

# THRIVE

## How to Choose an Academic Major and Career That's Best for You! College of Staten Island - STEP December 14, 2019

1. Take self assessments:
  - i. Receive and review results of assessments.
  - ii. Gain greater insight of personality type, interests, abilities, skills, accomplishments, preferences.
  - iii. Discover related academic programs and career options.
2. Take your own personal inventory:
  - i. Who/what influences you to make decisions as they relate to the person you are today?
3. Ask trusted friends/family/coworkers for feedback on your skills and to name a profession they could see you entering.
4. Is there a dream job that you have?
5. Narrow down choices of career options by selecting those that are of most interest to you. Do so with the mindset that you will be able to do anything you want; you will identify which ones are realistic options based on variables you will consider at a later time.
6. Research narrowed-down selection of options taking results of the assessment into consideration. A career that matches you perfectly may or may not be found; know yourself and what you would and would not be willing to do.
  - i. Example 1: If you prefer to be in an office all day and the job requires some travel to local companies, even though it's not your preference, are you willing to be flexible and adapt assuming that most everything else matches your preferences?
  - ii. Example 2: If a job requires long-distance travel and you are petrified of flying and have family obligations that prevent you from being away for more than one day, then you know it is not possible to be flexible and take on that job.
7. From the following websites, identify 1) typical work day, 2) education needed, 3) advancement opportunities, 4) job outlook nationally and locally, 5) national and local salaries based on employer type (ie. public vs. private vs. government entity):
  - i. Occupational Outlook Handbook: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
  - ii. O\*NET: <https://www.onetonline.org>
  - iii. NYS Department of Labor: <https://labor.ny.gov/stats/index.shtm>
8. Explore sites to view employment listings: newspapers, Indeed, CareerBuilder, SimplyHired, Monster, WorkLooker (Richmond County Government Jobs), New York State Government.
  - i. Review postings to learn more about employer type, job qualifications, salary range, necessary qualifying tests, etc.
9. Network, network, network with everyone.
10. Identify and research employers on Staten Island (or wherever you are interested in living) in the field(s) of your choice.
11. Request appointments with a guidance counselor while still in school. In college, meet with a career counselor
  - i. Seek guidance
    1. Informational interview
    2. Job Shadow opportunities
    3. Inquire about networking opportunities with alumni
    4. Volunteer/part time job opportunities

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12. Identify colleges that offer the necessary degree and program:
  - i. Local / In State / Out of State / Out of Country
    1. Research the institution to verify it's accredited.
    2. Request statistics on program graduation rates and employment opportunities given before or soon after graduation.
    3. Visit and request at least one meeting with a program representative, speak with students, get a feel for the environment to try to determine if it's a good fit for you.
13. Identify professional associations related to your field(s) of interest. Explore their website to gain more knowledge of the field.
14. Attend job and career fairs as part of your information-gathering process. Speak with employers and find out what they're looking for in employees.
15. Attend college fairs ([www.collegefairguide.com](http://www.collegefairguide.com)) to acquire information from a variety of colleges about the programs you are considering.
16. Browse through college catalogs. Read descriptions about the programs and related career opportunities.
17. Attend college open houses to get more insight on majors and to see the campus for yourself to see if it's a good fit for you.
18. Listen to the news; awareness of what is going on locally, nationally, internationally.

## **Identify Short-Term Goals**

Based on the above, what are you willing and able to do within the next 6-12 months?

It's a long list which does not have to be rushed through to completion, and you may choose steps to put off or skip altogether based on what you believe to be the most productive use of your time. Take the time that is appropriate for you so that you can gather as much information as needed to narrow down choices and make a well-informed decision.

Considering your life, job, obligations and down time, about how much time can you realistically take every day, every few days, every week or month to commit to each step? See what works for you and modify as needed.

Throughout the process, it's important to take brief breaks, maybe long breaks; take time for yourself, maintain a healthy lifestyle of eating, exercising and resting. You may wish to share what you are learning about yourself and about your options with family, friends, teachers, guidance counselors; and perhaps ask them to give you their honest feedback. Gravitate to those who are both genuine and supportive.

## **Identify Long-Term Goals**

Based on the achievements of your short-term goals, what are your long-term goals?

What is your dream job?

How can you achieve your dream?

What are your personal goals? For example, do you plan on raising a family? If so, is your career choice one that will allow you to have a good balance between work and family or are you OK with crossing that bridge when you get to it? There is no right or wrong answer... it's just something to think about 😊