COMPASS

A FUTURE-PROOF CAREER FRAMEWORK

A structured method for choosing your university, major, and country, built to stay relevant as AI reshapes work

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Version 1.0

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Part 1 Introduction

What COMPASS is, and who it is for

COMPASS is a method, not a verdict. It takes a student from “I have no idea what to do” to a concrete, personal roadmap: a primary path, real backup options, target universities, the skills to build, and a year-by-year plan. It is written for Lebanese high school students standing at the hardest decision of their young lives, and for the parents, teachers, and counselors trying to help them make it well.

It is built to be used alongside any AI model. You bring the honest information about yourself. The AI brings live data and structured reasoning. COMPASS is the bridge between the two, the set of questions and tests that turns a vague conversation into a defensible plan. The framework itself does not expire, because at every point where the answer depends on current facts, it tells you and the AI to go and search for those facts first.

The problem COMPASS solves

At seventeen or eighteen, a Lebanese student is asked to make decisions that shape the next decade, and the information they need to make those decisions well is not in the room. Which majors actually lead to work. What a degree truly costs once living expenses are counted. Whether a field will still be hiring by the time they graduate. Which countries are realistic given their passport, their language, and their family budget. The student who happens to have a well-connected parent or an experienced counselor gets answers. Everyone else guesses, follows a friend, or does what sounds prestigious, and discovers the truth years and thousands of dollars later.

I built COMPASS because I lived that information gap and watched classmates make irreversible choices without the map they deserved. Career guidance in most Lebanese schools is thin, generic, and disconnected from how the world is actually moving. This framework is my attempt to put a real map in the hands of any student who wants one, regardless of who their parents know.

> **Why this exists**
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> *The decision of where to study, what to study, and whether to leave the country is one of the most consequential a young Lebanese person makes, and it is usually made with the least support. COMPASS is meant to level that field. It does not replace a great mentor. It makes sure that a student without one is not flying blind.*

How to use this framework

Work through the parts in order. Part 2 builds an honest profile of who you are, what you can afford, and what you actually want. Part 3 walks the single biggest decision, whether to study in Lebanon or abroad, and then maps the realistic options on each side. Part 4 selects majors and careers and runs each one through the five-to-ten-year test, the heart of this document. Part 5 turns all of it into a written roadmap you can act on and revisit.

Throughout, you will see boxes that instruct you to run a live search before trusting a number. Take them seriously. Rankings, tuition, living costs, visa rules, and the job market all move. The framework stays accurate precisely because it never asks you to trust a figure that has gone stale. When you sit down with an AI model to use COMPASS, your job is to feed it your honest profile and to make it search for current data at every one of those points.

What this is, and what it is not

COMPASS gives academic and professional career guidance. That is its lane and it stays in it. It is not medical advice, it is not psychological or mental health advice, and it is not a substitute for a doctor, a therapist, or a counselor.

Choosing a future is stressful, and that stress is normal. But if you are carrying something heavier than the ordinary weight of a big decision, if you feel persistently hopeless, overwhelmed, or unsafe, please talk to someone you trust: a parent, a teacher, a school counselor, or a qualified professional. That conversation matters more than any roadmap, and it is the right first step. COMPASS will still be here when you are ready to plan.

Part 2 Student Profile Intake

Good advice is impossible without an honest picture of the person receiving it. Answer the following as truthfully as you can, including the parts that are uncomfortable. Vague inputs produce vague plans. The more precise and honest you are here, the sharper everything that follows becomes. Write your answers down, because you will feed them into the decision tree in Part 3 and the selection logic in Part 4.

Academic profile

- **System and stream.** Your school system: French baccalaureate, Lebanese baccalaureate, or an international system such as IB, SAT, or A-Levels. This shapes which universities and countries you can enter most easily.
- **Grades.** Your real grades, not your hoped-for grades. Your average, and where you sit relative to your class if you know it.
- **Strongest and weakest subjects.** The subjects where you are genuinely strong, and the ones you struggle with. Be specific. “I am strong in math and physics, weak in memorization-heavy subjects” is more useful than “I am a good student.”

