



Choosing what to study in Years 8, 9 & 10

Some of the most important decisions you make at school are choosing subjects to take in Years 8, 9 and 10, later leading to your selection of a course of study in Years 11 and 12.

These decisions are important since they may directly affect your success at school and how you feel about school. They may also impact on your career plans when you leave school.

OVERALL PLAN

As an overall plan, it is suggested that you choose subjects which:

- you enjoy
- you have enjoyed some success in
- will help you achieve your chosen career goals or keep your career options open
- will develop skills, knowledge and attitudes useful throughout your life.

If you follow these guidelines and ask for help when you need it, you should come up with a study program that is appropriate for you and that you will enjoy.

GUIDELINES

Keep your options open

At the moment you may not know exactly what you want to do when you finish school. This is normal at this stage of your life and means that it's important for you to explore many options.

It is wise to keep your options open. This means choosing a selection of subjects that makes it possible for you to continue exploring your career options before making more specific decisions in the future.

Most schools require that your study program include the following subject areas:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social science
- Health and Physical Education.

These study areas provide excellent foundation skills for both your future career and your life.

In addition, you will be able to choose from a range of electives that are designed to develop your interests and practical skills.

Think about career options

It is helpful to have some ideas about possible career choices, even though these ideas may change when you learn more about yourself and the world of work.

Your school may have a program to help you with career exploration. If not, talk to your guidance officer or career adviser and check the following sources of information on careers:

- *myfuture* – national career information service at <http://www.myfuture.edu.au>
- *Job Guide* – available in book form or online at <http://www.jobguide.dest.gov.au>
- *Career Information Service* at <http://www.cis.qsa.qld.edu.au/>
- Job and careers planning – Department of Education, Training and the Arts' website at http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au/client/jobs_and_careers/job_career_planning/
- other career information such as brochures from industry groups which show the various pathways to jobs in these industries
- Google the industry you're interested in on the Internet to find current information
- employers and other people who are working in the job you're interested in.

After checking through this information, it is likely that you will come up with a list of prerequisite subjects needed for courses and occupations that interest you. If you are still

unsure, check with your guidance officer or career adviser.

Find out about the subjects or units of study offered by your school

It is important to find out as much as possible about the subjects offered at your school. The following ideas will help:

- read the subject descriptions provided by your school
- talk to the heads of department and subject teachers at your school
- look at textbooks and resources used by students in the subjects
- talk to students who are already studying the subjects
- listen carefully at class talks and subject selection nights.

When investigating a subject to see if it is suitable for you, find out about the content (i.e. what topics are covered) and how it is taught and assessed. For example:

- does the subject mainly involve learning from a textbook?
- are there any field trips, practical work, or experiments?
- how much assessment is based on exams compared to assignments, theory compared to practical work, written compared to oral work?

Your choice of subjects may affect your choice of a study program in Years 11 and 12. For example:

- it will be difficult in the future to take Mathematics B and C without a strong background in Years 8, 9 and 10 Mathematics
- Chemistry and Physics will be more manageable if good results are obtained in Years 8, 9 and 10 Mathematics and Science
- Music and languages in the Senior years almost always require previous study in Years 8, 9 and 10
- successful achievement in pre-requisite subjects in Year 10 may be required to enrol in particular Year 11 and 12 subjects

- subjects such as Graphics and Accounting are usually taken for the first time in Year 11, although it is useful (but not essential) to have taken related studies in Years 8, 9 and 10.

Make a decision about a combination of subjects or units that suits you

You are an individual, and your particular study needs and requirements may be quite different from those of other students. This means that it is unwise to either take or avoid a subject because:

- someone told you that you will like or dislike it
- your friends are or are not taking it
- you like or dislike the teacher
- you have heard that “all the boys or girls take that subject or unit”.

Be honest about your abilities and realistic with your occupational ideas. There is little to be gained by continuing with subjects or units that have proved very difficult even after you have put in your best effort.

Also, if your career choices require the study of certain subjects, do you have the ability and determination to work hard enough to achieve the results required?

Be prepared to ask for help

If you need more help, then ask for it. Talk to your parents, teachers, guidance officer or careers adviser.

Make use of the school subject selection program. Look at the resources suggested in this handout. You'll feel much more confident about your selection of a study program.



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