



User's Guide

WELCOME TO SIGI PLUS®

What is SIGI PLUS?

SIGI PLUS — pronounced “siggy plus” — is a very special tool that can help you to plan your career. It was developed by a team of researchers and specialists at Educational Testing Service. ETS has been a leader in the development of career planning software for more than 20 years, and SIGI PLUS (System of Interactive Guidance and Information PLUS) is one of the most advanced education and career planning systems available. It combines the unique capabilities of the computer with thoroughly researched information about occupations, work-related values, interests, skills, educational programs, and more.

How can a computer help me decide on a career?

SIGI PLUS can help you examine your work-related values, interests, and skills systematically. Once you enter your own preferences, the program searches its built-in library and finds those careers that most closely match your preferences. It can save you literally *days* of leafing through catalogs and career books, and because its built-in library is so large, it may well find career options you never knew existed.

What can a computer know about me?

A computer is only a machine. It knows what you tell it; nothing more. That's why it's so important for you to think hard and respond honestly to the computer's questions. Even if it asks a question you've never really considered or that you find hard to answer, make the best choice you can. In this way, the career possibilities SIGI PLUS presents will be as accurate as possible.

What does SIGI PLUS include?

SIGI PLUS consists of an introduction followed by eight core sections, each covering an important step in the career planning and decision-making process. Since people have different goals, you may find some sections more

useful than others. SIGI PLUS has been specially put together to show you how to choose the path through the system that's best for you.

The INTRODUCTION shows you how easy it is to navigate through the program and what the other sections contain. Afterward, you can decide where you want to go in the system.

If you're using SIGI PLUS for the first time, you may want to go through the entire program. Or, if you like, SIGI PLUS can recommend a pathway through the system to suit your situation. If you have specific questions, you can also go right to the section that deals with them. For example, if you want to find occupations related to your field of study, you can go directly to the SEARCH section and do a search by major. Or, if you want to find out more about a specific occupation, you can go directly to INFORMATION.

Because SIGI PLUS is flexible, you can use the program in a variety of ways to meet your individual career planning needs.

In this guide, you'll find descriptions of all the sections in SIGI PLUS along with brief explanations of how you can use the information in those sections.

1. INTRODUCTION

What's in SIGI PLUS?

In INTRODUCTION, you get an overview of SIGI PLUS and can choose which section you want to use next. You can:

- see clearly what's in the whole system
- decide which sections apply to you
- get a recommended pathway through the system

2. SELF-ASSESSMENT

What do I want? What am I good at?

In SELF-ASSESSMENT, you can:

- look at work-related *values* and decide what's most important to you
- choose the main *interest fields* you want to use at work
- look at various *activities* and decide which ones you like and can do well
- play a values game to help you clarify your work-related values

3. SEARCH

What occupations might I like?

In SEARCH, you can:

- choose features you want in your work
- choose features you want to avoid in your work
- receive a list of occupations that match what you asked for
- choose a college major and see a list of related occupations

4. INFORMATION

What occupations might I like?

In INFORMATION, you can choose one or two occupations at a time and ask specific questions about them, including:

- what skills each occupation requires
- possibilities of advancement in the field
- what the potential income is
- the national employment outlook in the field
- what the education requirements are

5. SKILLS

Can I do what's required?

In SKILLS, you can:

- see specific skills required for any occupation in SIGI PLUS or for management
- rate yourself on these skills
- see how job skills are applied in a chosen field. For example, SIGI PLUS can distinguish between the sorts of negotiating skills required of social workers, police officers, sales representatives, and foreign service officers.

6. PREPARING

Can I do what's required?

In PREPARING, you can:

- see typical preparation paths to any occupation in SIGI PLUS
- see the typical training or college education needed for any occupation in SIGI PLUS. (Then SIGI PLUS permits you to see not only courses and course descriptions, but even the work tasks that must be learned.)
- consider four important factors related to preparing: finding time, finding money, handling the difficulty, and staying motivated
- estimate your likelihood of completing preparation

7. COPING

Can I do what's required?

In COPING, you can:

- find out how to get practical help with issues related to preparing for or changing a career, for example:

finding time and money, arranging care for others, relocating, working at home, or obtaining academic credit for what you already know

- get suggestions about how to handle worries common to adults in a college or training situation, such as time management, fitting in, competing

8. DECIDING

What's right for me?

In DECIDING, you can look at as many as three occupations at a time. For each one you can ask:

- What are the rewards? Will I enjoy this occupation?
- What are my chances? Can I get in?
- All things considered, would this be a good choice for me?

9. NEXT STEPS

How do I put my plan into action?

In NEXT STEPS, you start moving toward your career goals by planning short-term strategies such as:

- getting more education or training
- developing new skills
- proving you can do the work
- building a network of "contacts"
- writing a resume (You can see a sample resume.)
- writing a cover letter
- dealing with obstacles
- applying for jobs

GETTING STARTED

What are the system requirements?

To use SIGI PLUS, your computer must have:

- Access to a web browser – Internet Explorer® recommended
- 64 MB RAM
- Pentium II or better processor

How long will it take me to use SIGI PLUS?

That depends on what you want. You can go through all the sections systematically or only those you think apply to you. A section can take anywhere from a few minutes to half an hour. If you prefer, you can work on just a few sections at a time and then come back for another session. You can set your own pace, and you can stop whenever you want.

How private are my responses?

The system maintains confidentiality through its Student Record-Keeping capability. When you log in the first time, you choose a user ID and password. You simply enter your user ID and password when signing on again, and the

computer matches it with your record file. Only you know what information you've put into SIGI PLUS. Please note that your user record will be saved for the current academic year only.