Strengths and interests

- **Natural strengths.** What you are naturally good at, the things people come to you for. Analysis, persuasion, building things, organizing people, creative work, working with your hands.
- **Interests.** What energizes you, what you would happily do for free, what you lose track of time doing. This is data, not decoration. The work you can sustain is the work you will get good at.

Track record so far

- **Achievements.** Your mini-CV: activities, projects, jobs, competitions, volunteering, anything you have actually done. Achievements signal drive and direction, and they matter for scholarships and admissions.

Money, honestly

This is the section most frameworks skip, and skipping it is how students end up in debt for degrees that do not pay. Treat it directly.

- **Family budget.** What can your family realistically contribute per year, in dollars, for tuition and for living costs, separately. Not the dream number. The number that does not put the family under strain.
- **Scholarship dependence.** Are you dependent on a scholarship to make a given option work? If a plan only functions with funding you do not yet have, it is a hope, not a plan, until the funding is real.

Risk, ambition, language, and constraints

- **Risk tolerance.** Do you value a safe and stable path, or are you willing to take an ambitious and uncertain one for a bigger upside? There is no wrong answer, but the honest answer changes the recommendation.
- **Ambition.** How hard are you actually willing to push? Advice should be calibrated to your real drive, not a generic baseline. A high-ambition student and a stability-seeking student should not receive the same plan.
- **Languages.** Arabic, French, English, and any others, with an honest fluency level for each. Language is leverage. A trilingual student has options a monolingual one does not, especially in the Gulf and Europe.
- **Constraints.** Family expectations, ties to a location, passport and citizenship for mobility, and any genuine non-negotiables. A second passport, for example, can quietly open an entire continent of affordable public universities.

> **Run a live search before you trust this**
>
> *Before you finish this section with an AI, have it search for the current cost of living in any city you are seriously considering, and the current scholarship deadlines for any program you might depend on. Budgets and deadlines move every year. Do not plan against last year's numbers.*

Part 3 The Decision Tree

Step 1 The big question: stay in Lebanon or go abroad

Every other choice flows from this one, so face it directly rather than drifting into a default. The decision has two dimensions, and an honest answer weighs both.

The practical dimension is cold arithmetic. What can your family afford. What does your passport allow. What does your language profile open or close. What is the job market on each side, and where does the field you are drawn to actually hire. The emotional dimension is just as real. Leaving family, leaving a country you love, the weight of being far from home against the weight of staying somewhere whose economy has not yet recovered. Neither dimension should be ignored, and pretending the decision is purely rational is its own kind of mistake.

Hold both truths at once

Lebanon is home, and the pull to stay is legitimate, not weakness. At the same time, the country's economic situation means that for many fields, the realistic path to building a career and savings runs through the Gulf, Europe, or North America, at least for a period. A good plan does not force a permanent choice at eighteen. It often looks like: build a portable, hard-to-automate credential, gain experience where the work and the money are, and keep the door home open. Decide with clear eyes, not guilt.

Run a live search before you trust this

Have your AI search for the most recent figures on Lebanese emigration and on the current state of the Lebanese job market and currency before you weigh this decision. The situation has changed fast in recent years, and it will keep changing. Decide against today's reality, not a memory of it.

Step 2A If you lean toward staying in Lebanon

If staying is your direction, choose the university deliberately, because in Lebanon the institution and the specific program matter as much as the degree itself. Compare the realistic options against each other and against the honest alternative of leaving.

- **Compare on what matters.** Compare the main universities on the dimensions that decide outcomes: academic reputation in your specific field, cost, and honest job-placement reality. AUB, LAU, USJ, NDU, and BAU each have fields they are

genuinely known for and fields where they are ordinary. A university's overall prestige is less useful to you than its strength in your major.

