

Social & Community Services

The Social & Community Services sector is a big employer in New Zealand and is essential for maintaining the well-being and safety of New Zealanders. There are growing demands for more educated and skilled young people to enter the industries.

To do this, we need to ensure that all young people have the skills and competencies, including literacy and numeracy, to progress into tertiary education and training, and to enter and progress into the industries.

Approximately 70% of school leavers do not enter degree level study, so there are many students looking at alternative options and careers via a different pathway.

NCEA Level 2 or an equivalent qualification is the minimum qualification that young people now need to succeed in New Zealand's economy. Achieving this means they are better prepared to enter tertiary study, training or work. Growing the number of young people coming through the education system will make a positive contribution to growing and maintaining the Social & Community Services Industries, and positively contributing to local communities.

The Government has set a target that 85% of 18 year olds will have NCEA L2 or equivalent in 2017. This puts an emphasis on achieving a minimum qualification and developing pathways for students to move into.

The Vocational Pathways

The Vocational Pathways were developed in collaboration with industry and education to ensure students 16-19 years are getting the skills and knowledge that employers require for young people to be prepared for future study, training or work.

There are six industries in the Vocational Pathways:



*I want to make a real difference for people.
My path is Purple.*





Learning to care from the classroom

Last year while still at Freyberg High School, Meredith Barker completed a Certificate in Health Science through the Trades Academy at the University College of Learning (UCOL) in Palmerston North. Meredith enjoyed the hands-on learning and work which she did through the Trades Academy one day a week at a real nursing home, which she was allowed to attend during her school week and as part of her studies.

"I love to help and appreciated the people to people contact I got while working in the home," she recalls. "I had to explore what I wanted to do before I made a decision. The rest home experience made up my mind."

The Executive Dean of Trades and Technology at UCOL, Kelly Gay, points out that it's so important to create an environment where students can grow and mature and make decisions for themselves. Using the Vocational Pathways helps provide that.

"We see our job in providing that pathway and making sense of the confusion before a student leaves school without knowing what to do," he says.

Due to the passion and interest which was sparked last year during her time at a nursing home, Meredith has now started a full time three year Bachelor of Nursing also at the UCOL campus.

"The Trades Academy is an exceptional idea which is now paying off", Kelly Gay says.

"Students stay longer at school and are doing better because of the day a week they spend with us. They've gained life experience, extra maturity and can make informed choices.

"They also recognise they need a higher standard of numeracy and literacy to meet our academic content. Trades Academies aren't for dummies," he says.

The Vocational Pathways are designed to help students have a better understanding of the workplace, and the qualifications and skills required by industry. Students can get NCEA Level 2 with Vocational Pathways, which shows how their learning is relevant to future work or career options.

Social & Community Services Pathway

The Social & Community Services pathway offers a broad range of study options for students such as:

- analyse an adolescent health issue
- analyse issues related to the provision of food for people with specific food needs
- apply sequences and series in solving problems

- consistently demonstrate social responsibility through applying a social responsibility model in physical activity
- use a computer to produce documents for a business
- explain concepts of law
- investigate biological material at the microscopic level
- demonstrate an understanding of waves.

The flexibility of NCEA Level 2 qualifications with Vocational Pathways enables young people to easily change their study options, and many options are applicable to multiple pathways. Students can choose subjects which interest them, suit their learning style, or help them with their career choice.

Ask a young person for their Vocational Profile. It's a good way to understand how a student's learning relates to the Social & Community Services industries.

A student with NCEA Level 2 with a Social & Community Services pathway will have:

- a foundation qualification: NCEA Level 2 (or equivalent qualification), recognised as the minimum qualification a young person needs
- a Vocational Pathway in one or more industries
- the minimum level of literacy and numeracy required, or more
- a broad understanding and some relevant skills in the Social and Community Services industries.



Sources

- www.dol.govt.nz/publications/research/forces-for-change/forces-for-change-06.asp
- *NZ Manufacturing Sector: its Dynamics and Competitiveness* by Castalia Advisory group is on businessnz.org.nz.