How can I remember all the information that SIGI PLUS provides?

You can make a printout of all the information provided by SIGI PLUS that you want to save. At the end of this booklet is a checklist of key printouts you can make and directions for making them. This list will help you keep your printouts organized.

How do I get started?

You've already begun just by reading this booklet. Continue on with the questions and answers and look at the list of key printouts you can make. Then go ahead and start to use SIGI PLUS. The INTRODUCTION appears automatically — after that, the program will guide you.

Can I erase an entry I've made?

Yes. Simply click the BACK button that appears on the SIGI PLUS screen, then enter your response and follow the instructions SIGI PLUS provides for moving to the next screen. To maintain the integrity of your activities, avoid using your browser's BACK, FORWARD, or other buttons when you are working in the SELF-ASSESSMENT, SEARCH, and DECIDING sections.

What are the questionnaires that appear in SIGI PLUS?

The first time you begin SIGI PLUS and every time you exit, you will be asked some information about yourself and your experiences with the program. Answering the questions will take only a few minutes of your time, and all of your responses will be completely confidential.

Is online HELP available?

SIGI PLUS includes an online HELP section that provides information about the various sections and other valuable tips. Simply click on the SIGI PLUS logo that appears on each screen.

What if I encounter technical difficulties when using SIGI PLUS?

Contact your institution's Web server administrator.

Where can I send comments about or suggestions for SIGI PLUS?

Please email your comments or suggestions to sigiplus@ets.org.

YOUR SIGI PLUS PRINTOUTS

Why do I need printouts?

SIGI PLUS provides a great amount of information — too much to remember. Printouts give you an accurate record of your work and are a valuable resource in any meetings you might have with a counselor.

How do I get a printout?

You can get a printout of any SIGI PLUS screen. This is helpful because it allows you to keep a permanent record of the work you've done. You can keep these printouts for reference and bring them to any sessions you may have with a career planning professional. To print a screen, click your browser's PRINT button. The computer will do the rest. If you do not wish to make a printout, simply move on by clicking NEXT or CLOSE.

On the next page, there's a list of key printouts you can make with SIGI PLUS. As you make each printout, check it off in the space provided. If you use SIGI PLUS more than once, make a duplicate Printout Checklist. Keep your printouts in a folder to protect them from damage and loss.

SIGI PLUS PRINTOUT CHECKLIST - On Page 4

SIGI PLUS PRINTOUT CHECKLIST

Name: _____ Date: _____

Check off the printouts you've made and file them in this order.

1. INTRODUCTION
 - 1-1 What you can do in each section
 - 1-2 Your recommended pathway
2. SELF-ASSESSMENT
 - 2-1 Summary of values
 - 2-2 How you weighted your values
 - 2-3 Fields you're interested in
 - 2-4 Your most important activities
 - 2-5 Section summary
3. SEARCH
 - 3-1 List of occupations/features asked for
 - 3-2 Why an occupation is not on the list
 - 3-3 List of occupations related to a specific college major
4. INFORMATION
 - 4-1 Definition of occupation
 - 4-2 Description of work activities
 - 4-3 Typical job titles/specialties/military
 - 4-4 Work settings: indoor/outdoor
 - 4-5 Special problems/satisfactions
 - 4-6 Educational requirements
 - 4-7 Examples of courses
 - 4-8 Specific occupational training
 - 4-9 Personal qualifications
 - 4-10 Skills required
 - 4-11 Other requirements, experience
 - 4-12 Beginning income
 - 4-13 Average income
 - 4-14 Top earning possibilities
 - 4-15 How earnings vary
 - 4-16 Contribution to society
 - 4-17 Leadership
 - 4-18 Prestige
 - 4-19 Leisure
 - 4-20 Independence
 - 4-21 Variety
 - 4-22 Interest fields
 - 4-23 Employment outlook
 - 4-24 Where employed
 - 4-25 Security
 - 4-26 Advancement
 - 4-27 Where to find out more
 - 4-28 All of the above
5. SKILLS
 - 5-1 Summary of skills
 - 5-2 What you've said about yourself as a manager
 - 5-3 Section summary
6. PREPARING
 - 6-1 Overview of how to prepare
 - 6-2 Formal education or training
 - 6-3 Learning by doing
 - 6-4 Chances of preparing
 - 6-5 Section summary
 - 6-7 Educational/training options
7. COPING
 - 7-1 Record of time use
 - 7-4 Four-step method to estimate total preparation time
 - 7-5 To calculate preparation costs
 - 7-6 Internships
 - 7-7 Information about financial aid
 - 7-8 Child care
 - 7-9 Care for adults
 - 7-11 To find accredited home-study courses
 - 7-19 Where to write for information about testing programs
 - 7-19 CLEP
 - 7-19 Regents College Exams
 - 7-19 DANTES
 - 7-19 TECEP
 - 7-19 Credit for military training
 - 7-20 Colleges offering credit
 - 7-21 Credit for training
8. DECIDING
 - 8-1 Where occupations showed up on your Deciding Square
9. NEXT STEPS
 - 9-1 Overview of how to prepare
 - 9-2 Skills required
 - 9-3 Getting more education or training
 - 9-4 Developing new skills
 - 9-5 Proving you can do the work
 - 9-6 Building a network of contacts
 - 9-7 Writing a resume
 - 9-8 Sample resume
 - 9-9 Writing a cover letter
 - 9-10 Dealing with obstacles
 - 9-11 Applying for jobs
10. SIGN-OFF
 - 10-1 You're now leaving SIGI PLUS