- **Benchmark, do not assume.** Benchmark the Lebanese option against a real international alternative so you see the true tradeoff. For example, set AUB Finance against a French public university Finance degree: compare total cost including living, the strength of each on graduate employability, and where each one can take you geographically. Sometimes the local option wins decisively. Sometimes it does not. You only know once you put the real numbers side by side.

> **Run a live search before you trust this**
>
> *Have your AI search for the current tuition at each Lebanese university you are considering, the latest available rankings for your specific field, and any recent reporting on graduate employment from those programs. Lebanese tuition and the dollar context have moved sharply. Use current figures only.*

Step 2B If you lean toward leaving

If your direction is abroad, the task is to match destination to profile. Each major destination has a different cost, a different language fit, a different visa and work-rights reality, and a different scholarship landscape. Map them honestly against who you are.

France and Europe

For a French-baccalaureate student this is often the single strongest value option in the world. French public universities charge a fraction of Anglo-American tuition, the language barrier is already cleared, and the Grandes Écoles route offers an elite, highly selective path with strong employability across Europe. Weigh Paris against cheaper student cities such as Lyon, Toulouse, or Lille, where the same degree comes with a far lower cost of living.

The Gulf

The most relevant destination for many Lebanese graduates, because it combines proximity, cultural fit, strong demand in specific fields, and tax-free income. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and the major Saudi cities are hiring in engineering, healthcare, technology, cybersecurity, and finance, driven by national transformation programs. The tradeoff is that nationalization policies increasingly reserve roles for citizens, so expatriate opportunity concentrates in specialized, hard-to-fill fields. Mobility plus a scarce skill is the winning combination here.

North America and others

The United States and Canada offer the strongest upside and the strongest research universities, at the highest cost and with the most demanding visa pathways. They make

the most sense when paired with significant scholarship money or a field where the earning premium clearly justifies the expense. Treat them as high-cost, high-return options to be entered with funding, not on hope.

For each destination, get four numbers before you commit

- **Tuition.** Total tuition for your program, per year.
- **Living cost by city.** Cost of living in the specific city, not the country average. Paris is not Lyon, Dubai is not Sharjah, and the gap is large.
- **Visa and work rights.** Your right to work during and after study, and the path to staying if you want to.
- **Funding.** Scholarships you actually qualify for, with their real deadlines.

Run a live search before you trust this

Have your AI search for current tuition, current cost of living by city, and current visa and work rules for every destination on your shortlist, each time you use this framework. Immigration rules and prices change yearly, and a plan built on outdated rules can collapse at the worst moment.

Part 4 Major and Career Selection

This is the heart of COMPASS. Choosing a field is no longer just about what you enjoy or what you are good at, though both still matter. It is about choosing work that will still exist, and still pay, by the time you graduate and for years after. That requires a test.

The five-to-ten-year test

Run every major and career you are considering through one question:

> ***Will this field still have strong exit opportunities by the time you graduate, and five years after that, given where AI and the global economy are heading?***

The goal is not only to apply this test once, but to learn to think this way for the rest of your working life. Fields rise and fall. The skill that protects you is the habit of asking, honestly and with current data, whether the work you are about to invest years in is growing, stable, or quietly being hollowed out. That habit is the most future-proof thing this framework can give you.

What the evidence says, as of June 2026

The picture below is current as of this writing. It will shift, which is exactly why the framework instructs you to search again every time you use it. Use these findings as a model of how to reason, and refresh the specifics with a live search.

AI is compressing entry-level white-collar work, unevenly

The clearest evidence comes from Stanford’s Digital Economy Lab, whose 2025 study of millions of payroll records found that early-career workers aged twenty-two to twenty-five in the most AI-exposed jobs saw a roughly **thirteen percent relative decline in employment** since late 2022, while older workers in the same jobs held steady. In banking, junior analyst classes are being cut by as much as two-thirds. In the UK, graduate job adverts in accountancy fell about forty-four percent against 2023, and the major audit firms trimmed their graduate intakes. Entry-level software roles are down sharply from their 2022 peak. The rote tasks that used to train juniors are exactly what AI automates first.

