Choosing subjects for Years 11 & 12

It is important to choose your senior subjects carefully as the decisions you make now may affect your:

- options at the end of Year 12 (jobs and/or further study and training)
- success at school
- feelings about school.

Subject selection is not a simple decision. It is a process in which you learn about:

- your career interests
- Year 12 certificates and qualifications that you can achieve
- further study options after Year 12
- subject and course options available at your school.

Once you have gained this information, you can begin to make decisions and develop a plan for your senior studies.

Your career interests

It’s not expected that in Year 10 you know exactly what you want to do when you finish Year 12. However, it is expected that you begin to think about your future career options and have a few job ideas you are interested in. This will help you with your subject selection.

Coming up with job ideas is a process in which you learn more about yourself (interests, abilities, values, ambitions, things that influence your decisions, etc.) and about the jobs available. Resources to help you with this process include:

- myfuture [http://www.myfuture.edu.au/] - ‘Sign up’ to develop your profile
- Career Quest [http://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/careerquest/] - this is a New Zealand career quiz

Once you have five to ten jobs on your job ideas list you can research the jobs by:

- reading about them (use myfuture, the Bullseye Posters or the ‘Careers’ section of

the Good Universities Guide at [http://www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/]
- talking to people already in the jobs
- trying the jobs by doing work experience or work observation
- thinking about what you have found out.

As you learn more about the jobs you can prioritise your jobs list by putting the jobs you most like at the top. When you select your subjects make sure to include subjects that are required (i.e. are prerequisites) for your top three or four jobs.

Year 12 qualifications

During Year 10, your school will register you with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) and a learning account will be opened for you. You will be given a LUI (Learner Unique Identifier) and a password to access this account on the Student Connect website at [https://studentconnect.qcaa.qld.edu.au/].

Your learning account is used to record eligible learning you successfully complete during Years 11 and 12. In December of Year 12 you will receive your Senior Education Profile (SEP), which is based on the contents of your learning account. Your SEP may consist of:

Senior Statement

The Senior Statement is given to every student who completes Year 12 in Queensland. It contains all eligible studies and results achieved during Years 11 and 12. It also includes your results on the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test (read about the QCS Test at [http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/587.html]).

Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)

This is Queensland’s senior school qualification, which is awarded to eligible students usually at the end of Year 12. To be eligible to receive a QCE you must:

- achieve a total amount of learning of 20 credits at Sound Achievement or pass from Core, Preparatory, Enrichment and Advanced courses
- attain between 12 and 20 credits from completed Core courses of study
• achieve a minimum standard in literacy and numeracy.

See http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/589.html for details about these requirements.

Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA)

The QCIA is awarded to students who undertake individual learning programs. To be eligible, students must have impairments or difficulties in learning that are not primarily due to socioeconomic, cultural or linguistic factors. Read more about the QCIA at http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/590.html.

Tertiary Entrance Statement

The Tertiary Entrance Statement contains the Overall Position (OP) on a 1 - 25 scale and Field Positions (FPs) on a 1 - 10 scale. To be eligible for an OP and FPs you must:

• study 20 semester units of Authority subjects during Years 11 and 12 (e.g. a minimum of five Authority subjects)
• 12 of these units must be from three subjects studied over four semesters (i.e. you must not change three of the Authority subjects you select during Years 11 and 12)
• sit for the QCS Test.

Learn more about OPs and FPs at http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/17761.html. Tertiary institutions use OPs and FPs to select students for their courses.

Students who are not eligible for an OP can receive a QTAC Selection Rank when they apply for tertiary courses through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC). This rank is calculated from the student's results in their learning account. Read more at https://studentconnect.qcaa.qld.edu.au/12655.html.

During subject selection, include subjects that will make you eligible for the qualifications you want to receive at the end of Year 12.

