

A GUIDE TO CHANGING YOUR CAREER

(AND HOW A GRADUATE DEGREE FROM SACRED HEART CAN HELP)



People often think that moving into a management role, going to work for a new company, or even changing careers can "fix" the problems and disappointments they feel in their current jobs. But many find themselves looking in the wrong places. A rewarding career satisfies who you are. It considers your personal strengths and goals. It gives you energy and enthusiasm. Changing a career is about more than a higher salary or a corner office. It's about finding the path that gives you opportunities to do what you love and showcase what you do best.

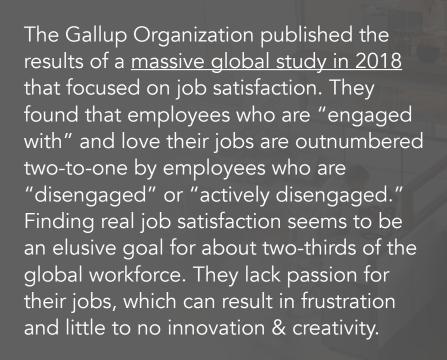
This guide can help those who are unhappy in their current careers or who have already identified the need for a career change. You'll find guidance that will help you take the appropriate steps as you move toward a new career. You will find information about how to change careers, mistakes to avoid, how a graduate degree could help propel your next career forward, and more. You'll also hear from Sacred Heart University students who are pursuing a graduate degree to fuel their career changes and several links to helpful grad school resources. Let's dive in!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

>	It's Okay to Be Unhappy with Your Current Career — But Don't Stay There	4
>	How to Find a New Career That Makes You Excited for Mondays	11
>	Out with (Some of) the Old and in with the New: How to Take from Your Old Career and Apply it in Your New Field	22
>	A Graduate Degree Could be Your Key to Second Career Success	25
>	Student Story: Why I Chose to Switch Careers (and How a Graduate Degree from SHU Helped Me Do It)	41
>	We're Here to Help! Connect with Sacred Heart Admissions Counselors Today	43





If this sounds like you, it may be time to start thinking about a career change.

12 SIGNS THAT YOU'RE READY FOR A CAREER CHANGE

There are plenty of reasons you may find yourself less than fully engaged, and any of them can eventually destroy the job satisfaction you hoped for but haven't found. Do any of these resonate with you?

Issues on the Job

- 1 The company (or the boss) doesn't recognize or reward talent.
- Workers often see better ways of doing certain tasks, but bosses don't give workers who suggest those new ideas the support they need to succeed.
- There's a lack of promotion opportunity. You cannot see a viable pathway to promotion.
- Oc-workers who don't care are clearly disengaged and infect others with their negativity and lack of enthusiasm.
- Meaningless assignments, endless to-do lists, and pointless meetings that accomplish nothing seem to be the order of the day.
- 6 Bad office politics make coming to work an unwelcome chore.

What You May Be Feeling

- 1 You dread waking up for work.
- 2 You procrastinate at work or put in minimal effort.
- 3 You're constantly dreaming of doing something else with your time.
- 4 You thrive in your hobbies and activities outside of work but are bored at the office.
- You've used up your personal time off and feel trapped having to come to work each day.
- You live for the weekend and vacations, anything that takes you away from the workplace.

These, and similar problems, can lead to boredom and burnout. If you are in an unsatisfying job, you owe it to yourself to make a change. But the change you need might not be as easy as you would like, and sometimes that can be a result of faulty thinking.

5 COMMON BELIEFS THAT HOLD YOU BACK FROM A NEW CAREER (AND ARE ALSO FLAT-OUT FALSE)

Have you ever been faced with a promising opportunity and talked yourself out of it? It can be a hard truth to swallow, but sometimes we can stand (unintentionally) in the way of our own progress. We can be our own worst critics, which can set us off track and create roadblocks to reaching our goals — ultimately meaning we don't perform as well as we'd like.

If you find yourself stuck in these unhealthy cycles, the first step to breaking out is identifying the thought or belief that is holding you back. Here are five examples of false beliefs and negative thought patterns that can keep you from beginning a new career:

1. "Trouble is right around the corner." Some people tend to be pessimistic, seemingly by nature. They assume their glass is half full, at best, and that the worst will certainly happen, if not now, then eventually. For instance, people considering a new career can be paralyzed by worry that they will face unexpected challenges as they start a completely new career, that they'll have trouble "fitting in," or even that some unknown issue will spell disaster.

