

The Student-Centered Starter Kit is a series of tools that you and your colleagues can use to explore the content and design of your website through the lens of prospective and current students. These worksheets are intended to be considered in sequential order, but can also be independently deployed depending on your current needs. Above all, the tools provide easy-to-use methods and prompts that will help you bridge the gap between your prospective student's desires and your college's priorities, providing opportunities and insights for decision making and resource allocation related to your website.

Worksheet content developed by SmallBox.



# Personas

## INTRO (PURPOSE + BENEFIT)

Personas are archetypes that represent real people using our product or service. Documenting personas provides a variety of benefits such as maintaining a unified focus on user needs, preventing self-referential design, prioritizing next steps, and reducing risk as we pursue solutions.

## PROCESS

- **Review what we know and identify what we would like to learn**

Individually or with a group of colleagues, consider the depth of understanding you have established around your audiences. Are there any gaps? Do you have assumptions that could be validated or challenged? What would enable you to serve your audience better if you had the opportunity to ask them questions directly?

- **Collect data**

Gather all the existing data you have on your audience. This can be analytics data, survey results, testimonials or other anecdotal documentation. If you don't have much data, consider creating a survey to start.

- **Create categories**

Look for patterns and connections in your audience data. Create categories that group information around common demographics, motivations, or pain points.

- **Capture details**

We will embody a group or category using a singular persona. Start by giving the persona a name. If helpful, use a descriptive term along with a proper name. "Re-Careering" Rachel, for instance.

Briefly describe Rachel's lifestyle and behaviors. What would Rachel say about that summarizes her current state and how she feels? Capture that in a quote: "I feel stuck. I don't know what I want to do when I grow up."

- **Document motivation**

Next, document Rachel's goals and motivations. What are her needs and what led her to recognize the need?

- **Document pain points**

What are the obstacles she faces? What are the pain points she experiences when engaging with a service like yours?

- **Document Influences**

What influences Rachel? Where does she get information? How does she make decisions?

- **Share with your team**

Place persona documents someplace visible. Socialize them with your internal team, and if applicable, your website vendor.

- **Review and refine regularly**

As you continue to enhance and optimize your site over time, document questions you have about your audience. Create methods to find answers to your questions, challenge assumptions, and validate your understanding.



**Persona Name**

**Description**

**Goals & motivations**

**Pain points**

**Input / Where do they seek information**