



Create experience. Build your brand. Launch your future.

The GradPlanHQ Practice Field Guide

How the system works, and how to use it.

You already know what you should be doing. The hard part is doing it consistently. This is the operating manual for the Practice Field: how the Growth Cycle, Action & Momentum Meetups, the GradPlanHQ Community App, and Project Launchers help you take action, create small wins, and turn ordinary student work into Proof employers can see.

- What happens in a Momentum Meetup, hour by hour
- How a repeating schedule fits your semester
- Why small wins, not motivation, build momentum

Community is the engine. The cycle is the machine.

You supply the follow-through. We supply the prompts, the pace, and the system. Some of the people you need are already around you. Others you'll meet through the work.

Connect. Build. Grow. Repeat.

Four parts, one loop.

The Practice Field gives you a place to actually do the work. The Growth Cycle provides direction. Action & Momentum Meetups provide the nudge and accountability. The Community App sustains connection. Project Launchers make meaningful work easier to begin.

1. Growth Cycle

How students make progress.

Connect, Build, Grow, Repeat. Connect a goal to a strategy, build meaningful experiences, turn them into Proof and Visibility, and start again with a bigger goal.

2. Action & Momentum Meetups

How students build and maintain momentum.

Recurring virtual working sessions that provide steady human support, accountability, and protected time for students to take the next action, create small wins, and maintain momentum.

3. GradPlanHQ Community App

How students stay connected.

Where people, conversations, resources, opportunities, drafts, feedback, and progress stay connected between Momentum Meetups.

4. Project Launchers

How students begin meaningful work.

Optional, structured starting points for meaningful work. Useful when you want one, never the only way to gain Experience.

The handoff that makes it work

CONNECT **Connect goals with strategy.**

- ✓ Clarify goals and professional identity
- ✓ Explore opportunities aligned with your interests
- ✓ Identify relationships, skills, and resources
- ✓ Build a practical strategy for growth

BUILD **Take meaningful professional action.**

- ✓ Networking and outreach
- ✓ Credentials and projects
- ✓ Leadership and service
- ✓ Meaningful professional practice

GROW **Turn Experience into Proof.**

- ✓ Reflect on learning
- ✓ Increase Visibility
- ✓ Capture evidence and artifacts
- ✓ Build credibility through contribution

REPEAT **Compound advantage over time.**

- ✓ Expand Relationships
- ✓ Strengthen credibility
- ✓ Increase Visibility
- ✓ Create new opportunities

Small wins create momentum. Momentum makes the next action easier. Members and Community Ambassadors surround the Practice Field as human support.

Community is the engine.

Motivation is not the thing that gets a project finished. People are. Members and Community Ambassadors are the human supports surrounding the Practice Field. Almost every project that works started with a conversation, and kept going because someone was expecting you.

It removes the blank page

You don't have to invent an idea alone. Members help you match a real need to your strategy — sometimes through something you already have, sometimes through a relationship or opportunity you create together.

It creates gentle accountability

A Momentum Meetup on the calendar and a project partner waiting beats willpower every time. Small wins make the next action easier.

It makes your work visible

Proof nobody sees does nothing. In the community, wins get shouted out, reposted, and recommended.

What the community actually does for you

- Helps you connect a goal to a strategy, naming what you already have and what you still need to develop.
- Reviews your LinkedIn, resume line, and post before you publish.
- Turns a vague interest into a scoped project you can finish.
- Gives you people to tag, endorse, shout out, introduce, and be recommended by.
- Staffs your project when you need a second or third person.
- Passes your project to the next student when you move on.

You are not joining a network. You are joining a rotation.

Someone helped you start. A semester later you are the one handing a project to a younger student. That hand-off is where the loop restarts.

One hour. Real progress.

Momentum Meetups are the recurring nudge: protected time, people working alongside you, and one next action. No lectures, no pressure to perform, no fixed cohort. The Meetup isn't the final value. The work you accumulate is.

0-10 min

Icebreaker

Warm up, meet two or three members, swap LinkedIn connections. This is where most collaborations start.

10-20 min

Set the task

The host leads a Q&A on the curated resources listed on the signup calendar. You come with questions and choose one thing to move forward.

20-50 min

Work time

Heads-down work with people doing the same thing. Ask questions out loud. Optional breakout rooms if you want to team up.

