



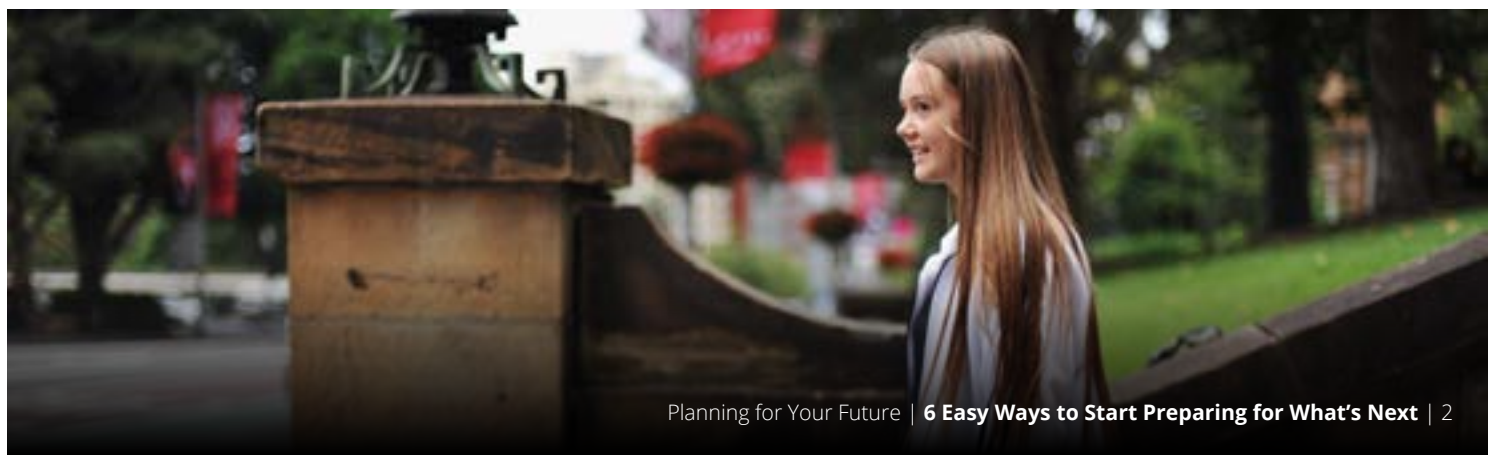
Planning for Your Future

6 Easy Ways to Start Preparing
for What's Next

ACT[®]

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Introduction

Planning for what's next can be overwhelming. You might not know where or how to start. **That's okay.**

It's important to learn about the options available to you, whether it's going to college, starting work after high school, or doing something else.

SO, WHERE DO YOU START?



**Self
Knowledge**

+



**Academic
Information**

=



**Informed
Decisions**

You can take the knowledge you have about yourself (what you're interested in, what's important to you, what you're good at, etc.) and pair it with academic information about yourself, like your grades and your ACT® test score, to make more informed decisions about your future.

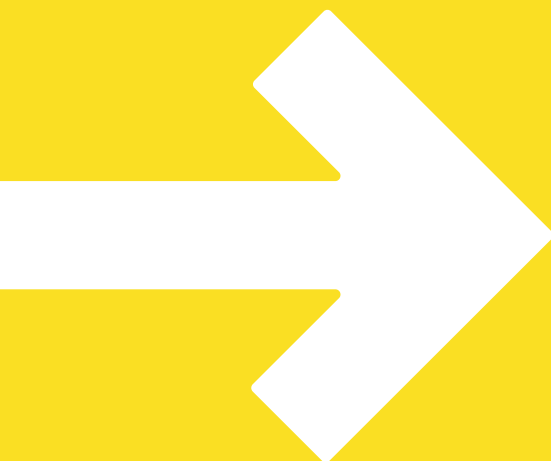




This eBook will highlight six key activities you can complete to start planning for your journey after high school.

