

What does it take to be great?

What does it take to be a great actor, geologist, academic, or chemist? This resource incorporates a brainstorming exercise, some research on 'discipline role models', and a self-assessment. It is even more effective if you have completed the ['Find your mission'](#) and ['Plot your preferences and strengths'](#) activities.

Brainstorming

The brainstorming exercise takes only 10 minutes. On your own or with friends, come up with a list of what it takes to be a great professional in your field - a great composer/pharmacist/lawyer/teacher etc. Keep the list for later.

Researching

The research task concerns a discipline hero – someone you admire. If possible, do this activity early in semester so that you can gather information over a number of weeks. You can explore the person's work ethics, expertise, personal values, and work experience. You may be able to find interviews, a CV, or a biography online. You may be able to contact your discipline hero and ask some questions about what the work really involves and what it takes to be successful.

Ask how the person defines success (you may be surprised at the answer). You could also look at historic figures to see what their lives and work looked like. Did the historic discipline heroes experience hardship and failure along the way? Was there a gendered difference that persists today? If you can, talk to peers about what you found. Dig deep! At the end of the research task, look at the list you made earlier and amend these items, noting what has changed and why.

Self-assessment

The self-assessment enables you to apply what you have learned to your own career thinking and professional identities. Areas you identified as relevant but in need of development should be positioned as personal challenges – things to work on rather than barriers. Similarly, strengths and interests contribute to self-efficacy and become sought-after attributes in team activities.

The self-assessment to follow comes from music academic Michael Hannan from Southern Cross University.

You don't necessarily need a detailed list such as this one, but it's a great idea to add some of your own ideas to the lists produced by the students. In accredited courses, use the accreditation requirements as a starting point. Ideally, share some experiences with peers and get other ideas from advertisements for work and from career stories.

The self-assessment is best completed individually as a guided reflection, although you might like to talk through what you have written. Sometimes talking through just the items marked 'to develop' leads to some useful discussion and confidence building. Keep an e-copy of your work, because it will come in very useful each time you consider different future roles.

Self-Assessment – Music Example

Make a list of your own musicianship and allied skills and rate them on a scale of one to five, with five being highly developed skills. Refer to the lists generated earlier and to the source list below. Rate each of these skills first in terms of how relevant you think it is to your career, and then in terms of how developed it is.

Make it count!

Enlist a colleague and review the self-assessment items together. Next, create a mock application for work, using some of the key terms that make someone great in your field.

Create the application on the basis of your own skills and expertise, or create one for someone who is at the top of your field – what would their application look like?

	Current Skill Level 1 - 5	Relevance 1 - 5
Performance Skills		
Instrumental or vocal technique		
Playing by ear		
Memorisation (of music learnt by ear)		
Memorisation (of notated music)		
Music score reading (interpretation of notation conventions)		
Sight-reading (fully notated music)		
Sight-reading (chord charts)		
Sight-singing		
Transposition by ear		
Transposition from notated music		
Ability to keep a rigid tempo in performance		
Ability to maintain good intonation in performance		
Performance practice knowledge (of music from different periods, genres or cultures)		
Ensemble performance skills		
Improvisation skills (style-based)		
Repertoire knowledge		
Rehearsal skills		
Music direction skills		
Conducting skills		
Technology Skills		
Live sound reinforcement		
Lighting and projection		
Sound design		
Stage management		
Sound recording, editing, signal processing, and mixing		
Music production		
Sound and lighting systems design		
Other Technologies		
Multimedia		
Website design		
Graphic design		
Desktop publishing		

Business Skills		
Knowledge of industry structures		
Career planning		
Intellectual property		
Standard contracts (for performance, recording, publishing, agency, management, merchandising)		
Negotiation		
Self-promotion		
Public relations		
Entrepreneurship		
Networking		
Audience development		
Small business management (business structures, financing, market analysis, marketing, marketing technologies, business planning, insurance, business communications, office management, office technologies, etc.)		
Project management (planning, team building, quality control, budgeting, sponsorships, grant applications, conflict management, time management, project evaluation)		
Stagecraft Skills		
Stage planning		
Stage etiquette		
Stage movement and gesture		
Communication with fellow musicians and crew		
Communication with the audience		
Visual image		
Aural Recognition Skills		
Intervals		
Rhythm and metre		
Harmony		
Identification of instruments and performance techniques		
Frequencies: cycles per second of tones		
Electronically-produced audio signal processing (effects)		
Tempo: beats per minute (bpm)		
Textural and structural techniques		
Notation Skills		
Chord chart writing		
Scoring		
Transcription skills (notating performances from recordings)		
Music notation software programming skills		

Theoretical Understandings		
Music analysis methods		
Harmonic theory		
Acoustical theory		
Music cognition		
Historical knowledge		
Knowledge of other musical cultures		
Composition Skills		
Orchestration and arranging		
Electronic orchestration (programming)		
Composition techniques (of different periods and genres)		
Lyric writing		
Synthesis		
Synchronisation of music to image		
Generis Skills		
Written and oral communication		
Creativity		
Social interaction		
Leadership		
Computer literacy		
Information searching		
Critical analysis/evaluation		
Cultural awareness		
Professionalism/ethics		
Understanding of social justice/ethics		
Reflective practice		
Teaching Skills		
Teaching approach		
Knowledge of materials and resources		
Ability to engage and motivate students		
Ensemble direction		
Class and parent management		
Organisational and small business skills		
A good attitude		

This resource was developed by Michael Hannan (Southern Cross University) and Dawn Bennett (Curtin University).