

Planning My Career – Answer to FAQs Questions

Q. How do I know I have made the right subject or course choices?

A. You will know you have made the right choices if you feel that you can manage the work or course requirements and you are achieving results that reflect your hard work. While there are no guarantees, if you have thought carefully about your choices and sought some advice then you have done your best to make good decisions.

Q. My parents believe I should only study subjects that give the highest possible score?

A. Ultimately it is you taking the subject and not your parents. All subjects and subject combinations have the potential to give high scores. By studying subjects which you enjoy and are interested in this will motivate you to do well, and by doing well you will achieve the good scores.

Q. My friend left school and went to work at 15. Should I do the same?

A. Before you answer this question be aware that research shows your earning power and employment prospects increase the longer you stay at school. Therefore you should think long and hard about whether or not you should stay at school. You shouldn't do something just because your friend has done it. Ultimately the final decision is up to you.

Q. I have a career in mind but my teacher said that that career is not suitable for me because I am a girl – how can I find out if this correct?

A. Careers options being limited by gender is a very outdated notion that many people and industries are trying to change. Your first point of call should be in checking the careers website of your chosen industry looking for a section on women in the industry. Many non-traditional industries for women have initiatives to try and encourage women into their industry.

Q. I only really like sport subjects so what's the problem with just doing well in this one subject and letting others slide?

A. There are a number of problems with this line of thinking. First is that all subjects contribute to your final score, by doing well in just one subject will not offset doing poorly in all other subjects once your final score is calculated. Second, material you study (particularly in Year 12) may provide the foundation knowledge for your future studies or work, by not making an effort now you may find that once you start your course or your job you are missing vital knowledge and will struggle. This is particularly true if the subjects you let slide are prerequisites. Finally, good marks in a single subject and poor marks in all other subjects looks bad on resumes, it shows future employers that you are only interested in putting effort into tasks that you like and may let slide important tasks which you don't like but need to be done. By working consistently across all your subjects will offset all three points mentioned here, and much more.

Q. I really want to explore a number of subject options, there are just too many choices – how do you make a decision about what to study?

A. First, check the prerequisites for the courses you wish to apply for, you will need those prerequisites to get into the courses so they must be part of your selected subjects. Next, fill the remaining places with subjects you enjoy and are interested in. Finally, if you are unsure, make an appointment with your school's career practitioner, they will be able to help you narrow down your subject selections and discuss which options are possible

Q. There seems to be an expectation that you can only succeed if you go to university? Is this true?

A. The short answer: No. The long answer: success is not limited to a university education, it is possible to become very successful via vocational education and training. Many tradespeople become directors of their own profitable companies.

Q. My teachers keep talking about pathways, but I don't know what this means?

A. Pathways are the combination of subjects, courses, work and other activities which are used to map your career journey from the start to a destination. Pathways are the set of steps needed to achieve a career goal (to reach this career study this course, then move onto this looking for work in this area etc). Pathways are used to show that many career goals can be reached by taking multiple different sequences of steps.

Q. Is work experience really necessary?

A. Yes. It is through work experience that you gain a feel for the world of work and your future workplace. It is strongly encouraged that you choose a work experience placement in an industry which you think you would like to work in, so that you can get a feel for what working in this industry is like and whether you really would like to work in it.

Q. I want to do work experience but don't know where to start?

A. There are two places where you can start. One is to research over the Internet your chosen industry. You will find that many industries offer work experience or taster programs, you can start with applying to some of those. The other option is to talk to your career practitioner, they may have some suggestions on where to start and may have some industry contacts you can use.