

Choosing School Subjects

Choosing school subjects is often not an easy task. The system for picking subjects can seem complicated and it isn't always clear what subjects are needed for particular career pathways. Follow the eight steps below and work out what subjects are the right ones for your young person.

Step 1: Attend school information evenings WBHS Wednesday August 1st 5.30 – 7.30 pm View subject displays and speak with Heads of Departments, Deans and Career Advisor.

Step 2: Look back on subjects taken before It's often a good idea for you and your young person to look back at the subjects they have taken before. Are there any subjects they particularly enjoyed or are good at? They are more likely to do well when they enjoy the subjects they take.

Step 3: Choose subjects for a range of careers If your young person doesn't know what they want to do as a career, or even if they think they do, it's important to choose subjects that will prepare them for a range of different careers.

It's a good idea to choose STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) subjects as those skills are of growing importance for future jobs and are in high demand by employers.

Your young person may also benefit from programs like Gateway and Trades Academy. They allow students to earn NCEA credits while working one day a week or attending a NorthTec course or specialised program at WBHS. See your Curriculum Guide for more information.

Tools like Subject Matcher on careers.govt.nz are helpful for seeing which subjects relate to which jobs. Your young person also has this information in their Crossroads Booklet from their whanau class and in their Curriculum Guide.

Step 4: Choose subjects for the course they want If your young person is planning to do tertiary study after secondary school, it may be important that they choose subjects that will help them get into the course they want.

If they want to attend university they should choose subjects that will give them the required literacy and numeracy credits. English and maths are the most common subjects for gaining literacy and numeracy credits. However, these credits can be gained from some other subjects.

If they know what course they want to do, check the education provider's website to see what subjects are required or recommended for the course. Search: New Zealand Qualifications Authority website - information about university entrance requirements

Step 5: Check the subjects are right for NCEA In order to study a subject at NCEA Level 2 your young person may need to study it at NCEA Level 1 first. eg Design and Visual Communication. Some subjects at NCEA Level 2 or 3 may need them to have studied a combination of NCEA Level 1 or Level 2 subjects. An example is physics – you usually need to study mathematics and science at NCEA Level 1 to study NCEA Level 2 physics. If you're unsure about the right NCEA subjects, get in touch with the school's career adviser: careers@wbhs.school.nz or one of your year level Deans.

Step 6: Attend a Careers Road Show or Expo A Careers Road Show is hosted by WBHS (March 2019) and we take year 12 boys to the Careers Expo in Auckland (May 2019). Exact dates for these will be notified early next year.

Career Road Shows and Expos bring together universities, training providers, ITOs, polytechnics, defence forces and sometimes employers. By attending these events, you and your young person can get advice on what subjects they should take for careers that interest them.

Step 7: Encourage them to speak with their school Career Adviser Speaking with the Career Adviser is helpful for young people who don't know what subjects to pick. A career adviser will explore different career pathways with your young person and guide them in picking subjects for particular careers: careers@wbhs.school.nz

Step 8: Get subject choices in on time If they want to change a subject after getting their NCEA results they will need to arrange this with their school. WBHS Deans will be available Tuesday 22 until Thursday 24 January after NCEA results have been released, to make the process of changing subjects easier. Ring 09 430 4170 for an appointment.

For more personal advice, you and/or your young person are welcome to speak with the WBHS's career adviser or their Year Level Dean, or contact CareersNZ Advice Line 0800 222 633 during 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. WBHS Career Office 09 430 4170 ex 728 or email careers@wbhs.school.nz



Choosing a course or subjects at school

Secondary school should give young people a broad education and help them work out what they want to work at in the future. WBHS provides opportunities in Year 9 and Year 10 to sample a variety of subjects. This gives you experience of the subject, to see if it suits you. You and your parents/caregivers will have the opportunity to ask about different subjects at the Subject Selection Evening in the WBHS Hall on Wednesday evening, 1 August.

Unless you are absolutely certain what you are going to do when you leave school, at Year 11 (Level 1 NCEA) you should take a broad range of courses that may lead on to more specialised subjects. In Years 12 and 13, start thinking about what areas you need to focus on for your future study or career.

Your Level 2 results are important, as these are often used as part of the selection process by universities, polytechnics, employers and scholarship applications. You will also need to take particular Level 3 standards as an entry requirement for some university courses.

Compulsory subjects

At many schools, all students study English, Mathematics and Science in Year 11. At Years 12 and 13, there are no compulsory subjects. However, you need to achieve University Literacy in NCEA L2 or above, to study a Bachelor Degree at a New Zealand university or polytechnic. Some degree programmes also have English or another language-rich subject, Calculus, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Visual Arts, or Design and Visual Communication, as a pre-requisite. An example is Calculus and Physics at Level 3 for Engineering with Honours at The University of Auckland or Canterbury University. You need to become familiar with the different programs that interest you and with their requirements.

Choosing courses to meet University Entrance requirements

If you are planning to go to university in New Zealand, or just want to keep it as an option, you will need to meet the New Zealand university entrance requirements. However, if you are planning to go to university overseas, you will also need to meet requirements for the country you wish to study in. Some countries have their own specific requirements.

New Zealand has arrangements with some countries for NCEA to be recognised for university entrance. For more information about them, search NZQA for International Recognition of NCEA.

Choose subjects you enjoy and are good at

Your chances of doing well and achieving the standards assessed in your courses are better when you enjoy the subjects, or have a natural talent for them. These are the subjects you should look at first when choosing your course. Your options are in the Curriculum Guide.

Choose subjects that support what you want do after school

It is sensible to choose subjects and courses that relate to what you want to do after you leave school. Many careers or qualifications have special requirements. For example, if you want to be a motor mechanic it makes sense to consider one of the technology subjects. Or, if a career in medicine appeals to you, you should do science subjects like chemistry and physics.

If you don't know what you want to do, the best path is to do as broad a range of subjects as possible across all your courses, to keep your options open. If you need assistance go and visit the Careers Office in H5 or speak with one of your Deans. There are also helpful websites listed in your Crossroads Booklet and in the information provided at Whanau Conferencing.