- 2. "I made an error. What's wrong with me?" Yet other people magnify their own flaws and errors. An engineer might design a product that has an unnoticed defect. Upon discovering the defect, he or she may think, "What's wrong with me? I should have caught that before it ever got this far. My boss will probably fire me for making this mistake." Such people elevate those distorted beliefs and worries to mistakenly turn the focus on themselves, blaming themselves, even though other explanations for the misstep may be more accurate and relevant.
- 3. "No one liked my idea, they'll never listen to me." Overgeneralization takes negative thinking even further by imagining that an unwanted event will continue in the future. For instance, a person who has been passed over for a promotion may believe "I'll never, ever get promoted at this company." Such thinking is not only demotivating, but it can also become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- 4. "I can't make a mistake, otherwise I'm a total failure." Believing that something is either good or bad with no middle ground is an example of polarized thinking. People who see the world around them in such absolute terms often think they must be perfect—and if they are not, they are a complete failure. This mindset leads to negative self-talk and fear about your ability to take on new responsibilities.

5. "I'm the sole reason XYZ went wrong." Some people personalize events by automatically blaming themselves when something goes wrong. For example, while leading a training you notice your boss is staring at her phone for most of the session, so you assume you are doing something wrong. This line of thinking can exclude perfectly reasonable explanations for the occurrence and can lead down a road of unnecessary self-deprecation.

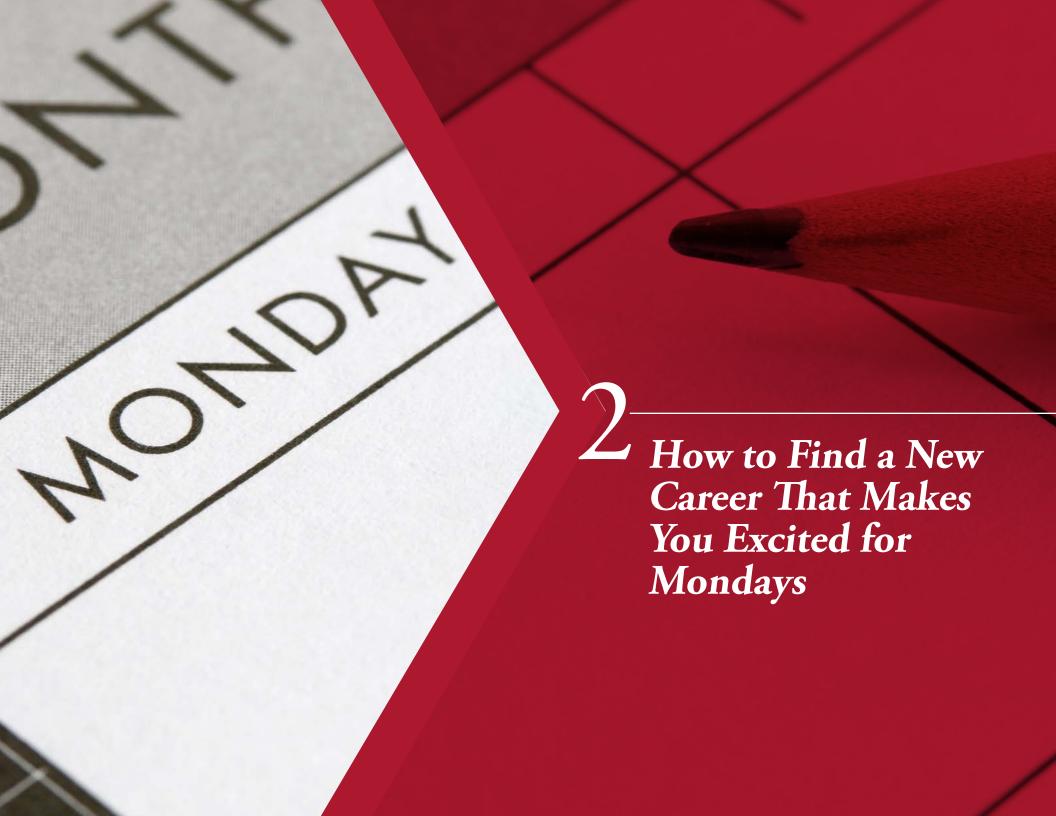
Negative self-talk and the attitudes they engender can keep you from finding happiness and success in your career. People seeking a career change might also express one or more of these beliefs:

"My career efforts have been a **total waste**. **terrified** of them and know I'll blow it."

