

SUMMER EXPERIENCE **DECISION MATRIX**

Decision matrices are effective tools to assist with making the difficult choice of selecting the best summer experience option. This tool gives you a structure to evaluate each option against a set of criteria you have determined to be important for any experience you plan to pursue.

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1: Identify 2 – 4 summer experience types that you are having difficulty deciding between, and write them down as **choices** at the top of the chart.

STEP 2: Think about what qualities your winning summer experience should possess in order to determine your **criteria**. One obvious criterion should be that the summer experience helps you accomplish the goals you outlined for yourself. Other criteria might include core values you identified (i.e. must give you freedom to express creativity/innovativeness) or characteristics (i.e. must be available in my hometown). Once you come up with a list of criteria, write them down in separate boxes in the column on the left hand side of the chart.

STEP 3: It is possible that you'll weigh some criteria more than others. For instance, it might be very important that the experience you pursue is paid, but not as important that it be close to home. Take some time to think about which criteria you prioritize, and then assign **weights** to them by distributing 10 points total amongst the criteria.

STEP 4: Establish a **rating scale** for each criterion so that the high end of the scale is the rating that would tend to make you select the option. (*Example: 1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high*) Rank each summer experience choice based on how well it meets the criterion.

STEP 5: Multiply each summer experience by the weight and add up the points to determine a **score**. The experience with the highest should be the one that you spend more time exploring, researching, and discussing with others to truly determine whether it is right for you.

VALUES

DIRECTIONS

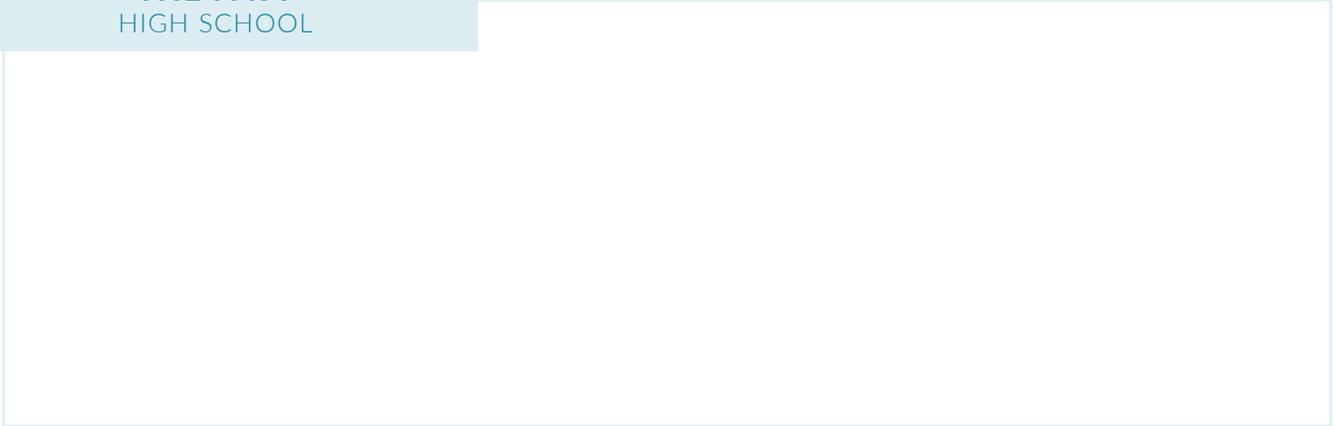
1. Rank (1-5) your top five values, with #1 being the most **important** to you.
2. Then put an "X" next to the five values that are **least** important to you.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good health | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility in choosing where I live |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Many close friendships | <input type="checkbox"/> Time to myself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A fulfilling career | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyment of arts, entertainment, and cultural activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A financially comfortable life | <input type="checkbox"/> A life with many challenges |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> A life with many changes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity/innovativeness | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity to be a leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having children | <input type="checkbox"/> To make a major discovery that would save lives or make a big impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A variety of interests and activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity to establish roots in one place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Owning a house | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for physical activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A happy love relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> An exciting life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing to my community | <input type="checkbox"/> A chance to get into politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abundance of leisure time | <input type="checkbox"/> To live according to strong moral values |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A stable life | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity to teach others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A life without stress | <input type="checkbox"/> To write something memorable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A chance to make social changes | <input type="checkbox"/> A chance to become famous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dedication to religious/spiritual development | <input type="checkbox"/> To help others solve problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being a part of a team | <input type="checkbox"/> To make lots of money |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pursuing truth and knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> An intellectually stimulating life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To be remembered and recognized for my accomplishments | <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic appreciation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping those in distress | <input type="checkbox"/> Influencing others |

