



Making the Most of Summer 2020 | Education

For many of us, the way we planned to spend summer 2020 has been drastically altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of you may be able to engage in your planned work/internship on a remote basis, but for others that isn't possible. With this document, we hope to provide some ideas to structure an engaging and productive summer in order to keep building on your current skills and preparing for your future career pathway.

Making the Most of Your Mindset

Summer brings considerable down time, and for many of us this can conjure up myriad, often perplexing questions about how to use one's time and what matters most. First, it's important to set the right mindset. Try to consider your summer as time to explore and/or work on 'Project You.' Start with trying to better understand your own interests, skills, and values and then determine how you want to either deepen them or build anew. Try a self-assessment tool by [checking out this website](#). It can also be helpful to contemplate the difficult but important questions to answer relating to 'purpose' or 'meaning in life.' [The following website](#) has some excellent prompts to consider in conjunction with some journaling. There's also a great book on life navigation and discernment. Check out [*Designing Your Life*](#).

Establishing Learning Goals – The Key to Your Summer Syllabus

Next, you might consider building your summer as a teacher builds a course for students. Curriculum design principles are transferrable to any career pathway, because they provide a framework to: discern learning objectives, employ effective teaching methods that align with learning preferences, and perhaps most importantly, compel the developer to determine how to both measure and demonstrate success. This is where the idea of a "Summer Syllabus" comes in. Fortunately, UChicago offers complete guides on how to build curriculums with requisite steps, examples, and further reading. [Check out this site!](#) You'll also find a sample syllabus at the end of this document to get started on building your own.

Develop Your Knowledge About Education (10-15 hrs/week)

The summer is a great time to learn about different career pathways, interesting problems people are tackling, and how people find their way to education or other careers. Here are some simple but important tips:

- **Talk to alumni** in the field to learn more about their corner of the Ed space, how they got there, and what advice they'd have for you. Most alumni are willing to 'pay it forward' by helping UChicago undergrads better understand their sector. You can find them in two ways – by [using Wisr](#) and LinkedIn (search for University of Chicago and then click the Alumni button to filter thousands of alumni!). Most students fear inauthentic 'networking' calls, but this is different. You're simply asking for *their* perspective and a chance to learn, and again, most alumni enjoy this. It will be interesting to talk with them about their experiences. Contact your career adviser if you need help with questions to ask, introductory email to send, or anything about this process.



- **Read books** that provide insight about careers in education.
 - Book lists:
 - [Goodreads.com Education Lists](#)
 - Book recommendations include:
 - Lewis, *Despite the Best Intentions*
 - Emdin, *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too*
 - Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
 - Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*
 - Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*
 - Payne, *So Much Reform, So Little Change*
 - Ewing, *Ghosts in the Schoolyard*
 - Dintersmith, *What School Could Be*
 - Lemov, *Teach Like a Champion*
 - Rosen and Raudenbush, *The Ambitious Elementary School*
- **Podcasts** are a wonderful way to learn and engage.
 - [Great list of podcasts](#) and [link to Harvard's EdCast](#).

Build Skills for Your 'Ed Cred!' (8-10 hrs/week)

A great place to start skills building is UChicago's Center for Teaching. This is where faculty members, post-docs, and grad students turn to better understand specific teaching strategies that are aligned with research founded, best practices. [For a list of helpful resources, check out this site.](#)

A multitude of online courses, videos, and blog posts can also help. Here are a few to get you started:

- [LinkedIn Learning](#) – As a UChicago student, you have free access! LinkedIn Learning is a leading online learning company for personal and professional goals.
- [Coursera](#) – Hundreds of free courses give you access to on-demand video lectures, homework exercises, and community discussion forums.
- [Ivy League MOOCs](#)
- [Ed-X MOOCs](#)
- [Edutopia](#)
- [Great list of YouTube's top education channels](#)

Research Professional Schools (2-4 hrs/week)

When you are ready to consider professional schools, you will give yourself the best odds for acceptance by applying to a carefully cultivated range of schools for which you demonstrate a good “fit.”

Surf through school websites to learn more about the program features, entrance requirements, and relevant experiences you should consider if grad school is in your future. Then build a spreadsheet of key application dates, recommendation letters, and complex application materials like personal statements. [See the Center for Teaching's articles on Teaching Statements.](#)



- [Columbia University Teachers College](#)
- [DePaul University College of Education](#)
- [Harvard Graduate School of Education](#)
- [Johns Hopkins School of Education](#)
- [Loyola University Chicago School of Education](#)
- [Michigan State University College of Education](#)
- [New York University Steinhardt](#)
- [Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy](#)
- [Stanford Teacher Education Program](#)
- [UC Berkeley- Graduate School of Education](#)
- [The University of Chicago Urban Teacher Education Program](#)
- [Vanderbilt Peabody College](#)

Work on Life/“Adulthood” Skills (2-4 hrs/week)

The “everyday” essentials of independent life should not be an additional stressor, and summer’s a great time to develop important life skills and a self-care routine!

- [Improve your time management by learning from the master, Stephen Covey \(see sample exhibit at the end\).](#)
- Do you know how to cook? Offer to cook and deliver a meal to neighbors trying to manage childcare and work obligations at home.
- Develop an at-home exercise routine (this is also good self-care!)
- Take up or revisit a craft or hobby -- origami, bike repair, gardening, the instrument or art supplies you put down at the end of high school
- If you’ve never tracked your budget and expenses before, analyze your spending from the last year and develop a budget moving forward (see [Nerdwallet tips](#))

Prioritize Personal Growth - Be Well, Take Care (2-5 hours per week)

Prioritize [UChicago’s Seven Key Facets of Well-being](#): Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Physical, Social, Spiritual.

- Spark Joy with [Marie Kondo](#)
- Exercise from anywhere with [UChicago Department of Athletics](#)
- Relax with the [Jellyfish Cam from the Monterey Bay Aquarium](#)
- Develop a Budget with [Tips from Nerd Wallet](#)

Learn to Cook with [SeriousEats](#) or [America’s Test Kitchen](#)

Continue to Serve Others (5-10 hrs/week)

Wanting to be of service to others is a cornerstone for your interest in education professions. While it may not be possible to work with kiddos in traditional ways we encourage you to investigate the following options:

- Be an active, helpful member of your home community.



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Career Advancement

- Contact alumni and ask how you can support their summer work.
- Use [idealists.org](https://www.idealists.org), [volunteermatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org), or [omprakash.org/](https://www.omprakash.org/) to seek other local options, but be ready for slow responses.
- Check to see if [Meals on Wheels](https://www.mealsonwheels.org) needs more volunteers in your community. Inquire whether other local organizations focused on supporting the elderly need volunteers.
- Food pantries, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters in most areas are continuing to look for volunteers and have been trying to maintain social distance for their volunteers and those they serve. [Feeding America](https://www.feedingamerica.org) can help students to find their local food pantry.
- Many chapters of the [United Way](https://www.unitedway.org) have updated their volunteer opportunities to show all the local non-profits seeking help.