I can't keep doing the same thing "I'm too old, I'm too young. I am day in and day out." **overqualified**, **underqualified**."

"My new career field won't offer me as high a salary. Isn't "If I make a career switch now, I'll have to start from the bottom again."

If you're looking to make strong career moves and build your self-confidence, you'll need to change the patterns of negative self-talk into positive ones. You can find various tools and techniques to banish negative self-talk through online resources like PsychCentral.com and MedCircle.com.



You have probably noticed that some employees at your current company are truly engaged in their jobs, while others may loathe coming to work on Monday morning. Finding satisfaction in your job depends upon several factors, some of which are in your control. If your current position is not giving you the satisfaction you desire, you have two choices: Find ways to enjoy your current job and career, or change careers.



10 SIMPLE STEPS TO TAKE AS YOU LOOK FOR YOUR NEXT CAREER

If you decide that a career change is the best choice for you, here are ten simple steps you can use to successfully make that career change.

Identify the Need for a Career Change

"Employee engagement" is a characteristic that has been the focus of hundreds of peer-reviewed studies. Engagement is important because workers who are engaged in their jobs are happier, more productive, contribute disproportionately to meeting company objectives, and are less likely to leave the company.

Sadly though, study after study shows that most workers are not fully engaged. For instance, the Gallup organization reports that only about one-third of U.S. workers are engaged in their jobs, while 53 percent are "disengaged," and 17 percent are "actively disengaged."

If you fall into one of these categories, and you don't see a practical way to find excitement, enthusiasm, and engagement in your job, a career change is the most rewarding step you can take.

#2

Rally Your Support Network

A support network refers to the people in your life that help you achieve your personal and professional goals. Your network could consist of your family, members of your church, parents in your children's softball league, high school and college friends, counselors you trust, workmates from a former job, and many others.

Seek their advice! They know you best. Talk to them about your current job situation and ask them for advice on how to find a more rewarding career.

#3

Evaluate Your Skills and Talents

Getting input from others can show you skills and talents you didn't know you had. For instance, begin by asking your support network about where you excel. It may surprise you to hear that they consider you an excellent teacher, a powerful leader, or an intellectual who can see through common misperceptions.

Then, ask yourself, "What do I want to be good at?" The things that come to mind will most likely be subjects that charge you up and give you a sense of excitement.

But, perhaps the most important question you can ask to uncover your skills, talents, and interests is this: "How may I best serve?" The answer to that question can reveal your deepest motivations. Perhaps you want to change careers to a STEM-oriented discipline where you can contribute to new technology that improves human quality of life — think "developing a clean drinking water solution," for example. Or perhaps you find you are attracted to a helping field such as healthcare, psychology, or social work.

Assess Your Interests and Determine What You Want to Do

Are you familiar with the Kuder Preference Test or the Strong Vocational Interest Blank? Both are psychological inventories that help students and job seekers discover the fields and careers that match their personal interests. Learn how to use <u>self-assessment tools like these</u> to help inform your next career move.

Develop a List of Potential Careers or Fields

Using your results from the previous step, consult the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook. This resource provides comprehensive, up-to-date, and reliable labor market information that has helped millions of Americans plan their future careers. Be sure to utilize the Occupation Finder portion of the handbook, where you'll find data on the level of education required for various occupations, median incomes, and more.

#6

Determine If You Need Additional Education or Training

Next, based on all your research and information gathering, answer the following question: Do you need additional education to pursue this career or field?

If a graduate degree or certificate is necessary or would provide you with a significant edge over your competition, visit <u>Sacred Heart's Graduate Programs</u> page to find more information on your program of interest. You can analyze the graduate program to find the classes you will take and the topics covered. If you are not already proficient in the areas described, a graduate degree will "fill in the blanks" and prepare you for your new career field.

#7

Apply to the Relevant Graduate Program

Sacred Heart offers several resources to assist its graduate students. Begin by visiting the <u>SHU</u> <u>Admissions page</u> to request information, speak to a counselor, arrange a campus visit, or apply.

