

CHOOSING YOUR COURSES

Choosing your courses is one of the most important decisions you make each year. You need to make sure you choose courses that:

- are right for the future you want for yourself
- you can succeed in (with hard work)
- you will enjoy
- do not restrict your future options (in case you change your mind about where you are heading).

How does the system work?

Obviously, no school can offer everyone their perfect combination of subjects. What we do is try to design a structure that gives the best choices to the most people. As well as that you may be able to fill in any gaps by doing Online or Correspondence courses.

Three Step Process

- 1 You are to attend the course selection afternoon with your parents/caregivers and then fill in the subject preference form telling us what subjects you think you would like to do. You must discuss this with your parents/caregivers and teachers. This is just an indication and, unfortunately, doesn't necessarily mean you'll actually be able to do this particular combination.
- 2 The school will use this information to draw up an option structure, which will give the largest possible number of students the courses they want within the teachers and facilities available.
- 3 When your results are known you may want to (or may need to) make changes to your course. You will be able to do this at the start of next year.

How to choose your course

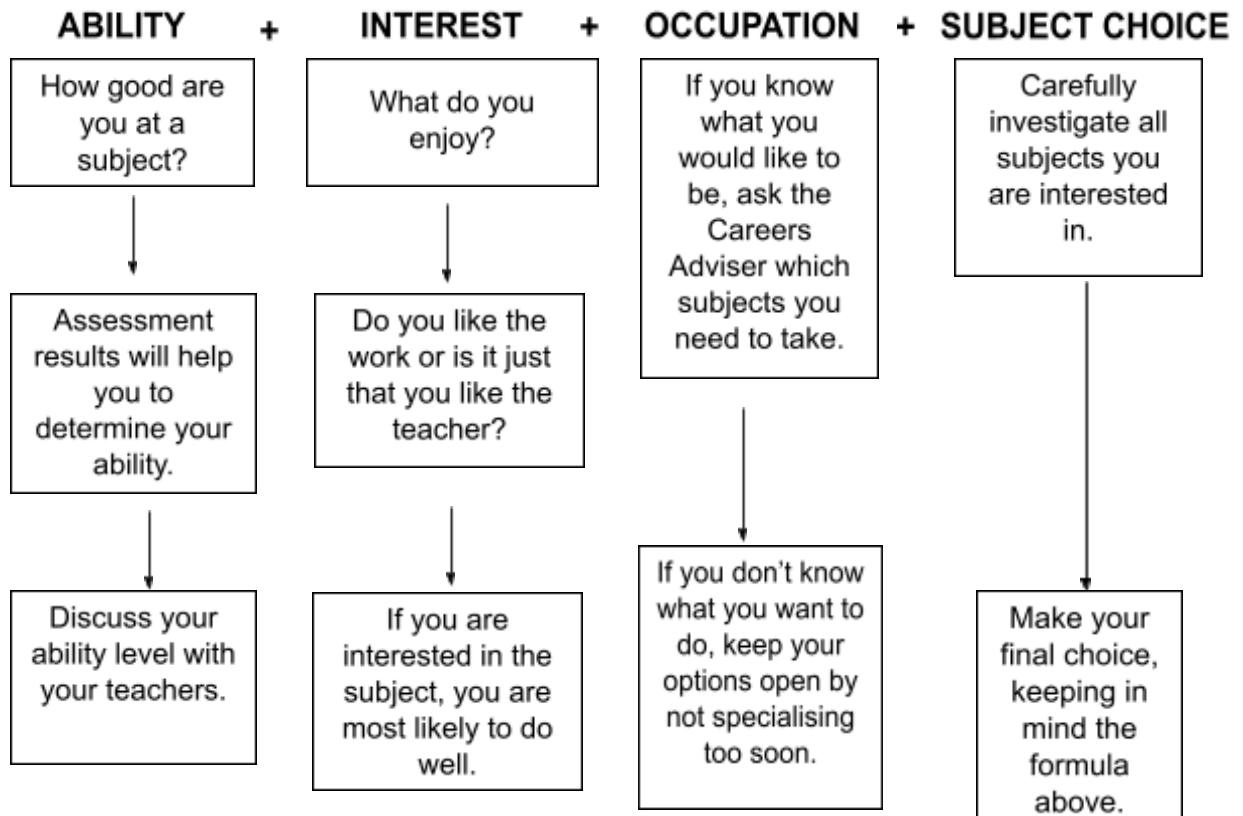
Ask yourself these questions (writing down the answers helps).