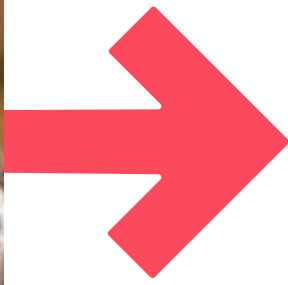
You may do these more than once and out of the order listed below.

1. **BEGIN SELF-DISCOVERY**
2. **EXPLORE MAJORS**
3. **EXPLORE CAREERS**
4. **EXPLORE SCHOOLS**
5. **MEASURE ACADEMIC READINESS**
6. **ESTIMATE COSTS**



Chapter 1

Self-Discovery

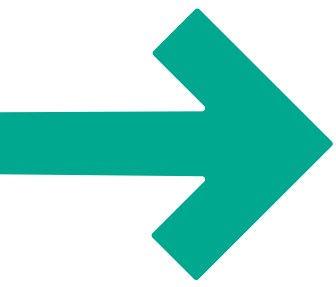


Chapter 1

Self-Discovery

It's important to learn more about yourself and how your own characteristics link up to future education and work opportunities.

There are a number of ways you can learn more about yourself. In fact, you might have already done some of these activities as part of a career component in class or even a career day at your school.



Chapter 1

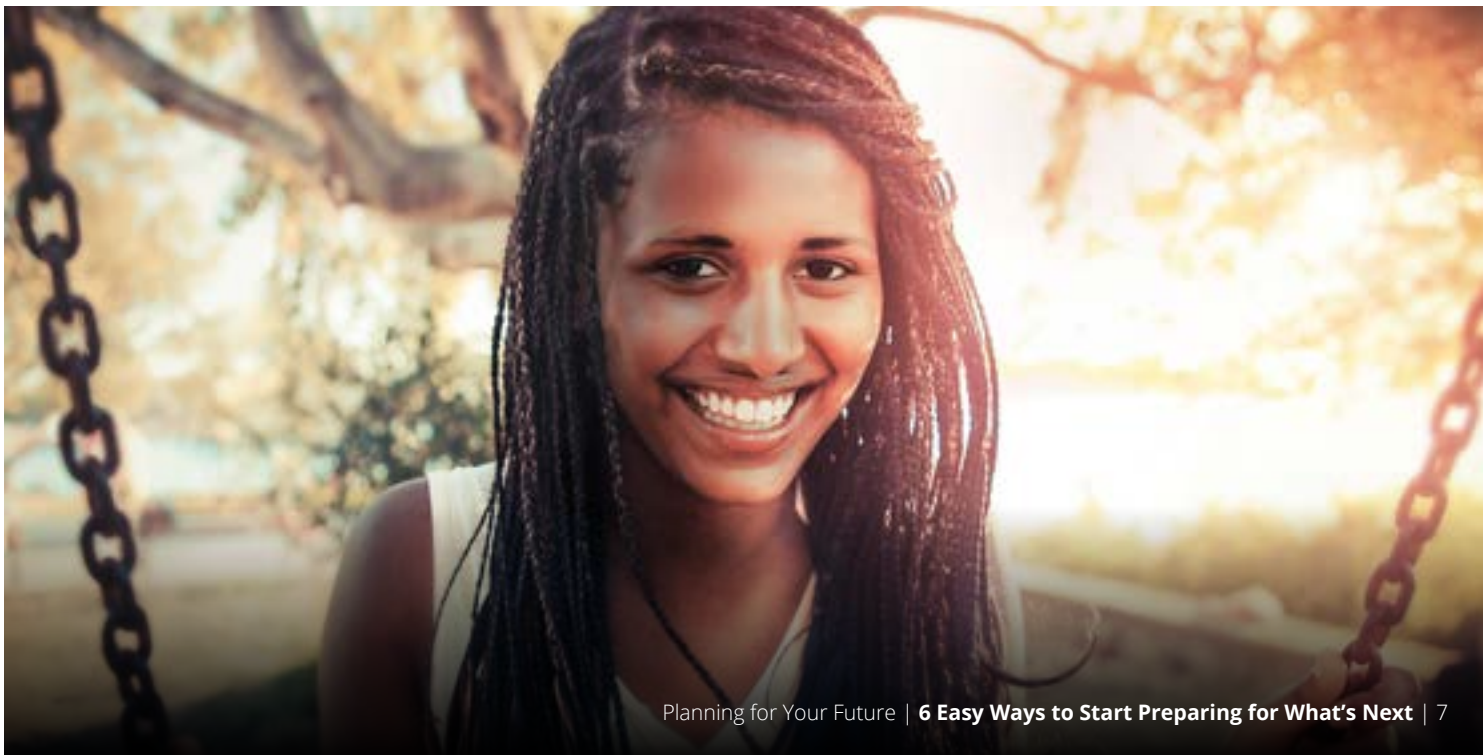
Self-Discovery

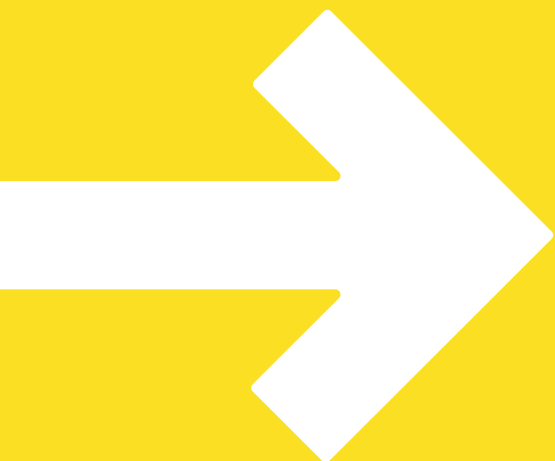
TAKE A SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessments often take the form of a quiz where you answer dozens of questions and get recommendations about majors and/or careers you might want to consider. Each assessment might focus on a different topic, such as your interests, your abilities, or your values.

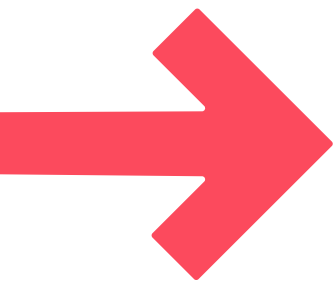
Many self-assessments are based on research, which can help you make a more informed decision. For example, the ACT Interest Inventory is a self-assessment designed to help you find a major that matches your interests and is a good fit for you.