Tap into Your Professional Network

No one should tackle this career move alone. Be sure to recognize the value your personal network of friends and associates can offer. Take the time to investigate formal networking organizations like <u>Business Networks International</u> and LinkedIn. The more advice and support you can derive from your network, the more successful your career change efforts will be.

Build and Strengthen Your Resume

Once enrolled at SHU, you have nearly endless opportunities to add relevant, valuable credentials to your resume. For instance, <u>internships</u> provide hands-on, valuable workplace experience that help students integrate classroom study into their industry. <u>Volunteer programs</u> offer students the opportunity to engage in the local community and in communities around the world. The experiences you have at Sacred Heart will set you apart from others who may compete for the same job.

Apply for That New Job, New Career!

Get ready, set, go! Begin by searching for jobs and hiring companies. Get your resume ready for submission, decide whether you need a cover letter, then submit your resume and online application. Be sure to follow up on your submission in a professional email.

COMMON CAREER CHANGE MISTAKES: 4 PITFALLS TO AVOID

- 1. **Don't let your career change be all about money.** The Gallup organization reports that once workers reach an income level that assures their financial stability, additional income does not have much impact on their overall well-being.
 - Instead, look for a new career where you can "get into the flow" and become engaged with your day-to-day work. Find your passion and the money will follow.
- 2. **Don't jump ship because you hate your current job.** Sure, it can be tough to come to work every day when you are burned out and disengaged. But avoid making a hasty decision simply to escape an unpleasant job situation. Take the time to research the career fields that appeal to you. Tools at the <u>BLS website</u> are helpful in analyzing relevant job markets. And remember you are perceived as more employable if you are still employed when you begin interviewing for a new position.

- 3. **Don't plan your career change on your own.** Rely on others to help you through the process. Many jobs are never advertised but are filled when someone refers a candidate to a hiring manager. Use resources like LinkedIn to connect with people already in the field you are considering. Go to networking events. They can be one of the most immediate pathways to meeting people who can advise you and help you find your future success.
- 4. **Don't take shortcuts.** You will need to update your resume and customize it to show your value in your new position. That can be tricky because resumes often do little more than list the jobs you have had and your successes, which keeps the focus on jobs you no longer want. Instead, focus on your transferable skills (discussed below) and get advice from people and <u>online resources</u> to help you craft a resume that shows your readiness to move into a new field.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING AND OVERCOMING DECISION FATIGUE AND BURNOUT

Steve Jobs wore the same style of clothing every day. Why? To avoid decision fatigue, a distraction that could reduce his effectiveness as a business leader.

Everyone has a certain amount of mental energy. When faced with too many options or required to make too many decisions, we eventually deplete our stores of energy and decide not to decide or make decisions we later regret.

How can you know if you're suffering from decision fatigue? The classic signs include:



Procrastination — "I'll get to that later."



Impulsivity —
"Randomly points
and picks."



Avoidance —
"I can't deal with
this right now."



"When in doubt, I just say 'no.'"

Career changers can often struggle with decision fatigue, but there are steps you can take to avoid it:

- 1 Make your most important decisions when you are well-rested, usually in the morning before you begin other tasks. Use the remainder of the day to make less important decisions.
- ② If you're faced with a recurring decision (like packing a lunch or choosing work clothes) consider your options and make a plan the night before.
- 3 Avoid making decisions when you are hungry. The hormone ghrelin reduces impulse control and increases the chances of bad decisions.
- People often fall prey to procrastination because they are seeking the "perfect" decision. Perfection is rarely achieved and chasing after it often leads to making no decision. Abandon perfect choices for excellent ones.



Even though you are planning a career change, do not undervalue your experience and the skills you have developed in your current and past jobs. Hiring managers appreciate the learning experiences you bring to the table, and they value the skills you have cultivated. Whether they're called "transferable skills" or "soft skills," be sure to summarize and highlight them in your resume, job application, and interviews.

