



Lesson #4

Discover Your Academic Streams

"When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps." - Confucius

"We can each define ambition and progress for ourselves. The goal is to work toward a world where expectations are not set by the stereotypes that hold us back, but by our personal passion, talents and interests." – Sheryl Sandberg

Objective: Now that you know what your goals are; the next step is to choose an academic stream that perfectly aligns with your goals, skills and interests.

Overview: Choosing the right academic stream of education is the first biggest academic decision a student makes in his/her career. At this point it is very important to ensure that the academic stream you choose is aligned to your goals, skills and interests. So first assess your interests, skills, and long-term plans and understand how different academic streams will help you strengthen your skills and goals.

For example – If you are interested in cars and want to pursue a career in car designing then the best academic stream that you choose is Engineering. But engineering also has a variety of options and you have to do proper research to understand which exact stream of Engineering will strengthen your skills and help you fulfill the goal of 'Designing Cars'.

Steps to follow:

- 1. Assess different academic streams:** Before finalizing on a career stream it is important to assess all the different academic streams and list down the pro and cons of these streams. Research what degrees, licenses, or certifications you'll need to become employed in the fields you're considering. It has been often noticed that students start hating their subject after some time or quit their subject midway or start feeling frustrated about the wrong move or decision. Therefore, it is very important that you evaluate your options thoroughly; so that you have a fair idea of what a particular stream has in store for you.





2. **Visit a career counselor:** For more clarification, you can visit a career counselor who will conduct tests which have been scientifically designed and formulated and helps you to know the right stream. Attending career guidance, seminars, educational fairs would also be a good idea to explore career choices and to help a student plan his/her next step.
3. **Get an internship:** Do you have a specific future career in mind, or any specific subjects that you would like to study further? Getting an internship at a related company or organization will not only help you explore, but will also help you cement your interest in this sector. For instance, if you love human biology, getting an internship with a hospital shows colleges that you are serious about this subject, and driven to learn more about it in terms of its real world applications, beyond a classroom setting. Try to structure the internship with your employer before you start to ensure that you maximize your learning experience. This is one of the most impactful ways that you can spend your summer.
4. **Shadow people:** Talk to seasoned professionals in careers and majors that you are considering. If you have a specific future career in mind or are considering a couple of options for college, network with seasoned professionals and college students in these areas who can guide you, and could help you design a relevant path. By doing so, you may connect with someone who could end up becoming your mentor, who would be a long-lasting source of wise counsel.
5. **Get involved on a college campus:** There are many ways you can get involved on your dream college campus. You can make a visit, or take a course or summer programs for high school students. Immersing yourself on a college campus does not ensure that you will get admitted, but it will give you valuable insights into campus offerings that can better inform the way in which you build your profile in your college application. Thoroughly research your options to ensure that you are enrolling in the right course or program.

Questions to Ask:

Here is a list of questions that you should ask yourself to help you identify your academic stream.

1. **What are your interests?** Do you prefer working with people, numbers and data, abstract ideas, or real-world things like animals or equipment? Or some combination?
2. **What skills do you have?** Putting your skills on paper can be an affirmative, eye-opening experience that provides confidence as you move toward your goals.
3. **What education or training do you need?**





Thoughts to discuss:

Discussions are the best and most interesting way of exploring any topic. When you are exchanging thoughts and ideas with a group of like-minded people, you get unique insights and different perspectives on the topic, which broadens your horizon and improves your knowledge base. So go ahead, and discuss the following with your friends, parents, siblings or friends!

1. Why is selecting the right academic stream important? How has it helped someone achieve their goals?
2. What do others think you are good at?
3. What topics do you find yourself continuously arguing or defending with others? What beliefs does your stance represent?
4. What 3-5 dream careers or businesses can you imagine that would firmly embody your core beliefs about the world?

Reference ReachIvy Resources:

Guides:

- How Do I Select The Right School For Me?
- How Do I Define My Career Path?
- How Do I Find The Right Internship For Me?

Videos:

- How to find the right school for me?
- What activities should I be involved in?

Blogs:

- College Visits – Maximizing Impact
- Reading Lists: 9th & 10th Grade
- What to look for in a Summer Internship

