

Appendix 3-G APS Longitudinal Cohort Exit Interview Guides

Academic Pathways Study
Exit Interview
Technical Public Institution/Urban Private University/
Suburban Private University/Large Public University
2005-2006

1. Can you tell me about your reasons for majoring in engineering when you started at (name of school)?

Note: For this question in particular, it will be worth knowing how a given subject has answered this question (or similar questions) previously. We wouldn't suggest being confrontational (i.e., "But wait, that's not what you said last year..."), but previous responses can usefully inform follow-ups for this question.

This can be a very useful question analytically, in that it can be compared to what students said in their Year 1 interviews. We expect that students might answer this question retrospectively, from the perspective of someone having left.

Please probe the answer to gauge whether the student had a prior connection to engineering through family or friends or some other type of exposure. Did the student's understanding of what engineering would be like change? Question #4, below, gets at this as well.

2. Think about your expectations when you started last year. Did things go as you expected? What did? What didn't?
3. What's your current major? How did you choose XXX? How is it going?
- 4.a. When did you first start to think about switching out of engineering? (or, if more appropriate, into their current major – some students might frame leaving engineering as a positive switch into something that was more appealing to them.)

Follow up with, e.g., "What was going on at the time to make you start considering this?," and explore each of the things they discuss.

- 4.b. So from that point, can you talk me through the process until now?

Follow up with, e.g., "What was switching like for you? Were there difficult moments? Were there moments when you doubted the direction you were headed

in? Were there moments when you were certain you were headed in the right direction? Were there any particularly important events/moments/etc.?" Any specifics should be explored further for more detail.

5.a. I'd like to ask about some of your specific experiences. Let's start with your classes. Did you have any classes that you would say were particularly good ones? (*Follow up on why they were good, looking for details.*) Did you have any classes that you would say were particularly bad ones? (*Follow up on why they were good, looking for details.*)

5.b. How about out of class? Any particularly good/bad experiences? (*Follow up as above*)

*Note: If student volunteers non-academic out of class experiences, let them talk about those. We'd suggest then directing them back to out of class academic experiences (e.g., tutoring, office hours, etc.) **The mentor questions might come up here as well.***

6. How would you say you're feeling at this point about leaving engineering?

7. What's different for you now that you're (no longer an engineering major/ an xxx major)?

8. What's ahead for you? What are you planning for when you leave (name of school)?

9. If you could talk to the people who run the engineering program, what would you tell them?

10. Do you have anything to add to what you've said so far?

Academic Pathways Study
Exit Interview
Large Public University
2005-2006

1. Can you tell me about your reasons for intending to major in engineering when you started at LPub?

1a. Were you aware of the engineering admission process?

Note: For this question in particular, it will be worth knowing how a given subject has answered this question (or similar questions) previously. We wouldn't suggest being confrontational (i.e., "But wait, that's not what you said last year..."), but previous responses can usefully inform follow-ups for this question.

This can be a very useful question analytically, in that it can be compared to what students said in their Year 1 interviews. We expect that students might answer this question retrospectively, from the perspective of someone having left.

Please probe the answer to gauge whether the student had a prior connection to engineering through family or friends or some other type of exposure. Did the student's understanding of what engineering would be like change? Question #4, below, gets at this as well.

2. Think about your expectations when you started last year. Did things go as you expected? What did? What didn't?

3. What's your current major? How did you choose XXX? How is it going?

4.a. When did you first start to think about switching out of engineering? (or, if more appropriate, into their current major – some students might frame leaving engineering as a positive switch into something that was more appealing to them.)

Follow up with, e.g., "What was going on at the time to make you start considering this?," and explore each of the things they discuss.

4.b. So from that point, can you talk me through the process until now?

Follow up with, e.g., "What was switching like for you? Were there difficult moments? Were there moments when you doubted the direction you were headed in? Were there moments when you were certain you were headed in the right direction? Were there any particularly important events/moments/etc.?" Any specifics should be explored further for more detail.

5.a. I'd like to ask about some of your specific experiences. Let's start with your classes. Did you have any classes that you would say were particularly good ones? (*Follow up on why they were good, looking for details.*) Did you have any classes that you would say were particularly bad ones? (*Follow up on why they were good, looking for details.*)

5.b. How about out of class? Any particularly good/bad experiences? (*Follow up as above*)

*Note: If student volunteers non-academic out of class experiences, let them talk about those. We'd suggest then directing them back to out of class academic experiences (e.g., tutoring, office hours, etc.) **The mentor questions might come up here as well.***

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