Transferable skills are those you learn during your education, internships, and through work experience that you transfer to future employment settings. Those especially valued by hiring managers include the following:

- **Project management skills** are highly valuable and transferable in almost every career field. Specific examples of these skills include research and planning, forecasting, problem-solving, goal setting, defining needs and solutions, and data and information analysis, to name a few.
- The **ability to work well with others** is one of the top concerns hiring managers have. Be sure to explain how you have worked in or managed teams, supported workgroups, and any other experiences especially conflict resolution or human resources work that show you as an emotionally intelligent, approachable employee.

- **Communication skills** include the ability to communicate clearly through written channels, actively listen, speak effectively, facilitate group discussions, persuade others, understand non-verbal communication, and interview and negotiate effectively.
- Hiring managers look for **leadership skills**, whether they're called for in your new career field or not, because effective leaders are often in short supply. Be sure to explain how you have managed groups, delegated responsibility to others, taught and counseled employees, managed conflict, met deadlines, and instituted change.





Of the many life-changing choices you make, switching careers can affect nearly every aspect of your life. In addition to preparing you for the challenges you will face in your new career, earning a graduate degree opens you to experiences that would otherwise be out of reach. A graduate degree can help you break into an entirely new field, propel you into leadership roles, or provide you with the competitive hiring edge you need to secure your next job.

Let's look at some of the many ways a graduate degree can benefit your career change.



A GRADUATE DEGREE FUELS YOUR CAREER CHANGE

While graduate degree holders generally earn more money over their lifetimes, income (which we'll cover later) is just one of several reasons to enroll in an advanced degree program.

Here are a few things that could happen when you use a grad degree to fuel your career change:

You Will Learn What You Love

What's your passion? Whether it's business, healthcare, STEM/STEAM, journalism and media, public administration, or education, earning a graduate degree forces you to hone in on a passion and dedicate time to exploring it. Imagine the excitement and reward you'll enjoy as you discover and understand new concepts and facts about your favorite subjects. What better way to make Monday a day you look forward to every week?

You Will Enlarge Your Professional Network

Building a professional network helps you in many ways. It makes you more valuable to your company because you become a source of fresh and useful ideas and connections.

Attending grad school also connects you to other students and alumni who may one day become leaders in their fields. It connects you to professors who have extensive experience and knowledge, and who can make introductions to people within their professional networks. Internship programs offer yet another opportunity to meet experts and thought leaders in your chosen field. Individuals from each of these groups could become friends, mentors, or advisors.

You Will Discover New Opportunities

In both your network and career, a graduate degree can open doors that employees with a bachelor's degree alone may not be able to access. From a hiring perspective, earning a graduate degree shows employers that you are committed to succeeding in your field because you have invested time, money, and energy in your education.

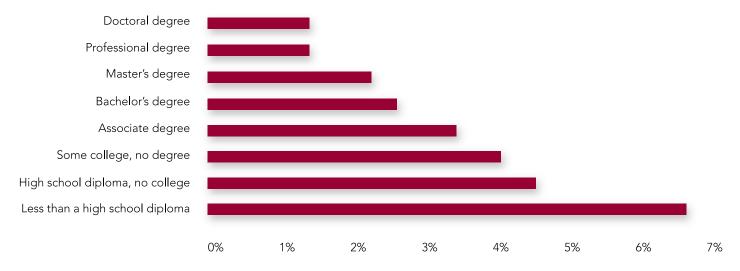
Advanced degrees confer respect, trust, and recognition from management, which can lead to promotions, travel opportunities, the coveted corner office, opportunities to lead special teams and initiatives, and can even lead to valuable connections outside your field.

You Become More Promotable

Advancement in your career depends upon your performance on the job and, generally, people with advanced degrees are more likely to be given greater responsibility and advancement.

Your Job Security Increases

Job security is easy to measure by studying national unemployment rates against educational attainment. The <u>Bureau of Labor Statistics</u> analyzed these factors in 2017 and found a clear correlation — **employees with the highest levels of education experience the greatest job security.**