You'll learn more about the free self assessment resources available in MyACT at the end of chapter 2.





Chapter 2 Explore Majors



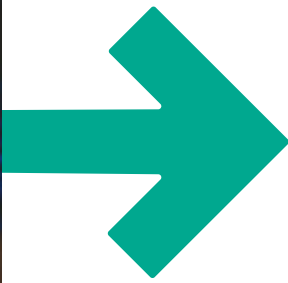
Chapter 2

Explore Majors

As you learn more about the college majors available to you, consider the following:

- **DOES THE MAJOR MATCH MY INTERESTS?**
- **DOES THIS MAJOR PREPARE ME FOR THE CAREER I WANT TO HAVE?**
- **WHAT COLLEGE COURSES WOULD I TYPICALLY TAKE FOR THE MAJOR?**
- **WHAT WILL I LEARN?**
- **WHAT DEGREE TYPES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?**
- **WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL JOBS AVAILABLE WITH MY PLANNED LEVEL OF EDUCATION?**
- **WHAT SPECIALTIES ARE WITHIN THE MAJOR?**
- **WHAT HIGH SCHOOL COURSES CAN HELP ME PREPARE FOR THE MAJOR?**
- **WHAT TYPE(S) OF SCHOOLS OFFER THE MAJOR?**
- **WHAT ARE SOME RELATED MAJORS?**





Chapter 2

Explore Majors

It's important to pick a major that matches your interests. There are lots of different factors that go into choosing a job, and your major helps you prepare for your career. Perhaps you think you want to study biology and become a doctor. You declare your major and begin to take the necessary courses. But what happens if you discover that you aren't interested in the subject matter you must master to perform the job?

