Education and Career Pathways

GAC032-aligned planning support; verify each institution's current requirements.

Education and Career Navigation: Finding Your Pathways

- Build a **personal profile** of your **interests**, **strengths** and **experience**.
- Find each **support** and **barrier** on your path.
- Write an **education and career plan** that works back from a **goal** .

Education and Career Navigation: Finding Your Pathways (2)

- Choose courses by **fit** and check their **entry requirements** .
- Practise the **interview** and draft a **college application essay** .

Create my profile

- Collect your **interests** , **strengths** , **values** and **experience** in one place.
- Give evidence, not adjectives: "I fixed the school's printer queue" says more than "I am good with technology".
- **Skills** transfer between subjects. A student who ran a fundraiser has shown planning and teamwork, whatever they study next.
- Ask two people who know you well to add to the profile; they will notice **strengths** you take for granted.

Build up your supports and knock down your barriers

- A **support** makes the path easier: a teacher who will write a reference, a relative who studied abroad, a scholarship.
- A **barrier** is in the way: cost, a language score, a missing subject, a deadline you did not know about.
- Most barriers have a workaround if found early: a foundation year, a test retake, a later intake. Found late, they can close the path.
- Write both lists down. A plan that names its barriers and how to deal with them is what an interviewer means by "realistic".

Connect your profile to your goals

- A **goal** must be specific enough to plan towards. It can be a direction ("environmental science in the UK") rather than one job title.
- Work backwards: the job needs a degree; the degree needs certain subjects and a language score; the score needs a test date; the test needs registration by a deadline.
- Check the **entry requirements** of real courses now. They are published, and one of them may change what you do this year.

Find good fit colleges

- **Fit** has several parts: course content, **entry requirements**, total cost, location, and **support** for international students.
- Build a list with a range: some ambitious, some likely, at least one safe choice.
- Read the module list of the actual degree, not just the university's home page. Two degrees with the same name can teach quite different things.
- Cost includes living costs and visa requirements, not just tuition.

Develop your college and career pathway

- An **action plan** has dates. Applications, tests, references and documents all have fixed deadlines.
- Prepare for the **interview** questions: why this course, why this university, why you, and what you have done about your interest.
- The application essay is a personal statement at higher stakes: evidence first, and specific to the course.

Build up your career skills

- Admissions readers and employers both look for evidence of **skills**, not claims.
- Build a **portfolio** as you go: the project, the report, the website, the video. Every GAC module produces at least one piece worth keeping.
- **Networking** means asking people who do the work you want what it is really like. Most people are happy to answer a polite, specific question.
- Keep the profile up to date; it is easier to add to it each term than to rebuild it before applying.

Worked example: working back from a goal

- The course requires IELTS 6.5 overall, with at least 6.0 in each part, and the application deadline is in late January.
- Lin wants a score in hand before applying, with time for one retake. Results take about two weeks, so the first test should be by October and a retake possible in December.
- Registration for an October test closes several weeks before: Lin must register in August or September.
- The course also requires A-level Biology or Chemistry. Lin takes Chemistry, so that requirement is met; it goes on the supports list.

Worked example: building a range

- A*AA and AAA: ambitious (above the prediction).
- AAB and ABB: likely (at or below the prediction).
- BBC: safe (well below the prediction).
- A balanced list of five might contain two ambitious, two likely and one safe choice, each checked for **fit** in content, cost and location, not grade alone.

Common errors

- Listing adjectives in a profile instead of evidence.
- Discovering a language or subject requirement after the deadline.
- Choosing a course by its title without reading its modules.

Common errors (2)

- Applying only to ambitious choices.
- Forgetting living and visa costs.
- Answering "Why this course?" with praise for the university's ranking.

Key terms

- **personal profile**: A record of your **interests**, **strengths**, **values** and experience, with evidence.
- **support**: Something that makes your path easier.
- **barrier**: Something that blocks your path.
- **goal**: The aim you are planning towards.

Check yourself

- Rewrite "I am a hard worker" as evidence for a profile.
- A course needs a test score by 15 January, results take two weeks, and you want time for one retake. When should your first test be, at the latest?
- Your prediction is ABB. Is a course requiring AAA ambitious, likely or safe?