



A2 ACHIEVE COLLEGE & CAREER ALIGNMENT ASSESSMENT CHLOE KNIGHTEN

Chloe, Where Are We Trying to Take You?

One of the things I want A2 Achieve to help you figure out is not simply, “What should I major in?”

That question is too small. I want to know what kind of work you could enjoy, what kind of life you want that work to support, what you are naturally good at, what environments bring out the best in you, and what college experience will help you get there.

Your answers give us a surprisingly clear starting point. You describe yourself as outgoing, busy and chic. Your friends describe you as supportive, energetic and bold. Your parents see you as mature, confident and talkative, while your teachers see you as smart, open and creative.

Those words matter because they tell me that you are not simply a creative student. You are a **creative people person**. And that distinction is important.

You don't seem interested in spending your career sitting alone creating things that no one else sees. You enjoy ideas, aesthetics and design, but you also like conversation, activity, people and being involved in what is happening around you. That combination is one of the strongest clues in your assessment.

YOUR CAREER PROFILE

Based on everything you told me, I see four themes coming together:

- **Creativity**
- **People**
- **Execution**
- **Entrepreneurship**

You like design, whether it is interiors or fashion. You enjoy decorating and brainstorming ideas with someone else. You work in retail. You have already pursued an internship in interior design. And when asked what you would learn if you had unlimited resources, you did not say art, fashion or decorating; you said **how to run a successful company**.

That answer tells me quite a bit. You aren't only interested in being creative. You are interested in eventually **doing something with that creativity**.

That aligns directly with the career goal you gave us: owning your own design studio. I think that goal makes sense for you.

YOUR NATURAL STRENGTHS

Communication

You identified communication as one of your three strongest skills. Your assessment repeatedly supports that. You enjoy talking. People ask you for help with ideas and everyday choices. You work successfully with different types of customers in retail. You describe yourself as an extrovert. That is an important professional asset.

Design is much more client-facing than students sometimes realize. Being able to understand what someone wants, ask good questions, explain an idea, manage expectations and help someone make a decision can become just as valuable as having a good design eye.

Creativity

This is probably your most obvious career theme. You specifically named interior and fashion design as subjects you could discuss without preparation. You enjoy decorating spaces, developing ideas, working on your homecoming float and completing small creative projects.

Your interests are not confined to one narrow creative category, either. You seem interested in the broader idea of **how things look, feel and come together**. That can translate into several careers.

Getting Things Done

This one may eventually distinguish you from other creative students. You identified “getting things done” as one of your three strongest qualities. You also described finding a better system for archiving information at work. You have taken initiative in groups. You stay extremely busy. You have balanced school, work, activities and an internship.

Creative industries need people who generate ideas. Successful businesses need people who can actually **execute them**. The combination is valuable.

Understanding People

There is another ability underneath several of your answers that I want you to notice. You observe people.

You said you have noticed how people move or behave differently depending upon who is around. You try to act as a middle person during disagreements. You have learned through retail that different customers require different approaches.

That awareness can translate into client relations, sales, design consultation, leadership and entrepreneurship.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU

Your answers suggest that achievement matters to you, but achievement for you does not mean working every waking hour for the rest of your life. You gave us a very specific picture of yourself at 35.

You imagined taking your children to school, going to Pilates, working for several hours, coming home without overwhelming stress, making dinner and spending time with your family. You defined success as being **happy, stable and healthy**. I actually think this is an important career-planning answer.

You want ambition **and** autonomy. You want meaningful work, but you do not want work to own your entire life. That makes eventual entrepreneurship especially interesting for you, but we also need to make sure you understand that owning a business can require very intense work, particularly in the early years.

Your long-term vision may therefore look something like:

Learn the profession → gain experience → develop a clientele and network → understand the business side → eventually build a design practice that gives you greater control over your work and schedule.

That is much more realistic than expecting to graduate from college and immediately open a successful studio.

YOUR VALUES

One answer in your Student Discovery Assessment may be one of the most important things you told me. You said that you believe you have to work for what you want and cannot rely on someone else to make you successful. That is an entrepreneurial value.

