

Making the right career choice after matric – The Academy for Environmental Leadership

By [Prof Leopoldt van Huyssteen](#), issued by [Stone](#)

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Are you in matric and worried about what to do next year? You are not alone. Many school-leaving youth face a significant choice challenge on what to study after high school. At 18 and 19, most people are unsure of what they want to do as a career and cannot make sense of their real options.



The challenges with choosing your career or study path may include lack of clarity, uncertainty, parental and peer pressure, economic constraints, limited access to information, academic performance barriers, anxiety to make quick decisions, fear of making the wrong choice, the changing job market, and rapid technological changes. These factors can make it difficult for you to make informed decisions and make the right choice for your future.

Before diving into any specific field of study, you must introspect and identify your interests, passions, and aptitudes. Consider what subjects you excelled in during high school and what activities bring you joy. Career assessments and counselling can also provide valuable insights into potential career paths. Workplaces are nowadays highly fluid, and jobs come and go. You may one day end up in jobs that don't exist right now. So, you must be prepared for lifelong study to remain relevant.

Where to start – know your study type

Some students pursue higher education, often in specialised fields like science, commerce, humanities or arts in tertiary education institutions. However, not everyone acquires the matric marks to qualify immediately for their programmes of choice. Vocational-orientated, academically less challenging training may be your best option instead of starting with higher education.

Vocational-oriented training provides practical skills and insights directly applicable to specific jobs. This path is well-suited for students who prefer a more practical approach to learning. Suppose you also have a passion for the environment and

sustainable development, but haven't obtained the marks for a degree programme. In that case, you might also consider academically less challenging training in these fields. Planet Earth needs many more qualified environmental custodians to enter industries where the environment is at risk. Studying in an environmental direction can be your first step towards a dream career.

With growing concerns about climate change and environmental sustainability, studying environmental science can lead to impactful careers in conservation, renewable energy, and environmental policy. Sustainable development programmes focus on creating solutions for balancing economic growth with environmental and social considerations. Graduates may work in NGOs, government agencies, or private companies committed to sustainability.

Consider a year at the AEL

The Academy for Environmental Leadership South Africa (AEL) offers a unique academic year. AEL follows a specifically structured approach for optimal learning with job readiness as one of the outcomes. The teaching and learning environment equips students with the necessary skills and insight to excel in the next defining chapter of their lives. Our students gain knowledge of specific elements of biology, ecology, soil science, geography, chemistry, physics, social sciences and environmental legislation through personal development and a comprehensive understanding of conservation ecology.

Students who do not have an exemption to study a specific programme at university are supported while studying the AEL's Higher Certificate in Conservation Ecology programme to better their maths and science school marks. This is achieved by providing the opportunity to improve their understanding of these subjects through a tutoring programme preparing them to rewrite these subjects in June.

Applications for the new academic year are still open, and classes start on 19 February 2024. Prospective students currently in matric or who just completed matric can apply to enter this programme if they meet the minimum admission requirements.

Studies at the AEL will transform you

AEL graduates are well-rounded, well-trained individuals who will bring a positive change in environmental management regardless of what career they will eventually follow. The world needs people with a heart for conservation in every profession and job. Examples of directions in which our alumni are already studying are conservation ecology, wildlife management, agriculture, agricultural economics, accounting, engineering, business sciences, winemaking, and law.

The AEL experience ensures awareness of the impact of responsible environmental management on society, the understanding that everyone has a responsibility to reduce humankind's impact on the environment, and a lifelong interest in environmental conservation science. Studying at the AEL might just be the best opportunity you have for a fulfilling career and a sustainable future.

Studying at the AEL is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It is a year filled with adventure, self-discovery, making lifelong friends, getting up close and personal with nature, and encouraging you to leave your comfort zone and develop as a leader.

At AEL, you learn, live and experience student life in a safe and picturesque environment.

Choosing what to do or what to study after matric is a crucial decision that requires careful consideration of personal interests, career goals, and market demands. Whether opting for academically more challenging higher education or vocational-orientated, academically less challenging higher education, staying informed about evolving industries and emerging trends is essential. Ultimately, the key is to embark on a career path that aligns with your passions and aspirations, setting the stage for a fulfilling and prosperous future.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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