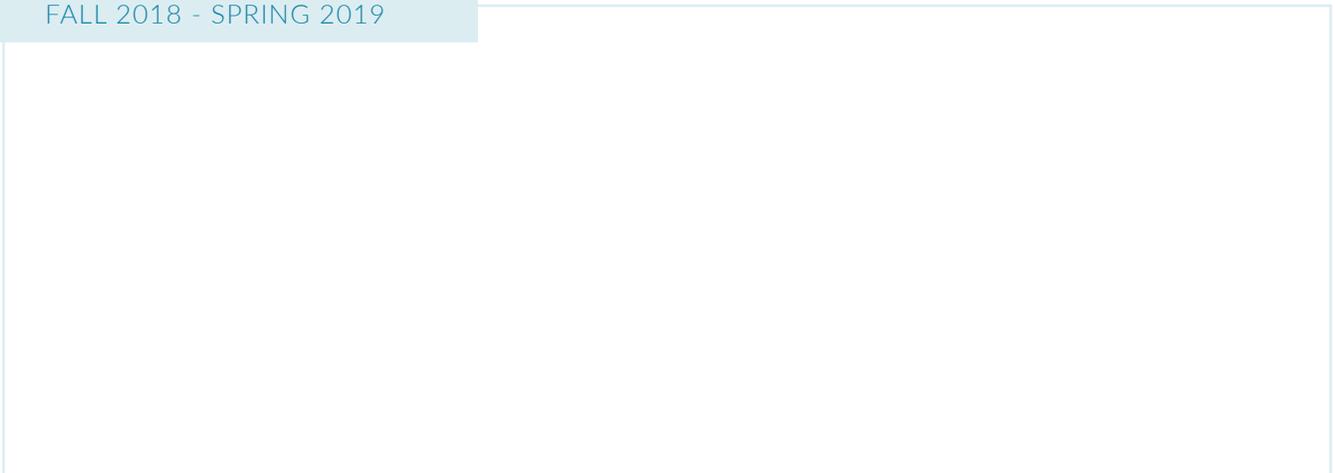
BRAINSTORMING GOALS

Thinking through what you want to achieve and learn over the next year is an important first step to creating a plan for the summer because you can use your goals as criteria for evaluating the numerous opportunities available to you. Listen to the instructions given during the seminar to find out how to complete this chart. An example can be read on the next page.