- What am I good at?
- What do I do well in?
- What do I enjoy?
- What subjects do I need for my future plans? **and for my back-up plans?**

Once you have done this, identify the subjects you think you would like to do. If you need more information about a subject the Option Booklet tells you whom to ask.

Then:

Look at the prerequisites - these tell you what you need to have already done to get into the courses (where they specify a grade or mark. Be honest with yourself about whether you think you will reach it).



How not to choose a course

Research shows that two main influences on course choice (especially among people who later regret their choices), are often:

- what subjects your friends are taking
- who is teaching a particular subject

These are very risky ways to choose a course. You may not be in the same class and decisions about who teaches what class are not made until later anyway.

It's vital **YOUR** course covers the subjects
YOU need for **YOUR** future

How to find your ideal course

1. Read the course booklet fully - become familiar with all the options - remember you can always do courses at higher or lower levels (this is called multi-levelling).
2. Talk to people about your ideas. You should try:
 - Your parents/caregivers - they know you better than you think.
 - Your teachers - they can advise about specific subjects.
 - The Careers Adviser - who can make sure you are on the right track.
 - Other teachers – they always have helpful advice.
 - People in the workforce – they can tell you what is needed for their job.
 - The liaison people at tertiary institutions.
3. Talking is always a good way to sort out your own ideas.
4. **If you are not sure where you are heading**, you should do two things:
 - Choose a broad course that leaves as many options open as possible - be careful you don't drop courses that will restrict future options.
 - Do some research on careers - you could:
 - ◆ Talk to people (see '2' above).
 - ◆ Do an internet search to gather more information.

Distance Learning – NetNZ (on-line) or Te Kura (Correspondence School)

- 1 Northern Southland College is an active participant in NetNZ. NetNZ is a community of schools that work together to provide online learning opportunities based around the New Zealand Curriculum. Using computer technologies, students are linked directly with leading specialist teachers from around New Zealand. The benefits to students at Northern Southland College as being part of this initiative include:
 - Access to a large group of selected teachers in specialist fields. These teachers are selected to provide learning to others because of their proven skill and ability. What better way to access the best teachers from around the country.
 - Access to over 60 subject areas and multiple courses within these subjects. Just look at the range of courses you can now study at NSC.
 - Better access for students to this type of learning due to being a small school.
 - The students have a one-hour session each week on-line with their teacher, and spend their timetabled lesson time under teacher supervision, working on assignments from that teacher.
 - Subjects available through NetNZ include such as Drama, Media Studies, Philosophy, and many others not available in a small school.
2. If the subject is not available through NetNZ, students may need to study through Te Kura.
3. For students to study through Distance Learning, it is essential that the following points receive major consideration.

- Sound independent work habits have been and continue to be demonstrated.
- Self-control and motivation are essential. Students are expected to follow their course of study with a minimum amount of teacher supervision.
- Organisational and planning skills are required so that students complete the required work.

For more information, see Mrs Duncan.

Gateway

Our Gateway programme was developed for students interested in agriculture, automotive, engineering and building careers. Other students have taken part in butchery, hairdressing, plumbing, early childcare, equine, baking, business administration, tourism and vet nursing programmes.

Under this programme, students attend a workplace for some structured workplace learning. Most students are able to study theory in class at school, and attend a Gateway placing, one day or afternoon each week, for one to four terms, or during the school holidays. Unit Standards are available for these tailor-made courses. Courses will be decided on a per student basis, based on decisions made in conjunction with the Principal and the Gateway Co-ordinator, Mrs Duncan.

Workplaces over the last three years have included farms, a car repair workshop (local garage), a large-engine engineering workshop, a builder, local early learning centres and a veterinarian. Anything will be considered.

For more information, please see Mrs Duncan.

STAR (Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource)

STAR is an important grant used by the school to meet the identified learning needs of senior students that cannot be catered for within the traditional school curriculum. In particular, it is used to:

- 1 Facilitate transition to the workplace for students, particularly those intending to go straight into the workforce or those likely to leave school without any formal qualifications.
- 2 Provide or purchase tertiary-type courses which will better meet students' needs, which will motivate them to achieve, and which will facilitate their smooth transition to further education, training or employment; and
- 3 Support students to explore career pathways and help them make informed decisions about their schooling and future work or study.

There are many ways in which STAR can benefit students. For more information, please see Mrs Duncan.