50-60 min

Capture and commit

Save what you made, name what you learned, and say what you will do before your next session. That small win is the point.

Things people worry about, answered

- "I have nothing to show yet." Perfect. The first task is usually deciding what to start.
- "Breakout rooms sound intimidating." They're optional. Plenty of members only ever use the icebreaker and the work time.
- "I can only make some sessions." That works. The series repeats, so you can return any time without falling behind.

Three goals. Nine processes. Ongoing practice.

Every Action & Momentum Meetup supports one of three goals through nine repeating processes. Join at any point in the schedule and choose the process that fits the work you need to move. These are not one-time tasks to complete and leave behind. They are continuing career-building practices.

You may write your first LinkedIn profile once, but your professional presence should grow as your Experience grows. You may prepare one interview story, but stronger stories emerge as you complete more meaningful work. You may make one new connection, but Relationships develop through continued attention and contribution.

01-03

Connect & Discover

- 01 Identify your values, interests, and story.
- 02 Craft your LinkedIn bio and profile.
- 03 Grow your online presence and network.

04-06

Build Experience

- 04 Create projects to develop your skills.
- 05 Turn class projects into work experience.
- 06 Earn credentials that validate your skills.

07-09

Tell Your Story

- 07 Translate skills to your resume effectively.
- 08 Build impact stories for your interviews.
- 09 Build trust and credibility via your socials.

Move it forward. Save it. Come back.

You are not meant to finish an entire process in one session. Choose one meaningful action. Move it forward. Save the progress. Capture the small win. Then return when that practice needs attention again. The series repeats because professional growth repeats: Relationships need attention, Visibility requires a rhythm, stories improve with practice, Experience continues to accumulate, and Proof becomes stronger as your work develops.

The processes continue. The actions change.

Small wins compound into Career Momentum.

Repeating schedule. Your pace.

The schedule exists so the Practice Field can bend around school, work, internships, family responsibilities, and life. Sessions may be available on multiple days. You are not required to attend every week, follow one fixed cohort, or begin at the first process.

Need Proof fast

Juniors, seniors, and anyone with a deadline

Attend several sessions over a short period and move the processes most relevant to a current deadline.

Several sessions close together

Focus on the deadline

Small wins, quickly

Steady build

Sophomores and busy schedules

Return regularly, move one useful piece forward, and let small wins compound alongside a full schedule.

Return regularly

One useful piece at a time

Compounds every term

Start early, low pressure

Freshmen with time on their side

Use occasional sessions to explore direction, strengthen professional habits, and begin building long before graduation creates urgency.

Occasional sessions

Explore before you commit

Years of compounding

Missing a session does not put you behind.

The series repeats. Resources remain available in the Community App. The process you need comes back around. Consistency matters more than intensity.

The other 167 hours.

Momentum Meetups are one hour. The rest lives in the GradPlanHQ Community App, where you stay connected to people, conversations, resources, opportunities, drafts, feedback, progress, and work between Momentum Meetups. Everyone there is working through the same three-goal series, so asking for help is normal instead of awkward.

Find Sessions

See what's on the calendar, pick the hour that fits your week, and RSVP.

Find Resources

Templates, project showcases, and curated replays for whichever process you're on.

Find People

Post what you're working on and who you need. Members answer with names.

Save Progress

Park the draft, the artifact, and the next step so you can pick it right back up.

Two apps, on purpose

- Calendar app — find and RSVP to the meetups that fit your week. That is all it does, and that is the point.
- Community App — everything else: the member directory, launcher groups, direct messages, the resource library, and the feed where drafts, questions, and wins get seen.
- Chapters — dedicated membership experiences inside the Community App, not separate organizations or apps.

A good first post takes ninety seconds.

Your name, your year, one thing you're curious about, one thing you could help someone with.

Designed starting points for real work.

Project Launchers are intentionally designed starting points for meaningful work. Some begin with experience, knowledge, relationships, or community assets already available. Others begin with a new goal, an unmet need, a host organization, a capability to develop, a problem to investigate, or an opportunity you create. Launchers are optional, structured starting points, not the center of the system. You can also apply the Growth Cycle to coursework, jobs, internships, research, volunteering, leadership, relationships, and existing projects.