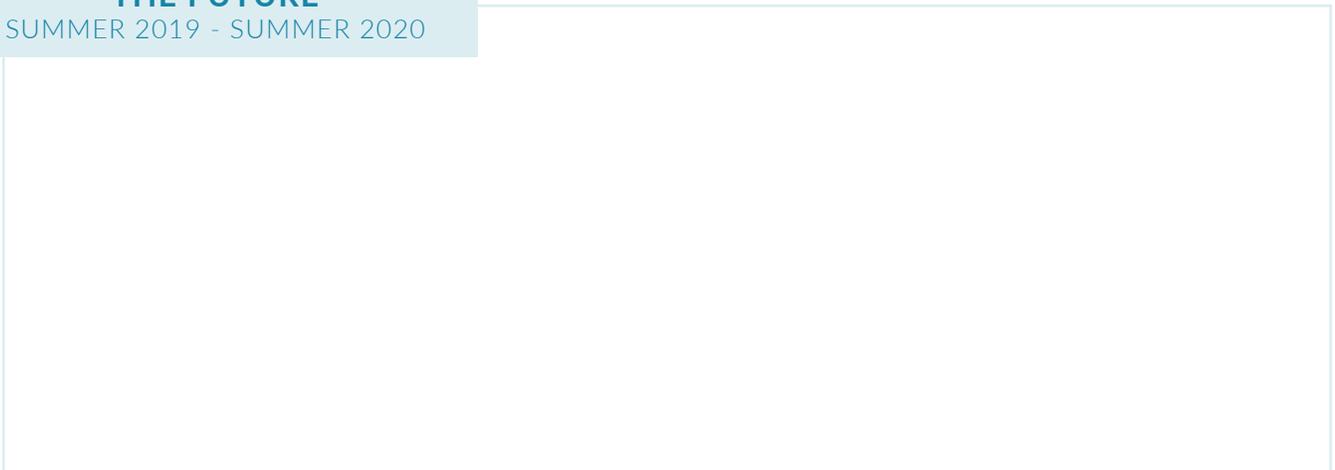
THE PAST HIGH SCHOOL



THE PRESENT FALL 2018 - SPRING 2019



THE FUTURE SUMMER 2019 - SUMMER 2020



BRAINSTORMING GOALS

EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED CHART

THE PAST

HIGH SCHOOL

- Became captain of the varsity football team.
- Promoted to first chair of first violin section of school orchestra.
- Tutored young children every week and helped improve their math skills.
- Organized fundraiser at my school or in my community for a charity.
- Volunteered at a hospital during junior and senior years.
- Graduated from high school.
- Accepted into Amherst College.
- Traveled abroad with my family.
- Learned Mandarin Chinese.
- Participated in Model UN conferences with school club.
- Won a DECA competition senior year.
- Voted Vice President of high school student council.

THE PRESENT

FALL 2018 - SPRING 2019

- Finish the fall semester with a GPA I'm proud of.
- Took an economics class and discovered I enjoyed the subject.
- Got a job as a teaching assistant.
- Became a member of GlobeMed.
- Working on a musical performance for the spring semester.
- Actively learning computer programming language Java.
- Writing for the Amherst Student newspaper.
- Going to the gym regularly.
- Selected to be an Eco-Rep.
- Working on a short story or poem to publish eventually.
- Building great relationships with my peers and meeting new friends.
- Created my first resume and got it approved by the Loeb Center.
- Attended a thought-provoking on-campus speaker event that challenged me.

THE FUTURE

SUMMER 2019 - SUMMER 2020

- Have my first experience doing neuroscience lab work.
- Find out what I'm good at and what I have a passion for.
- Gain some work experience in order to make me more competitive for internships.
- Gain a leadership role in a student organization.
- Become more comfortable speaking Spanish.
- Work on advancing a political or social cause I'm passionate about.
- Become a teacher, eventually, and want to develop my classroom teaching skills.
- Make enough money to support myself over the summer & when I return to Amherst.
- Reconnect with my family and high school friends.

SUMMER EXPERIENCE RESOURCE GUIDE

EXPERIENCE	BENEFITS	CONSIDERATIONS	RESOURCES
<p>INTERNSHIP: A temporary, structured opportunity that allows students to apply classroom learning in a real-life setting, develop skills, and receive guidance from professionals in their given career fields of interest.</p>	<p>Get inside scoop on career field of interest to decide if it's the right path for you.</p> <p>Gain the skills and knowledge to be competitive in the job market.</p> <p>Potentially position yourself for a job at the company after graduation.</p> <p>Develop new professional contacts.</p>	<p>Many internships are unpaid or low paying.</p> <p>Employers want interns with some demonstrated experience.</p> <p>Both the search process & opportunity require significant time & resource commitment.</p> <p>Not every career path requires an internship.</p>	<p>Loeb Center's Amherst Select Internship Program (ASIP)</p> <p>Any career advisor at the Loeb Center</p> <p>Handshake (amherst.joinhandshake.com)</p> <p>Online job boards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indeed • Glassdoor • LinkedIn • Idealist
<p>SUMMER JOB: Unlike internships, the focus isn't on your learning, but on the company's bottom line.</p>	<p>Receive compensation for hours worked.</p> <p>Highly likely to find one wherever you are during the summer.</p> <p>You don't need a great deal of work experience and can be trained.</p> <p>You can still gain valuable, transferrable skills.</p>	<p>Your job may not align perfectly with your career interests.</p> <p>Not all jobs are of equal quality, so you will need to heavily vet.</p> <p>There may be a lack of professional growth opportunities.</p> <p>You may not feel challenged.</p>	<p>Any career advisor at the Loeb Center</p> <p>Handshake (amherst.joinhandshake.com)</p> <p>Online job boards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indeed • Glassdoor • LinkedIn • Idealist <p>Local newspapers</p>
<p>VOLUNTEERING: Service-oriented work that may be for a variety of personal reasons.</p>	<p>Highly likely to find an opportunity in most locations.</p> <p>Learn professional skills and challenge yourself without workplace pressures.</p> <p>The time commitment is up to you.</p> <p>Prior work experience isn't necessary.</p>	<p>You don't receive a wage, but there may be other forms of compensation.</p> <p>You will devote time to the opportunity without a wage or stipend.</p> <p>The opportunity might not match your career interests or skill level.</p> <p>There may not be room for professional growth.</p>	<p>Five College Consortium Community and Volunteer Opportunities Board</p> <p>Established volunteer programs, such as AmeriCorps, United Way</p> <p>Online job boards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idealist • Volunteer Match • Points of Light <p>Searching for and contacting non-profits in your area</p>

