



## Continuing Education as a Means of Career Growth Career Planning for Employees

### **Why should I go back to school?**

Continuing your education does not always mean getting another degree or certificate. It can be as simple as taking a class on a topic that you want to know more about or attending a conference where you can gain new insight and/or speak with those directly involved in up and coming developments in your field.

Whether you're further along in your career or just starting out, continuing your education can mean a multitude of things and varies depending on your own situation. It's a great way to:

#### Stay on top of emerging techniques and technologies:

Staying up to date on trends, best practices and creative possibilities is always the best way to stay relevant and to help boost your chances at being considered an expert in your field.

#### Develop your network:

Whether it's attending a conference or taking a class that ends in a group project, learning alongside others creates numerous great opportunities to reach out to someone and exchange experiences and intel.

#### Become more marketable:

Traditionally we've seen that higher ed degrees correlate to an upward trajectory in organizational ladders. While that's debatable in today's job market, organizations are investing more in a workplace culture where employees can display a tendency to bring something new to the table and collaborate. This correlates to high achievement which provides employees with better mobility than simply fulfilling primary duties.

### **Options for continuing your education:**

#### Attend conferences

If you want to start small, attending conferences or workshops can be the perfect first step to getting short introductions to relevant and new developments. Set up a meeting with your supervisor about the possibility of getting funding to cover the costs since it can directly pertain to your job performance and the overall health of the department and organization.

### Take an online, night or weekend class

If you want something more substantial but aren't ready to commit to another degree or certificate program, taking a stand-alone course can get your foot in the door and start off a portfolio if you're ambitious.

### Enroll in a degree or certificate program

For long term results, degree and certificate programs equip you with substantial knowledge and resources. It's the difference between taking a programming class so that you understand your software company's negotiations better and learning how to code yourself so that you can navigate that realm comfortably and become indispensable to the organization. Of course, it all depends on your needs and long-term plan whether you need one class or another degree.

### Take advantage of Educational Assistance

University of Missouri employees are eligible for a heavily reduced tuition and supplemental fee waiver (75%) after they complete their 6-month probationary period. [Here's](#) the University of Missouri's program policy for more information on how it works, eligibility and conditions.

### Look into getting college credit for life experience

There are various testing programs that give you college credit based on experience you've gained outside of the classroom. Depending on what you want to go back to school for, you may be able to get college credit by taking these exams and scoring high enough. Not all certificates and degree programs accept these credits though, so make sure to do your research on what your campus will and will not take. [This article](#) goes over several programs, how they work and provides links to their websites so you can see for yourself if they are provided and accepted on your campus.

## **References and Links**

### *Articles:*

- [What Career Changers Should Know About Going Back to School](#)
- [Continuing Education Has More Benefits Than You May be Aware Of](#)