ACT RESEARCH TELLS US A LOT ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WHAT INTERESTS YOU AND YOUR CHOSEN MAJOR. We've found that when you choose a major that matches your measured interests, you are more likely to:

- **REMAIN IN YOUR MAJOR**
- **STAY IN COLLEGE**
- **COMPLETE YOUR DEGREE IN A TIMELY MANNER**



Remain in
Your Major

+

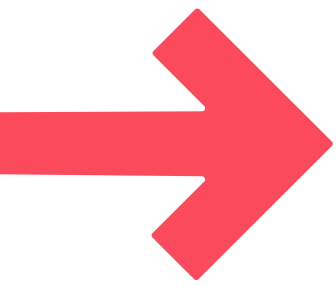


Stay in
College

=



Complete Your
Degree in a
Timely Manner



Chapter 2

Explore Majors

Remaining in your major means no added stress from appointments with your adviser (new classes needed to attain your newly chosen degree, etc.).

You'll stay in college, keep your focus, and complete your coursework when you're interested in what you're studying.

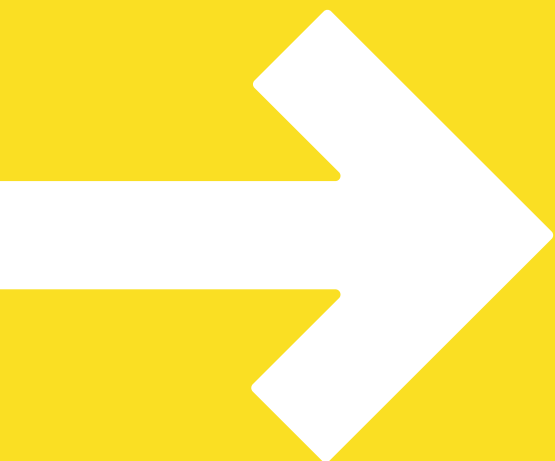
As a result, it's often easier in the long run to complete your degree on time. That can mean no extra student loans or money spent on that extra class, semester, or year!

“THAT ALL SOUNDS GREAT, BUT HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CAREER INTEREST MATCHES MY MAJOR?”

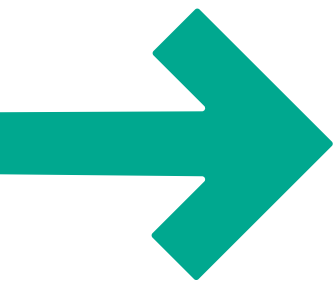
The ACT Interest Inventory is one tool you can use to measure your interests. On your ACT score report, you can learn if your interests are similar to those of students who actually chose the major you're considering. You can also take the interest inventory for free using your [MyACT account](#).

Once you've taken the interest inventory, you can see majors that match your measured interests on your personalized major map.





Chapter 3 Explore Careers



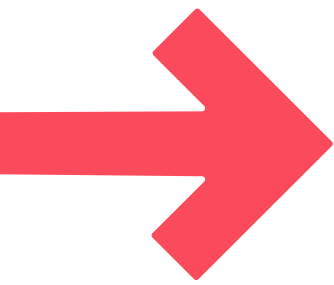
Chapter 3

Explore Careers



As you learn more about your career options, you should consider the following:

- **WHAT WORK TASKS WILL I PERFORM?**
- **WHAT CAREER SETTING (LOCATION, ATMOSPHERE) CAN I EXPECT?**
- **WHAT TOOLS WILL I USE?**
- **WILL I TRAVEL AS PART OF THE CAREER?**
- **WILL I WORK WITH PEOPLE?**
- **WHAT WILL MY SCHEDULE LOOK LIKE?**
- **WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL DEMANDS OF THE CAREER?**
- **HOW MUCH MONEY DOES THE AVERAGE PERSON WITH THIS CAREER MAKE?**
- **ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND ADVANCEMENT?**
- **WHAT EDUCATION AND/OR TRAINING IS REQUIRED?**
- **WHAT MAJORS AND/OR TRAINING WILL HELP ME PREPARE FOR THIS CAREER?**
- **WHAT ARE SOME RELATED CAREERS?**