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<p>RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP OR INDEPENDENT PROJECT: A mentored experience in which a student works on aspects of a faculty member's or graduate student's research project or in which a student receives faculty guidance for independent work.</p>	<p>The best experience if you want a career in research or you want to pursue a Ph.D.</p> <p>Graduate and medical schools want students who have research experience.</p> <p>Build a relationship with a professor who could help you professionally.</p> <p>Learn hard research and transferrable skills.</p>	<p>These opportunities are often very competitive, especially for first years.</p> <p>You will need to demonstrate expertise, high-level of skill, and discipline.</p> <p>Outside of established research programs, you will need to find a willing faculty member to provide you with an opportunity.</p>	<p>Amherst College Summer Science Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF)</p> <p>Networking with Amherst or even non-Amherst professors</p> <p>Other colleges and universities</p> <p>National Science Foundation</p> <p>Professional association websites</p>
<p>SUMMER ABROAD: A course of study through a university or an academic program in another country.</p>	<p>Demonstrate cultural competence and adaptability to employers.</p> <p>The chance to learn a new language.</p> <p>Lay the foundation for future work abroad.</p> <p>Expose yourself to new perspectives and world-views.</p>	<p>Amherst doesn't reward credit for summers abroad.</p> <p>There are high costs, but no financial aid available.</p> <p>You must search and vet programs on your own.</p> <p>There may not be a chance for career exploration and experimentation.</p>	<p>Amherst College Office of Global Education</p>
<p>JOB SHADOWING: An opportunity to observe a workplace environment while witnessing professionals completing a range of duties and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Career exploration without a large time commitment.</p> <p>Prior work experience or skills is unnecessary.</p> <p>There may be a chance to transform it into an internship or job.</p> <p>Build your professional network.</p>	<p>You will need to find a willing and available professional in your field.</p> <p>An opportunity may not be available close to you. Is it worth travelling for?</p> <p>No skill-building opportunity.</p>	<p>Amherst College Pathways</p> <p>Amherst College Alumni Directory</p> <p>Any career advisor at the Loeb Center</p>

SUMMER EXPERIENCE **TIMELINE WORKSHEET**

WEEK 1

OBJECTIVE(S)	
STEPS TO TAKE	
DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS	
NOTES	

WEEK 2

OBJECTIVE(S)	
STEPS TO TAKE	
DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS	
NOTES	

WEEK 3

OBJECTIVE(S)	
STEPS TO TAKE	
DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS	
NOTES	

WEEK 4

OBJECTIVE(S)	
STEPS TO TAKE	
DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS	
NOTES	

CONTINUE...

SUMMER EXPERIENCE **TIMELINE WORKSHEET**

WEEK 5

OBJECTIVE(S)

STEPS TO TAKE

DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS

NOTES

WEEK 6

OBJECTIVE(S)

STEPS TO TAKE

DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS

NOTES

WEEK 7

OBJECTIVE(S)

STEPS TO TAKE

DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS

NOTES

WEEK 8

OBJECTIVE(S)

STEPS TO TAKE

DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS

NOTES

CONTINUE...

SUMMER EXPERIENCE **TIMELINE WORKSHEET**

WEEK 9

OBJECTIVE(S)

STEPS TO TAKE

DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS

NOTES

WEEK 10

OBJECTIVE(S)

STEPS TO TAKE

DATES & TIMES TO IMPLEMENT STEPS

NOTES