You also demonstrated judgment when you chose to pass up a job opportunity because you did not believe you had enough time to do it well. That decision tells me something different than simply being ambitious. It shows that you are beginning to understand capacity, priorities and standards. Those will matter if you eventually manage clients, projects or employees.

YOUR BEST-FIT CAREER FAMILY

PRIMARY CAREER DIRECTION

Interior Design / Interior Architecture

This remains my strongest recommendation. You have already expressed the interest yourself, so A2 Achieve isn't manufacturing a career direction for you. More importantly, other pieces of your profile support it.

You are interested in spaces and aesthetics. You like working with people.

You enjoy creative problem-solving. You already have relevant professional exposure through Design Theory. You want to own a design studio. You enjoy the business and retail environment.

That is a much stronger foundation than simply saying you “like decorating.” The major question we still need to resolve is whether **Interior Design or Interior Architecture** is the better professional path. They overlap, but they are not interchangeable.

Your internship should help us answer this question. Pay close attention to what people at Design Theory actually do.

Which parts interest you?

- Client meetings?
- Selecting finishes?
- Space planning?
- Furniture?
- Color?
- Lighting?
- Construction documents?
- Renovations?
- Measurements?
- CAD drawings?
- Working with contractors?
- Project management?
- Business development?

The more specific your answers become, the easier it will be to select the right degree.

SECONDARY CAREER DIRECTIONS

I do **not** mean that I think you should abandon interior design. These are careers or specialties that appear compatible with the same strengths.

Residential Interior Design

This may be the most obvious path if you enjoy creating spaces directly with individuals and families. It combines aesthetics, relationships, problem-solving and client service. Your ability to communicate and understand different personalities could be a real strength here.

Hospitality and Commercial Design

Hotels, restaurants, boutiques, salons, offices and retail spaces could allow you to combine interiors with the part of you that likes business and branding. I would particularly keep an eye on **boutique and retail design**.

You specifically said that if money were not an issue, you would enjoy working in a boutique. That may sound unrelated to interior design at first. I don't think it is.

There is an intersection of:

fashion + interiors + retail + customer experience + branding

that could fit you extremely well.

Retail Visual Design / Visual Merchandising

This is worth exploring because you already have retail experience and a strong interest in presentation and aesthetics. Visual merchandising involves creating environments and displays that influence how customers experience products and spaces. You may ultimately decide professional interior design is much more interesting. But I would expose you to this world before college.

Design Entrepreneurship

This isn't your first job. It is your long-term lane. If owning a design studio continues to interest you through college, I would intentionally prepare for it. You will need more than design skills.

You will eventually need to understand:

- pricing
- client acquisition
- contracts
- marketing
- project management
- cash flow
- vendors
- employees or contractors
- sales
- branding
- customer relationships

That is why I would strongly consider pairing your design degree with coursework in **business, entrepreneurship or marketing**.

A POSSIBLE ADJACENT CAREER

Brand Experience / Creative Marketing

This is not currently my first recommendation, but I don't want to lose sight of it. Your interest in fashion, retail, people, communication, presentation and business could potentially translate into brand experience, experiential marketing, retail marketing or creative direction. I would place this in the **explore rather than pursue** category right now. Interior design has much stronger supporting evidence from your own answers.

CAREERS THAT APPEAR LESS ALIGNED

This part matters too. A career assessment should not simply tell you everything you *could* do. It should help us eliminate paths that do not fit.

You were very clear that you do not want a career in medicine because you are not interested in chemistry, biology or bodily fluids. Science is also the school subject you identified as your least favorite.

Based on the information you've given me, I would not spend much time exploring healthcare or laboratory-based STEM careers. I also do not currently see evidence that you would enjoy a career that is highly isolated, heavily theoretical or centered almost entirely on research.

You seem to gain energy from **people + projects + activity**.
That matters.

RECOMMENDED COLLEGE MAJOR

First Recommendation

Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design

Preferably a professionally accredited program with studio coursework, professional internships and strong preparation for actual design practice. This gives you the clearest pathway into the profession you currently describe.