But serious economists disagree on how fast and how far

This is not a settled question, and an honest framework says so. Nobel laureate Daron Acemoglu of MIT argues the macroeconomic effect over the next decade will be modest, on the order of a one-percent lift to output, with only a small share of tasks profitably automated, and insists we will still have analysts, journalists, and HR professionals. The

most alarming headlines, predictions that half of entry-level white-collar jobs vanish within a few years, are forecasts by industry leaders, not measured facts. The measured effects are real but concentrated. The responsible reading is to hedge intelligently, not to panic and not to dismiss.

The net picture, and where the growth is

The World Economic Forum's 2025 outlook projects a net increase in jobs by 2030, with large churn underneath: many roles created, many displaced, and around two in five core skills changing. The fastest-growing roles are in AI and machine learning, data, cybersecurity, fintech, and renewable energy. The fastest-declining are clerical and routine roles, with graphic design newly appearing on the decline list as generative tools absorb execution work.

The fields that hold up well

- **Healthcare.** The standout resilient sector. Aging populations and a global shortfall of health workers projected in the millions by 2030 make this among the safest long-horizon bets. Nursing, nurse practitioner, medicine, and allied health such as physiotherapy all show strong growth, and AI in medicine is augmenting clinicians rather than replacing them.
- **Engineering.** Hard to fully automate and tightly coupled to construction, energy, and the data-center build-out, especially across the Gulf. Renewable-energy and core engineering disciplines feature among the fastest-growing roles.
- **Cybersecurity.** A structural global shortage of talent, widened by AI-driven threats, with the Gulf hiring aggressively. Strong outlook through the next decade.
- **AI, machine learning, and data.** Top of every growth list, commanding a significant wage premium, but demanding genuine technical depth and constant relearning.
- **Skilled trades.** Persistent shortages and six-figure potential in specialized niches, including the build-out powering AI itself. Location-bound, so most actionable for a Lebanese student through the Gulf or migration.

The fields under the most pressure at the entry level

Generic accounting and bookkeeping, audit support, paralegal work, basic financial analysis, junior generalist consulting, routine coding, execution-level graphic design, and clerical roles are where the automation is biting first. None of these professions is disappearing wholesale. Licensed, judgment-heavy, client-facing work within them remains valuable. But the bottom rung is thinning, and entering one of these fields on the generic track, without a hard specialty and without AI fluency, is the riskiest move a student can make right now.

The resilience scorecard

A summary view. Treat the right-hand column as the real instruction: in almost every field, the way to be safe is to add a scarce, hard-to-automate specialty and genuine fluency with AI tools on top of the degree.

Resilience tier	Representative fields	What the student must add
High resilience / growing	Nursing & nurse practitioner, medicine, allied health (PT, PA), AI/ML engineering, cybersecurity, renewable-energy & core engineering, skilled trades, dentistry	AI tool fluency and a clear sub-specialty; mobility to the Gulf where relevant
Bifurcating (depends on specialty + AI fluency)	Software engineering, data science, finance & IB, law, consulting, pharmacy, psychology, architecture, teaching, UX design	A hard specialty plus AI fluency. The generic track in these fields is the part being compressed
Higher vulnerability (entry level especially)	Generic accounting & bookkeeping, audit support, paralegal work, basic financial analysis, junior generalist consulting, routine coding, execution-level graphic design, data entry, clerical roles	Either move up to judgment-heavy work fast, or pair the field with a scarce, hard-to-automate skill

The MENA and Gulf angle

For a young Arabic, French, and English speaker, the most employable combination is a licensed or hard-to-automate skill, medicine, engineering, cybersecurity, or finance paired with AI, plus the mobility to work in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's national AI strategy are driving large, sustained hiring in exactly these areas, and trilingualism is a real competitive edge in that market. The caveat is that nationalization policies increasingly reserve roles for citizens, so expatriate opportunity concentrates in the specialized fields where local supply is thin. That raises the premium on advanced, internationally recognized credentials.

