what to move first.

Build a professional identity

Clarify what to say, create a profile, and make values visible.

Build relationships

Practice introductions, outreach, networking, and joining conversations.

Build Experience

Create or strengthen meaningful work when Experience is missing.

Translate Experience

Turn work into stronger resume content and interview stories.

Increase Visibility

Document and share work so the right people can see it.

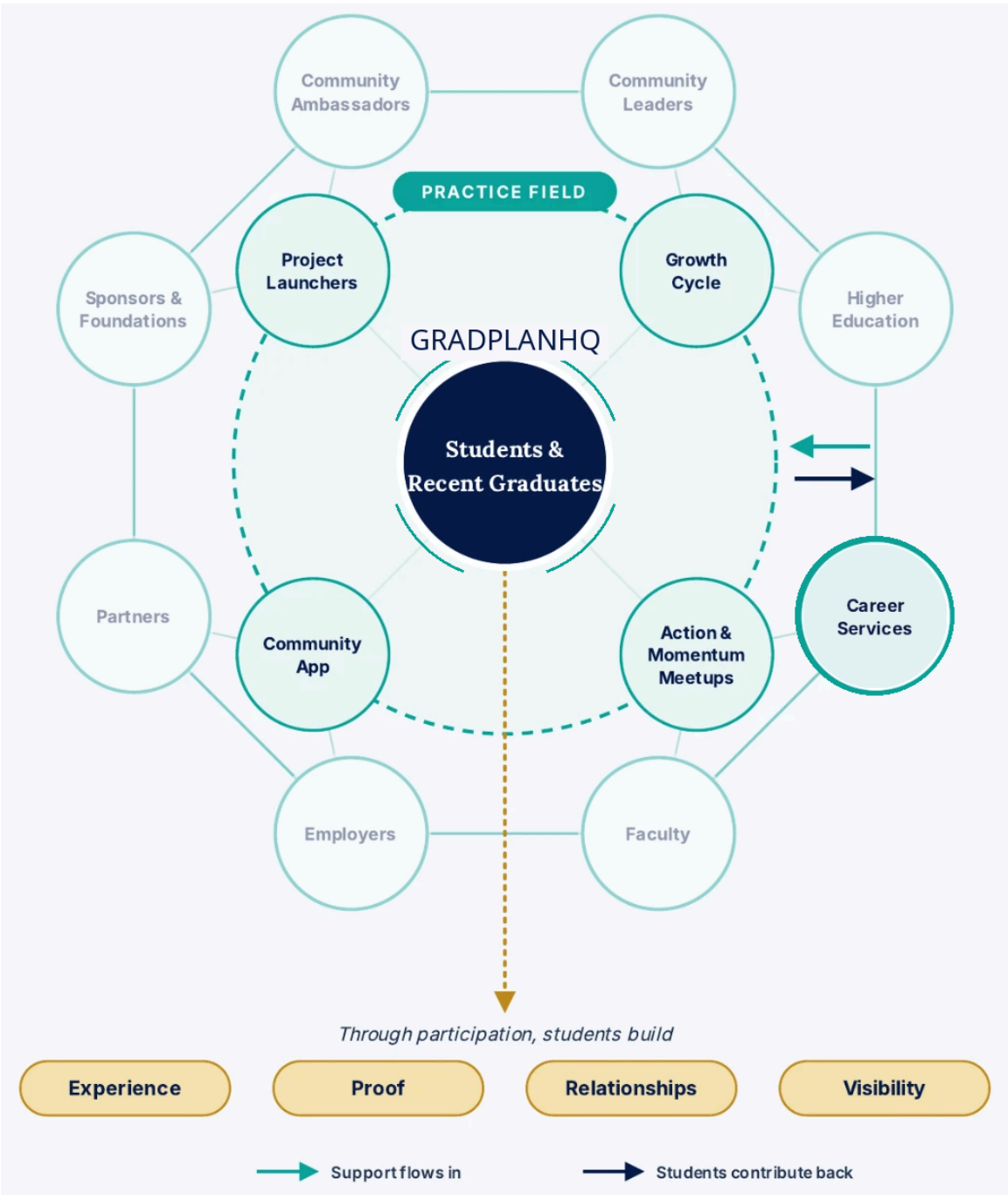
One Practice Field. Many possible next steps.

The system follows the job, not a rigid sequence.

Much of this work happens between appointments, where no one owns it. Career Services can multiply its reach when students have a place to keep acting on its guidance.

Distinct roles. Connected support.

Career Services remains the trusted campus home for career exploration, advising, employer engagement, internship strategy, application support, and career decision-making.



A Practice Field where guidance becomes repeated action.

GradPlanHQ is a professional-development community and the GradPlanHQ Practice Field, where students and recent graduates build Experience, Proof, Relationships, and Visibility through four connected parts:

- 1 Growth Cycle** — Connect goals to strategy. Build through meaningful action. Grow by reflecting and capturing Proof. Repeat with stronger Experience, Proof, Relationships, and Visibility.
- 2 Action & Momentum Meetups** — Recurring sessions, each built around one professional-development process. Students know what the session is for before they RSVP, and return as the work develops.
- 3 Community App** — Support continues between sessions. Chapters are membership experiences within the Community App.
- 4 Project Launchers** — Optional ways to build Experience when it's missing: PeerTakes, Teach It Back, Community Asset Map, and Design Your Own Internship.

A free place to start

The Growth Cycle Quiz and free tools help students identify a starting point, selected jobs, and a realistic pace. No email or account is required. Career Services can share them with students; they don't replace advising.

A small win isn't the finish line.

It's visible progress in meaningful work.

The full system is in *Developing Talent From Within: Field Guide for Community Leaders*.

HOW IT COMPLEMENTS CAREER SERVICES

Extend impact between appointments.

GradPlanHQ provides a student-directed practice environment where guidance becomes repeated action and visible progress. It complements Career Services and doesn't replace it.

Career Services strengthens	GradPlanHQ extends	Students bring back
Exploration and goal setting	A job, path, pace, and place to practice	Questions grounded in current action
Resume and LinkedIn guidance	Repeated profile and translation practice	Stronger Proof and clearer examples
Interview preparation	Story capture and rehearsal	Specific, credible impact stories
Employer and alumni relationships	Networking practice and follow-through	More confident outreach
Internship support	Ways to keep building while opportunities are pursued	Current Experience instead of an unexplained gap
Career education resources	Protected time to apply the resources	Greater use and visible progress

Practical ways to begin

Share free tools Add selected resources to advising follow-ups, workshops, first-year events, and student communications.	Refer a small group Invite students with a shared job to use a Practice Field pathway and review the progress created.
Pilot one cohort Start with first-year students, internship seekers, student employees, graduating seniors, or recent graduates.	Sponsor access Fund memberships for a defined group while agreeing on privacy, reporting, and learning questions.

Measure movement, not only activity.

Success should be defined with each partner.

Earlier engagement	More first- and second-year students taking meaningful professional action.
Stronger Proof	More artifacts, metrics, stories, references, and examples students can discuss.
Better resource use	More students applying Career Services tools, events, relationships, and guidance.
Continued momentum	Students keep building after a missed internship or recruiting cycle.
Stronger candidate signals	Students explain what they did, how they worked, who benefited, and what changed.
Learning before expansion	Partners review the evidence and decide whether to repeat, adapt, expand, pause, or stop.

Start with one useful move.

One advisor, one student group, one event, one resource-referral pathway, or one pilot cohort.

START A CAREER SERVICES CONVERSATION

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Career Centers help students prepare for opportunity. GradPlanHQ helps students build advantage before opportunity arrives.

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