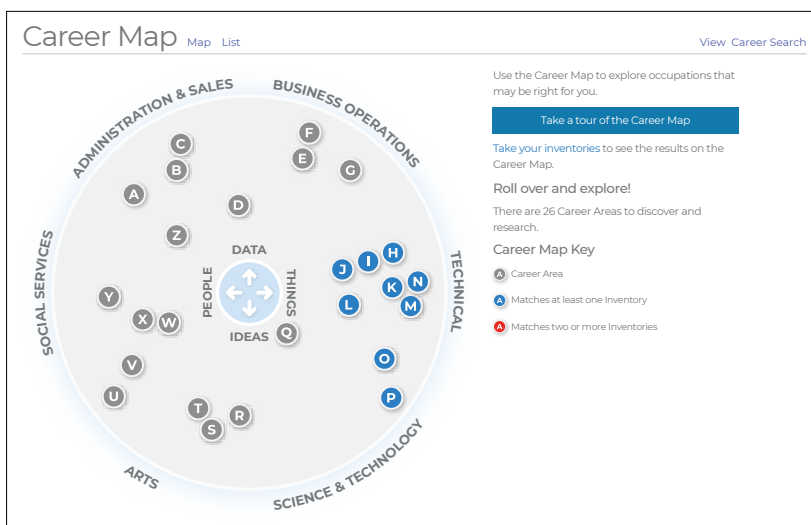
Chapter 3

Explore Careers

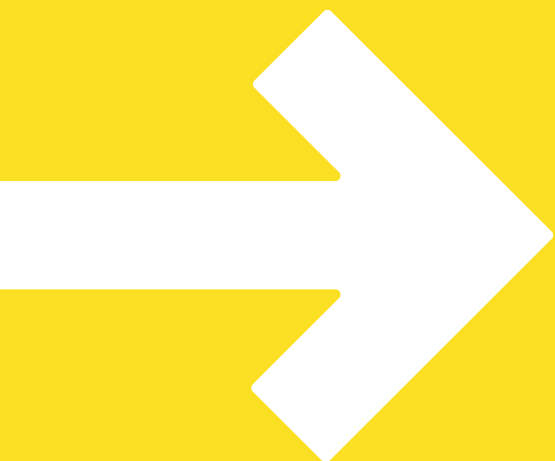
The ACT Career Map uses your ACT Interest Inventory results to offer you personalized information about how your interests, abilities, and values align with careers.

You'll see career areas that match at least one, two, or none of the interests, all on one map. You can click each career area to see what occupations fall under that category.

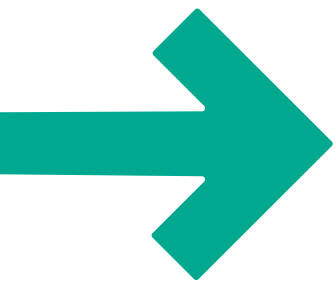
Remember, the more a career area aligns with your personal characteristics, the more likely it might be a better fit.



Complete your Interest Inventory at [MyACT.org](https://myact.org) to view your personalized Career Map.



Chapter 4 Explore Schools



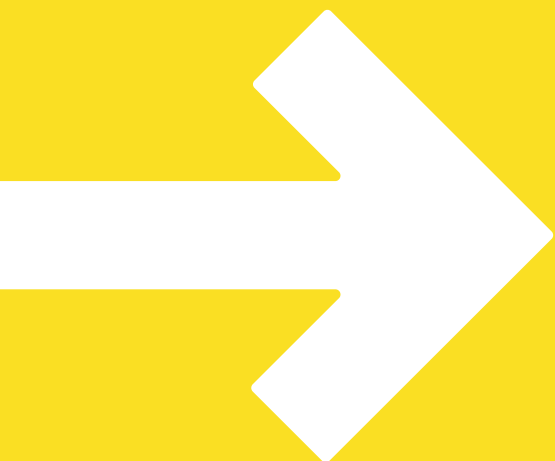
Chapter 4

Explore Schools

Now it's time to start narrowing down your list of school options. **As you learn more about your options, you should consider the following:**