ALTERNATE MAJOR TO INVESTIGATE

Interior Architecture

I want you to investigate this before deciding which term sounds better. Interior Architecture may involve considerably more architectural thinking, technical design, building systems and the built environment. You may love that.

Or you may discover that traditional professional Interior Design is much closer to the work you imagine yourself doing. We should use college visits and your Design Theory internship to figure this out.

THE MINOR I WOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER

Entrepreneurship

If your long-term goal remains owning your own studio, this is the first minor or secondary area I would investigate.

If a particular university does not have an entrepreneurship minor that fits easily into the design curriculum, then I would look at:

- Business
- Marketing
- Management
- Sales
- Small Business/Entrepreneurship certificates

I do **not** want a minor to interfere with completing a demanding professional design curriculum. The design degree comes first. But business literacy would be particularly valuable for you.

YOUR IDEAL COLLEGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

I do not think you need a college where you can disappear anonymously into lecture halls for four years.

Your best environment probably includes:

- Studio-based learning.
- Hands-on projects.
- Faculty interaction.
- Group collaboration.
- Internships.
- Real-world client or design projects.
- Creative spaces and labs.
- Opportunities to present your ideas.
- A professional program where students know each other.
- Access to business or entrepreneurship opportunities.

You will still have traditional academic classes, of course. But I think you are likely to thrive most when learning has an obvious **purpose and product**. You seem like the kind of student who wants to be doing something with what you learn.

YOUR IDEAL CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

You specifically said that meeting new people is one reason you want to attend college and that the social scene is what excites you most. I would not ignore that when choosing a school.

You appear more likely to enjoy:

- A traditional residential college environment.
- Strong campus life.
- School spirit.
- A significant student population.
- Organizations and social opportunities.
- A place where you can build a large circle of relationships.
- Potential sorority involvement if that interests you.
- A college town or campus-centered environment rather than an entirely commuter-driven college experience.

That helps explain why schools such as Auburn, Alabama, Mississippi State and Tennessee make sense to investigate. The program still has to work. But **campus fit matters for you**.

SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO WATCH

You told us your greatest fear about college is not succeeding academically. I don't want you to ignore that fear, but I also don't think the answer is choosing a school that will never challenge you.

You've already demonstrated that you can raise the academic bar. You moved from grade-level classes to advanced classes in a single year and maintained a reported 4.0 GPA. That is evidence.

What I want to understand before college is how you study, how you manage competing responsibilities and what happens when you encounter a class that does not come easily. Design programs can be demanding in ways that are different from high school academics. Studio classes can involve long projects, revisions and criticism. Developing those habits now matters.

SOMETHING ELSE I WANT YOU TO WATCH

You love being busy. That comes through clearly. But you have also already made one mature decision to turn down an opportunity because you knew you did not have enough time to do it well. Keep that lesson.

College will offer you 100 things you could do. You do not need to do 100 things. Particularly if you enter a demanding studio program, your goal will be to choose the experiences that matter rather than simply filling your calendar.

CAREER EXPERIENCES YOU ALREADY HAVE

You are actually ahead of many high-school students in career exploration. You already have:

- Retail employment.
- Customer-facing experience.
- An interior design internship.
- Exposure to different types of products and customers.
- Creative school projects.
- Leadership experience.
- Mentoring experience.

Your next step is not necessarily adding five new experiences. It is going **deeper** into the ones you already have.

A2 ACHIEVE CAREER EXPLORATION PLAN

1. Use Design Theory as your career laboratory.

Over the next several months, keep notes about what you see. Not simply what you do.

Ask yourself:

- What does a designer actually spend the day doing?
- Which parts look fun?
- Which parts look stressful?
- What surprised me?
- How much of the job is creative?

- How much is client management?
- How much is business?
- How much is technical?
- How much time is spent at a computer?
- How much time is spent with clients or vendors?
- Could I see myself doing this?

Those observations are career assessment.

2. Interview the owner or a senior designer.

You told us you want to own a studio. Ask someone who already does it.