Run a live search before you trust this

This is the section that ages fastest. Before you rely on it, have your AI search for the

> *latest labor-market and Future of Jobs data, the current hiring picture in your target field, and the most recent Gulf hiring and nationalization news. Use this page as a way of thinking, and refresh every figure.*

Durable skills that protect you in any field

Whatever you choose, build the capabilities that complement AI rather than compete with it. Fluency with AI tools, now a baseline expectation that also pays a premium. Judgment and the ability to check and correct what AI produces. Communication, relationships, and trust, the core of any client-facing or high-stakes role. Cross-domain synthesis, deep knowledge in one area plus broad range across others. And the habit of continuous learning, because a large share of specific skills will turn over within a few years. Increasingly, even junior roles demand judgment that used to be reserved for seniors, so prepare to step up earlier than previous generations did.

Part 5 The Roadmap Output

This is what COMPASS produces: a written, personal plan you can act on now and revisit as things change. Build yours by combining your Part 2 profile, your Part 3 decision, and your Part 4 field analysis. A complete roadmap has the following sections.

1. Recommended primary path

One clear recommendation, stated plainly: the country, the university or type of university, the major, and the career it leads toward. Not a list of options, a decision, with the reasoning that supports it. If the analysis genuinely points one way, say so.

2. Backup options, always more than one

At least two credible alternatives, in case the primary path closes through a missed scholarship, a visa refusal, or a change of heart. A plan with no backup is fragile. Name the second and third choices and what would trigger a switch to them.

3. Target universities and programs

Specific institutions and programs, chosen for their strength in your field and their fit with your budget and profile, not for general prestige. Include reach, match, and safety options where the system allows it.

4. Skills to build between now and application

The concrete capabilities to develop before you apply and before you graduate: the technical foundation for your field, AI tool fluency layered on top, and the durable human skills from Part 4. Tie each skill to how you will actually build it.

5. A year-by-year timeline

A plan for each remaining year of high school and the transition: what to study, which exams and language certifications to take, which scholarships to target and when their deadlines fall, and the application milestones. Vague intentions become real when they sit on a calendar.

6. Financial plan

The honest cost of the primary path, the scholarships and funding to pursue, and the strategy for closing any gap. If a path only works with funding you do not yet have, the financial plan names exactly what has to be secured for the path to become real.

7. The stay-current instruction

Finally, a note to yourself on how to keep this plan alive. Revisit it at least once a year. Each time, have an AI model search for the current state of your target field, the latest costs and rankings, and any shifts in the job market and immigration rules, then adjust.

The roadmap is a living document. The student who updates it deliberately, with fresh data, stays ahead of the one who decided once at eighteen and never looked again.

> **The real output is a habit**
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> *The roadmap on the page matters. The habit behind it matters more. If COMPASS leaves you able to sit down with an AI model, pull current data, and honestly re-test your own plan against where the world is heading, then it has done its job, because you can now do this for yourself, every year, for the rest of your career.*

Part 6 About the Creator

COMPASS was created by Samir Kassir, a finance student at the American University of Beirut. He built this framework out of a simple conviction: that the quality of a young person's most important decision should not depend on whether they happen to have a well-connected mentor. Having navigated the same information gap that every Lebanese student faces, he set out to put a structured, honest, and future-aware map into the hands of anyone who wants one.

COMPASS is the first version of that effort. It is built to be used with any AI model, to stay current through live search rather than fixed answers, and to teach the student to keep thinking this way long after the first decision is made.

Connect and contribute

This is Version 1.0, and it will keep improving. Feedback from students, parents, and educators is welcome.

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