Graduating Student Fact Sheet

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What kinds of jobs can I expect to get after graduation?

Review the results of a UX professionals survey here to get an idea of the backgrounds, roles, and salaries of people who work in the field.

http://uxpaboston.org/our-members/

Also see:
https://measuringu.com/salary-survey2018/

Where can I network with other UX professionals online?

Slack is one of the best options – there may be local slack groups you should also research.

https://slofile.com/category/Design

Facebook is also a good option – again, do your own research for additional/local groups:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/uxbooks/

https://www.facebook.com/groups/2025142364381875/

https://www.facebook.com/groups/uxrcollective/

https://www.facebook.com/groups/404691612915081/

On getting your first job/internship

Looking for internship/entry level work can be very competitive. This is why your best bet is to make personal connections with people working in the field, who will bring you on when they have an opening. The UX field is very open to newbies, but people are busy, so don't expect strangers to do things for you until you've gotten to know each other a bit.

- The #1 thing that you want to communicate to a potential employer is that you are a quick learner who will execute on work without much handholding – that you will quickly become an asset rather than someone who has to be extensively trained.
- Start attending local UX events and meetups to network (local chapters of UXPA, IxDA, IDF, or simply meetups). When you meet someone at an event, tell them you're looking for internships/work, and ask if you can follow up with them on LinkedIn to ask for ideas or even an informational interview at their company. Write down their name and find them on LinkedIn in the next day or two. If they respond, great, send them a message, but don't be pushy if you don't hear back. Don't expect to be remembered until you've had at least 3 interactions with someone. Remind people how you know each other the first few times you reach out.
- If you've been in classes with students who already work in UX, cultivate those relationships, and ask them for connections/introductions.
- Volunteer in some capacity at a UX event or conference, or for a meetup or organization. Keep in mind that it is upon you to be proactive, figure out the need, and then deliver on what you promised (that's the most critical thing IMO - a lot of people offer to volunteer and then don't actually follow through).
- Volunteering for a local Code for America meetup is another option - a lot of projects need UX. You'll meet mostly coders, but you could effectively lead the UX effort for a project. Research one-time hackathons and design challenges if you can't make an ongoing commitment.
- Consider looking for work with non-profits, government, or at https://www.designgigsforgood.org/job-board these jobs may offer less competitive pay, but could be a great first gig.
- If you haven't already, put together an online portfolio. If you need resume or portfolio feedback, search online for resume and portfolio review events you can attend (for example, at https://www.behance.net/reviews). Check out this online course by yours truly – it's a few years old, but the basic concepts still apply – you can access it for free for 2 months the last I checked: https://skl.sh/2tB8IL6
- Submit to present a poster, student presentation, or 10 minute talk at a UX or tech conference. Most people who are successful in the field have good presentation skills.
- Set up a LinkedIn profile with a professional headshot, and include a succinct description of your UX interests/what you're looking for in terms of work/internship. (Avoid selfies and other casual photos). A lot of networking events will do free headshots. Buy business cards from Vistaprint.com or moo.com, but use the card to highlight your design skills.
- If you are shy or introverted, research professional networking and how to do it effectively. If you need negotiating skills to help negotiate job responsibilities/salaries, read a book or attend a negotiation training. Any soft skills you learn through the process you will use in your job as a UX professional, so it's time well-spent.
- DON'T waste time cold emailing strangers you haven't met or have no connection to. The chances of those turning into something worthwhile are close to 0.

Below are notes on creating deliverables you can use in your portfolio from your Brandeis projects:

You can review my UX Portfolio course online for free using the free trial link at https://skl.sh/2tB8IL6. The course is a few years old at this point, so some content may be outdated, but the general approach still applies.

Below are notes from 3 faculty members about creating portfolio pieces in their courses.

Instructor 1
In prototyping class, we create two portfolio worthy projects. We do not talk too much about the portfolio, however in the capstone course I did somewhat as it came up and was relevant. When I teach the Capstone class I give out a free copy of my eBook that is all about creating a UX portfolio. I am considering doing the same for all my students.

Instructor 2

My classes do not touch on portfolio sites but they do create some before and after assignments in the info viz class that could be included as a portfolio artifact.

Instructor 3

Regarding the portfolio question posed...

Portfolios in UCD can be difficult, as there are many aspects of the field that do not easily lend themselves to visual presentations out of context. What I've always found is that it is better to tell a story in the context of a case study that lets a portfolio show off many aspects, while attempting to add visual context and thought processes.

In all three of the courses I have taught I bring up aspects of creating a portfolio.

I've outlined a bit on how the course have traditionally lent themselves to portfolio work:

RSEG-128: User Interface Design
Individual work product for annotated wireframes and sketches offer themselves well for portfolio pieces. The Final assignment of taking a paper-based process and developing interface designs also work well. Throughout the course I periodically offer that students can take their designs further in the design process for portfolio work outside the scope of the projects and I am available to offer feedback.

RUCD-170: Design Operation and Leadership
While not a design course, the group project lends itself to becoming a portfolio piece.

RUCD 190: Capstone in User-Centered Design
All of the deliverables are designed towards a completed project that can make for a solid case study. Individual deliverables are designed to be completed and then presented as Powerpoint documents aimed as getting stakeholder buy in, as such can make good individual portfolio pieces.