Here are Some Guidelines for Getting Started

**Take Inventory.**
Are you going to college for the first time or re-entering after an absence? Determine how many prior college credits you have, including non-credit courses and any life or work experience skills. Even if the subjects don't seem applicable to a major, they might count as elective credits (see definition below) toward your degree. If you are still undecided, don't worry. You're allowed to be undecided for a short amount of time, and special advisors will help you select course work that will apply toward general academic requirements. But ultimately you will need to decide on a **major** (a primary course of study, usually about eight to twelve courses in a specific discipline).

A **minor** is a secondary course of study, generally consisting of about six to eight courses in a chosen discipline area. **Electives** are courses outside your major and minor subject areas, while **general education** courses are core courses required for a degree program in a variety of subject areas.

Once you have defined your educational goals, you can determine the program of study:

**Certificate.**
A certificate signifies the completion of a specialized number of courses, generally required for vocational or technical training.

**Associate Degree.**
An associate's degree is generally the completion of two years of full-time academic study or a total of 60 semester credit hours. Associate of Arts (A.A.) and Associate of Science (A.S.) degrees are offered by LBCC in a **variety of majors**.

**Associate Degree for Transfer.**
The Associate in Arts for Transfer (AA-T) or the Associate in Science for Transfer (AS-T) is intended for students who plan to complete a bachelor's degree in a similar major at a California State University (CSU) campus.

**To help you with this LBCC offers** a variety of Academic and Vocational Programs at both campuses. The college catalog informs you on policies,
offices, and institutional procedures. Every major is identified through curriculum guides, which provides a listing of academic requirements and corresponding information. Every course is described through its Course Outline. Here research courses you are thinking about taking to get an idea of its rigor, difficulty, and scope.

**Complete any Testing and Admissions and Financial Aid Applications.** Before you can take any classes you must enroll in the college. This is called “matriculation”. This can be a bit cumbersome but all students must apply and matriculate through an established process.

**To help you with this LBCC offers a New Student Checklist.** Here you will find a step-by-step process to get started with the bureaucratic necessitates of a new collegian. There are offices and people who are available to help you with your beginning steps: Assessment & Orientation, Admissions & Records, Financial Aid should be where you begin.

**Personal Assessment: Define Your Educational Goals.** Before you can determine a career path you need a personal assessment to help you clarify your interests and define your educational goals. Why do you want to go back to college? Is your goal to change careers, grow professionally, or finish a degree program started years ago? By focusing on your motivation, you can best define your educational goals.

**To help you with this LBCC offers Career Counseling** to help you pinpoint your interests and help you decide on a career path. This office also offers several career inventories to help you identify occupations best suited to your talents and temperament.

**Research Academic Options.** Having a variety of educational offerings help re-entry students' complicated schedules. Having convenient campuses locations contributes flexibility in your busy environment.

**To help you with this LBCC offers two campuses** within the Long Beach city limits as well as some off-campus sites for selected courses throughout the city. Courses are presented throughout the day but also at night, on weekends, and early mornings, some one-day a week. Accelerated courses are offered for some of the basic skills (English, math, and reading). Accelerated courses can cover a full semester's instruction in six or eight week formats. These courses are learning intense, but help to quickly attain college credit for degree completion. While offered selectively during the fall and spring semesters, they are exclusively offered during winter or summer sessions. For the ultimate in flexibility you may want to investigate the many courses and some certificates that are offered through distance learning (online via the Internet only).
**Make an Academic Plan.**
Once you decide to matriculate, your next step is to make an academic plan. A counselor can help you decide which courses to take, and whether you should take any refresher courses (for example, in English or math). This plan will serve as your academic guide and timetable to keep you on course to your goal.

**To help you with this LBCC offers Academic Counseling** with counselors that are committed to assisting with your student development. Discuss any concerns you may have about attending college with a trained counselor, identify your goals, and select your course of study. For your convenience, **Online Counseling** is also offered. Here counselors respond to quick and common questions as well as recent “Hot Topics” and provide important dates and help links. Review and management of your academic plan is handled electronically through your **Viking Student System** account. You should review this plan periodically to determine how it fits your lifestyle: if it gives you enough time for work, family, and other activities.

**Build a Strong Support System.**
A major reason for returning adults not completing their academic goal is not having a strong support system. Transitioning from workplace or home to student can be difficult and present obstacles, especially if you lack support from employer, family, or friends.

Persistence is one of the most common hurdles facing adults who return to college. Adult students generally commute, may be married, work full or part-time, and have children. Handling an academic workload while dealing with these realities can cause some to drop out. Others might begin a program of study, to find they have to “put it on hold” due to life events (i.e., health or other issues).

Having a strong support system can help adults facing these challenges. While ultimate responsibility rests with you, it’s also up to you to reach out if needed. Involve family and friends in the excitement and importance of learning. Demonstrate to your employer how your goals will benefit the company as well as yourself. The more involved others are in your success, the more they will be on your team if you need them.

**To help you with this LBCC offers library, Academic Computing Center, and Tutoring services at accessible times and at both campuses.** Study skills are also part of your support system and you can find people, courses, and resources willing to help you in the **Learning & Academic Resource Department.** Take a study skills class or use the Success Center to help you with your classes. Instructors are available before and after class hours for quick consultations and take advantage of your professors’ office hours to answer any in-depth questions or seek help if you are struggling with a topic or assignment. Also you will find a broad **Student Life Program** that includes government, clubs, recreation activities, leadership programs, and a volunteer services center.
Finally, if you are a veteran we would direct you to our Veterans Services Office where you will find a supportive environment that will assist you with your benefits and other resources.