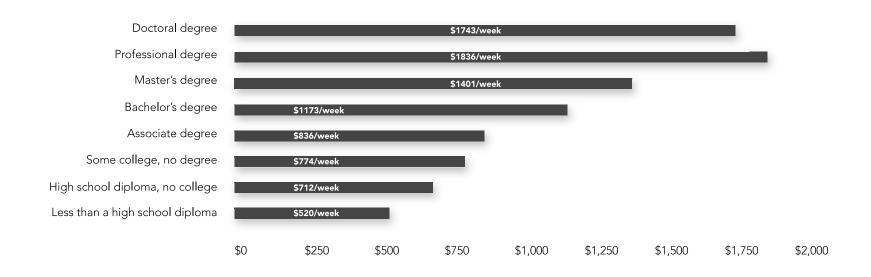


Unemployment rate by educational attainment, 2017

You Will Make More Money

The same study shows higher median incomes correlate with greater educational attainment. Consider the earnings advantage a graduate degree delivers. Compared to a bachelor's degree holder who earned just under \$61,000 per year, those holding advanced degrees enjoy far greater earnings. These figures show that the top three degree holders make \$90,636, \$95,472, and \$72,852, respectively. Actual earnings will surpass those figures due to salary increases over time, promotional increases, and inflation.

A 40-year career easily takes all three advanced degree holders well into the \$3 million lifetime earnings range, compared to just \$2.4 million for bachelor degree holders.



7 IDEAL CAREERS FOR MIDLIFE CAREER CHANGERS

No matter your career focus, Sacred Heart stands ready to deliver graduate degrees that will prepare you for your career change. But what if you still aren't sure which field or career path is right for you? Even after careful thought and evaluation sometimes it's nice to be given some options.

Here are seven career fields that are ideal for midlife career changers.

Healthcare

The U.S. continues to struggle with a shortage of qualified healthcare professionals, which makes nearly any graduate degree program in the healthcare field ideal for those who want to make a career change. Sacred Heart excels in providing state-of-the-art, hands-on education in healthcare. Some of the most popular degrees in healthcare include:

Family Nurse Practitioner | Doctor of Nursing Practice (FNP and DNP)

Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

Master in Physicians Assistant Studies (MPAS)

Master of Health Administration

Careers in Public Health

If your passion is for helping others cope with issues so they can better navigate their lives, a career in public health may be a great fit. Especially considering the many hardships the COVID-19 pandemic has caused, the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts the demand for health educators and community health workers will grow "much faster than average" over the next decade with a 13 percent increase.

SHU's <u>Master of Public Health</u> will help you advance your career, while you help individuals and communities by equipping them with the tools and education needed to avoid disease and embrace wellness.

Business Careers

Anyone interested in business has bright career prospects. The <u>BLS points</u> out that the ongoing digital transformation that has changed how business is conducted, globalization, a growing economy, and other related factors all contribute to a "faster than average" increase in these career opportunities.

SHU prepares grad students to become accountants, auditors, market research analysts, business operations, financial specialists, managers, sales personnel, and other roles in business. SHU offers a <u>Master's in Business Analytics</u> and <u>Master of Business Administration</u>, each of which can open exciting new doors at virtually any company.



44 Careers in Education

Careers in education are forecast to grow at 4-5 percent, or as fast as average, over the next ten years. Those interested in education have many career choices ranging from K-12 to secondary to post-secondary opportunities. If you're considering a career in education, a graduate degree will equip you with the tools to teach and lead in a post-COVID world.

SHU's Master of Arts in Teaching with Initial Teacher Certification provides a stepping stone into the world of education, with the initial certification and skills required to lead a classroom. This program equips career changers with the knowledge and hands-on learning opportunities they need to approach education from a whole-child perspective, helping students successfully meet learning goals and thrive as individuals.

SHU also offers the following degrees in education:

Master of Education in Literacy

Master of Education in Special Education

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership



Computer Science & Information Technology

The "digital transformation" that has made old, analog methods and techniques obsolete continues to affect nearly every aspect of modern life. Today, we take streaming video, natural language processing, artificial intelligence, and countless other digital domains for granted. Mastering computers, software, and technology gives you an advantage in one of the most visible and rapidly developing fields.

Though it is possible to work in IT management positions with a bachelor's degree, companies often search for managers who have graduate degrees. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual salary among IT managers was \$142,530 in 2018. The BLS projects an 11 percent growth in the number of IT manager jobs from 2018 to 2028. Other job titles in the IT segment share similar statistics.

Sacred Heart offers <u>several graduate degrees in the IT space</u> — including a Master's in Computer Science and IT, a Master's in Cybersecurity, and a host of graduate certificates ranging from database design to .NET technology and more. All of these degrees prepare you for a new career in the world's fastest-growing industry.

