

This handbook is written for you - the student who wants answers to critical questions about going to college.

Even with expert advice, it can be difficult to make good decisions about questions like:

- is college the right place for me?
- what kind of college should I be considering?
- what are the steps I have to take in high school to get into a college?
- what program in the college should be my first choice?
- where will my college education lead?

High school guidance departments often have limited time to counsel students on all the questions that occur when considering attending college. Many students want to arrive at their own decisions for college.

This step-by-step handbook is designed for you, working through many college-related questions on your own. By completing the steps in this handbook you will have the answers to many of your questions about attending college.

This handbook moves from general issues (e.g., What are the good and not so good reasons for going to college?) to more specific issues such as how to get the money to attend college and how to select courses.

How Do I Fit With College?

A critical step in preparing for college involves examining your interests, abilities and desires.

There are hundreds of career interest inventories, skills assessments, personality quizzes, temperament workshops and lifestyle questionnaires that are available if you choose to take them. However, doing your own self-directed search can often produce the insights that you need to make critical decisions.

Your personal experiences, behaviors and choices made in the past will lead you to understand the basis for making college-related decisions.

A self-directed search leads to conclusions about your values, your favorite pastimes, your favorite past experiences, your frustrations and your expectations of others and yourself. It also leads to conclusions about your talents, skills, abilities, strengths and natural gifts.

High school students
like Paige



and Samir



work with you,
exploring ideas about
going to college.

Thinking About College

Examining yourself allows many choices to automatically fall into place. It is worth the time spent on introspection and conversations with family and friends.

Discovering who you are is an ongoing process. We all change and grow, making the self-directed search a fluid and continuous process. Attending college is a new beginning. You have a blank sheet, to be filled in as you wish.



Paige is a student in Grade 12 who is planning to attend college but she has no idea where to begin. She is going to work through the Self-Directed Search below. A first step in preparing for college is to complete the Self-Directed Search for yourself. At the end of this chapter you can see what Paige wrote in her Self-Directed Search and how those reflections compare to what you wrote.

Forms and questionnaires in this handbook showing

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Here are my favorite things to do:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

This is what I value most in my friends:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My favorite school subjects are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I am strong, talented and skilled in the following areas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____