I would want you to learn:

- How did you get started?
- What degree did you earn?
- What do you wish you had learned in college?
- What part of the business is hardest?
- How do you find clients?
- What percentage of your work is actually design?
- What do successful young designers do differently?
- Would you still choose this career?
- What should a high-school student do now to prepare?

That conversation could be worth more than another online career quiz.

3. Complete one independent design project.

Choose a real space. It could be your room, a home office, a bonus room, a fictional boutique, a dorm room, a coffee shop or another manageable environment.

Take it through a process:

- Identify the user.
- Identify the problem.
- Measure the space if applicable.
- Develop inspiration.
- Create a mood board.
- Select colors and materials.
- Consider furniture and layout.
- Create a budget.
- Revise the idea.
- Present the finished concept.

Now you are testing whether you like **design**, not simply looking at design.

4. Learn one beginner design tool.

This could be SketchUp or another platform used or recommended by your internship supervisor. You do not need to become an expert. I want you to experience what happens when design moves from an idea in your head to something you actually have to represent accurately.

5. Investigate the business side.

Because owning a design studio is part of your goal, I would also have you complete a very small entrepreneurship exercise. Imagine your future studio.

- Who would your customers be?
- What type of design would you specialize in?
- Why would someone hire you instead of another designer?
- How would clients find you?
- What would your brand feel like?
- What services would you sell?

That exercise may tell us a surprising amount about whether entrepreneurship truly excites you.

YOUR CURRENT COLLEGE & CAREER ALIGNMENT

Career Direction: STRONG

Interior Design currently has substantial alignment with your interests, strengths, experiences and future goals.

Major Clarity: MODERATE

We still need to distinguish Interior Design from Interior Architecture.

Career Exposure: STRONG FOR A HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENT

Your Design Theory internship and retail work give you meaningful early exposure.

Academic Alignment: STRONG

Your GPA and increased course rigor support college-level study, although we are continuing to work on standardized testing and preparation for a demanding design curriculum.

Entrepreneurial Alignment: STRONG POTENTIAL

Your stated goal of owning a studio, interest in learning how to run a company, retail experience and independence all support further exploration of entrepreneurship.

College Environment Clarity: MODERATE TO STRONG

You appear to want a traditional college experience with significant social interaction and campus life. We now need visits to determine size, location and culture preferences more precisely.

Financial Fit: NOT YET ASSESSED

We still need family budget, scholarship expectations and affordability parameters before calling any college a true fit.

MY RECOMMENDATION TO YOU

Chloe, if you were my student and we had to choose your direction today, I would tell you:

Stay on the design path.

You have given me enough evidence that I think Interior Design deserves serious pursuit. But I would not lock you into one exact version of that future yet. Your job over senior year is to test it.

Use your internship. Visit design schools. Look at student studio work. Ask designers difficult questions. Learn a little software. Complete a design project. Explore the business side. Then pay attention to yourself.

Are you more interested after doing the real work, or less? That is what career exploration is supposed to tell us.

Right now, I think your strongest long-term direction looks something like:

Interior Design → Professional Design Experience → Business/Entrepreneurship Development → Design Studio Ownership

And within that pathway, I would especially expose you to:

- **Residential Design**
- **Boutique/Retail Design**
- **Hospitality Design**
- **Client-Focused Interior Design**
- **Design Entrepreneurship**

because those areas seem particularly compatible with the Chloe emerging from your assessments.

YOUR BIGGER PICTURE

One of your answers may be the best description of what we're actually trying to build. When you imagined success at 35, you did not describe a title or salary. You said: **happy, stable and healthy**. That is important.

The goal of this process is not to pick the most impressive major. It is to help you build toward a life that actually fits you.

You want creativity.

You want people.

You want independence.

You want financial and personal stability.

You want a family life.

You want meaningful work without constant stress.

And you seem to want the satisfaction of eventually building something that belongs to you.

That gives us a pretty good compass. Now our job is to choose the college, program, experiences and opportunities that move you in that direction.