Social Work

If you're excited at the possibility of helping others and making a tangible difference in their lives, social work may be the field for you. The BLS recognizes four kinds of social worker careers: Child, family, and school; Healthcare; Mental health and substance abuse; and all other social workers. All categories are expected to grow at the rate of 16 percent between 2016 and 2026.

SHU offers both a <u>master's</u> and <u>doctoral</u> degree in social work, both of which prepare you to make a difference in a world where people often struggle to survive and prosper.

Communications, Journalism, and Media

Journalism, communications, film, and video production each require a diverse set of artists, animators, writers, producers, directors, and in some cases, studios. BLS forecasts show steady, fast-paced growth in career paths ranging from public relations managers to broadcast and sound engineers to technical writers.

If you're looking for a career in communications or marketing, Sacred Heart's <u>Master's in Strategic</u> <u>Communication and Public Relations</u> will prepare you to become a leader in your field by pairing theory and practice in a program that provides essential communication knowledge and exciting, hands-on experience.

The Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Production program engages students in an intensive hands-on approach to learning journalism, photography, videography, documentary filmmaking, and television production. SHU students gain the knowledge and technical skills to pursue careers in the digital world of broadcasting, photography, video, journalism, and multimedia production, as they develop a theoretical, aesthetic, and practical understanding of the professional communication industry.

Bonus: There's Still More...

SHU offers more than 80 doctoral, master's, education sixth-year degrees and certifications, and graduate certificate programs for students interested in a career change. Visit <u>Sacred Heart's</u> <u>Graduate Programs</u> page to explore further.



GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES FROM SACRED HEART

If you are ready to take the next steps in pursuing a graduate degree, we have resources to help you! Learn about our guides below and click to access them!

The Guide for Working Professionals



If you're already working from home, you may struggle to decide if you should add another responsibility to your plate. Graduate school is demanding, but earning your graduate degree now is a smart choice, especially if you're able to work from home. This resource helps you navigate grad school, while remaining employed, and offers tips, advice, and encouragement on your path to career success.

The Grad Decision Guide



Thinking about going to grad school is both exciting and a little intimidating. It is certainly not a decision anyone should take lightly, as it requires a firm commitment of both time and resources. Yet, there are many reasons it could be the best path for you to build your skill set and advance your current (or future) career. This guide will help you decide whether graduate school is the right decision for you, and how you can best prepare for this monumental life change.

The Hybrid Guide



A graduate degree through a hybrid delivery, or hybrid program, combines traditional, in-classroom learning with online education. Many students who value the in-classroom experience of a traditional program find that pursuing such a degree is impossible for them as they also work to advance their careers. A hybrid program can take some getting used to, but many students find it provides them with the best of both worlds: face-to-face interaction and the convenience of online learning. This resource explains how SHU's hybrid programs work.

The SHU Grad Programs Guide



Whether you have just begun to entertain the idea of returning to school or are ready to submit your first round of applications, this guide will help you better understand the breadth of graduate degrees offered at Sacred Heart University and connect you with resources to learn more about your program of interest.



"I decided to make a career change when I realized I wanted to pursue my passion for teaching children. I began exploring my options and came across the program at Sacred Heart University. Prior to becoming a teacher, I was an accountant and was not happy in my career.

I chose to attend Sacred Heart because the Masters of Arts in Teaching with Initial Teacher Certification program offered an array of courses, as well as an attractive internship program. The program offered the flexibility of taking courses at night in order to allow participants the opportunity to work or partake in the internship program during the day.

This program is a great opportunity because it allows people who did not receive their undergraduate degree in education the opportunity to earn a graduate degree in the education field, as well as hands-on experience from the internship.

My degree from Sacred Heart University has allowed me to pursue a fulfilling career teaching elementary school children as a full-time teacher in Redding, CT!"

— **Leigh Anna Kamin,**MAT with Teacher Certification program,
Class of 2017



If you're ready to take steps toward earning a graduate degree, we're here to help you. You can begin by <u>requesting more information</u> or <u>scheduling a call with one of our admissions</u> <u>professionals</u>. We're excited to help you find the program that's the best fit for you. Contact us today to continue learning how Sacred Heart can propel your career change forward. We look forward to assisting you!