PeerTakes

Help students coming behind you understand what may come next

Use your recent experiences, lessons learned, and honest answers to help younger students explore possible futures, ask better questions, and better understand opportunities that may currently feel unfamiliar or out of reach.

future visibility

near-peer guidance

common language

motivation

Teach It Back

Share your knowledge to help other students succeed

Learn how to use tools, data, and resume or interview strategies to become a stronger candidate — then teach other students how to do the same.

leadership

adaptability

teamwork

critical thinking

Community Asset Map

Discover and organize the assets your community already possesses

Help communities better understand the people, programs, organizations, opportunities, places, and tools that already support student success — and turn scattered help into a living map they can keep using.

systems thinking

outreach

project management

Design Your Own Internship

The most advanced launcher — pitch a project an organization can't refuse

Use your major as a lens to find a real problem inside an organization, scope a project around it, and pitch it. Student engagement and success is the live challenge everyone needs solved — and you're uniquely qualified to work on it. It isn't a paid internship — it's the proof, and the named reference, that help you compete for one.

initiative

problem framing

pitching

ownership

Every project signals something.

Project Launchers are not busywork. Each one creates real proof — something concrete to post, list, and talk about — and that proof is what demonstrates your values, leadership, communication, initiative, and teamwork.

Proof of essential skills

Helping younger students avoid pitfalls and find success, especially those you share a connection with, is highly rewarding. It's an impactful, meaningful place to start adding projects to your LinkedIn or posts to your socials.

Leadership

Communication

Coaching

Empathy

Brand values and metrics

Employers hire people who show up and care, and they can tell the difference fast. Finish work you can put a number on: students reached, hours contributed, sign-ups increased, a process made faster. Numbers turn a resume line into an interview story.

Initiative

Ownership

Measurable impact

Social capital and confidence

Gaining experience and social capital through collaboration, volunteering, and projects you create yourself helps you overcome the anxiety that comes with being a first-time candidate. Creating your own work is great practice for becoming an opportunity creator rather than an opportunity seeker.

Collaboration

Networking

Self-advocacy

Applied frameworks

Name the thinking behind the work, not just the tasks. Employers and community partners recognize these instantly, and naming your method is what separates a volunteer from a contributor.

Design thinking

Jobs-to-be-done

Systems thinking

Collective impact

Shared value

What real projects actually look like

Idea → First ask → No response → Follow-up → Conversation → Scope adjustment → Small win → Result → Proof and a reference. If the work stalls, follow up, ask someone else, reduce the scope, or test a smaller version.

Reflect. Capture. Amplify.

Grow is where most students lose the value of work they already did. Three moves fix it, and each one has a place in Momentum Meetups. Run them after any project, shift, or class assignment.

1. Reflect

Name what the work actually showed about your skills and values, while you still remember the details. Meetups run this as a guided prompt so you're not staring at a blank page.

2. Capture

Write the STAR story and save the artifact: the number, the screenshot, the deliverable, the thank-you note. Captured once, reused in a resume line, a post, and an interview answer.

3. Amplify

Publish it and pull people in the same week. Proof creates visibility. People create credibility and reach. Together they create opportunity — collaborators, endorsements, shoutouts, recommendations, mentors, and references.

Challenge

What problem, need, or goal were you addressing?

Action

What did you personally do? What choices did you make?

Skills

Which communication, leadership, teamwork, or problem-solving skills did you use?

Values

What did the work show about what matters to you?

Impact

Who benefited? What improved? What number or evidence can you save?

Story

What should a future employer or collaborator remember?

The story bank, one loop at a time

EXPERIENCE

save what happened



REFLECT

name what it showed



TRANSLATE

resume line, post, answer



PRACTICE

say it, then sharpen it

Every retelling gets backed by people. Same story, stronger each loop.



START THIS SEMESTER

Start small. Stay consistent. Build your advantage.

You don't need more career advice. You need people expecting you, a task you can move forward in an hour, and a place to put the Proof when it's done. The challenge isn't knowing what to do. It's consistently doing it. The Practice Field helps you follow through.

Your first four moves

- 1 Join the Community App and the calendar app, then introduce yourself.
- 2 RSVP to one Action & Momentum Meetup that fits your schedule.
- 3 Choose your next meaningful experience — a Project Launcher, a role, a collaboration, a credential, or work already underway — and name the first step.
- 4 Move that step forward, save the small win, and come back when the work needs attention again.

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Connect. Build. Grow. Repeat.