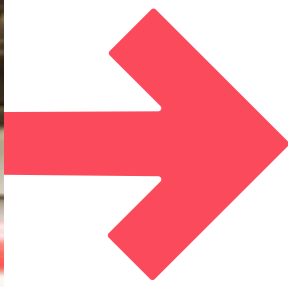


- **DOES IT OFFER THE MAJOR(S) I'M CONSIDERING?**
- **WHERE IS IT LOCATED?**
- **WHAT'S THE STUDENT BODY SIZE?**
- **IS IT A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOL?**
- **WHAT COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM SCORE RANGES DOES THE SCHOOL TYPICALLY ACCEPT?**
- **WHAT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE OFFERED BY THE SCHOOL?**
- **WHAT IS THE ADMISSION RATE?**



Chapter 5

Measure Academic Readiness



Chapter 5

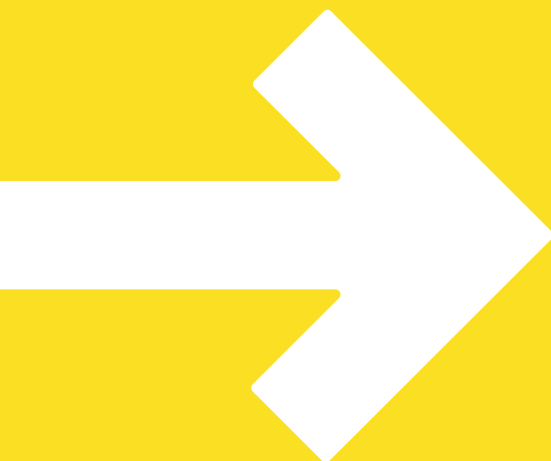
Measure Academic Readiness

If you're considering applying to a four-year college, it's likely you'll take a college entrance exam to support your application – either for admission, scholarships and merit aid, or as a specific program requirement for majors like nursing and engineering.

The ACT test measures what you learn in high school. This means that your score can help you understand how prepared you are for college and what you can work on before you start.

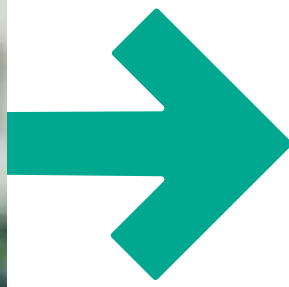
You can use your score to highlight your strengths in your college application. For example, students with interests in science can take the ACT and use their score to demonstrate their mastery of the topic. The ACT is the only college entrance exam with a science section.

You might also be wondering if your score is “good enough” to get into college. It's important to remember your goals. You can find specific recommendations and requirements around scores on individual schools' websites. Many colleges and universities disclose the range of scores typically expected for enrollment. You can use this range to help you decide whether you'd like to test again.



Chapter 6

Estimate Costs



Chapter 6

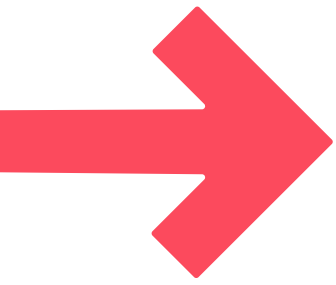
Estimate Costs

Estimating Costs and Affordability

As you're considering your options, it's important to remember the difference between the sticker price and the net price of a college.

- **STICKER PRICE** is the price a school lists without considering any personal circumstances.
- **NET PRICE** is the price it will cost you given your personal circumstances (like any scholarships and/or financial aid you're eligible to receive). You should focus on the net price when you are ready to make a decision.

There are a number of college cost calculators available online. Colleges are required to offer this tool on their websites.



What's Next?

It's important to remember that while everyone's journey to college and career looks different, there are **key things you can do to prepare yourself** to make smarter decisions about your future.

You may complete the previously listed activities in this order or in a different one. You might also complete the activities more than once!

Remember to keep an open, curious mind and that you have a number of resources to help you along the way.

HAPPY PLANNING!



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