Further study after Year 12

In Australia qualifications are regulated under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF consists of ten levels. The levels and associated qualifications are:

1 Certificate I
2 Certificate II
3 Certificate III
4 Certificate IV
5 Diploma
6 Advanced Diploma
7 Associate Degree
8 Bachelor Degree
9 Bachelor Honours Degree
10 Graduate Certificate
11 Graduate Diploma
12 Masters Degree
13 Doctoral Degree

Different jobs may require different levels of qualifications. For example:

• Teacher - Bachelor Degree
• Dental technician – Diploma
• Electrician - Certificate III

You can use the Job Guide or myfuture to research the qualifications required for jobs you are interested in.

AQF qualifications allow you to start at the level that suits you and then build up your qualifications if you wish. This is called ‘upgrading’ or ‘articulation’; using one qualification to help you gain entry to another. Read more about the AQF at http://www.aqf.edu.au/.

The term ‘tertiary’ is usually used to refer to qualifications at AQF levels 5 – 10. Universities, TAFE and other institutes of higher education provide courses that lead to these qualifications. To gain entry into tertiary courses you must meet specific entry requirements. Knowing what the requirements are is very important when selecting subjects for Years 11 and 12 if you wish to apply for specific tertiary courses at the end of Year 12.

The QTAC Tertiary Prerequisites booklet, given to all Year 10s in Queensland (usually in Term 3), provides the most accurate information on the Year 11 and 12 subjects that must be studied for entry to specific tertiary courses managed by QTAC. You can access the current QTAC Tertiary Prerequisites booklet on the QTAC website at https://www.qtac.edu.au/for-schools.

The subject and course options available at your school

An essential task in the subject selection process is to learn about the subjects and courses offered at your school. Most schools have a range of
options students can choose from. These might include:

**Authority subjects**

These are approved and developed by the QCAA. Achievements in these subjects are recorded on the Senior Statement, contribute to the QCE and are used in the calculation of OPs and FPs. They can be used in the calculation of a QTAC selection rank when applying for tertiary courses through QTAC if the applicant is not eligible for an OP.

**Authority-registered subjects**

These are based on QCAA developed study area specifications. Achievements in these subjects are recorded on the Senior Statement and contribute to the QCE. They are not used in the calculation of an OP but can be used in the calculation of a QTAC selection rank when applying for tertiary courses through QTAC if the applicant is not eligible for an OP.

**Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

VET options may include school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, school-based VET qualifications (certificate and diploma level), VET qualifications offered by external registered training organisation (e.g. TAFE). All of these can contribute to the QCE and may be given a QTAC selection rank when applying for tertiary courses through QTAC. They do not contribute to the calculation of an OP.

**School-based subjects**

These subjects are developed by your school. They can contribute to the QCE if recognised by the QCAA. They do not contribute to the calculation of an OP.

Your school may offer other options such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma program or you may be able to study university subjects as part of your senior studies program.

It is your responsibility to find out about the subjects and courses offered at your school and what they can lead to. Use the following strategies:

- read subject descriptions and course outlines in booklets provided by your school
- talk to heads of departments and teachers of each subject/course

- look at text books and materials used in the subject/course
- listen carefully at subject/course selection talks at your school
- talk to students who are already studying the subject/course.

**Selecting your subjects**

An overall plan is to choose subjects which:

- you enjoy
- you have achieved good results in previously (work with your strengths, not your weaknesses)
- reflect your interests and abilities
- help you reach your career goals
- meet any subject prerequisites you need for further study after Year 12
- will develop skills, knowledge and attitudes useful throughout your life
- will keep many post Year 12 options open.

It is also a good idea to have a selection that gives you a balance between:

- theoretical and practical subjects
- subjects with many assignments and those that are mainly exam based
- compulsory subjects and those you choose primarily because you enjoy them.

Be aware of the following ‘do nots’:

- do not select subjects simply because someone has told you that they “will help you get a better OP”
- do not be influenced by suggestions that you should, or should not, choose a particular subject because a friend/brother/sister either liked or disliked it when they studied it
- do not select a subject because you think a certain teacher may, or may not, be teaching that subject next year.

While it is important to consider other peoples’ opinions of the subjects, do not make your decision on these opinions only. Check the subjects out for yourself.

If you and your parents are still uncertain about the combination of subjects you have chosen check again with some of the many people who are available to help you e.g. teachers, guidance officers/counsellors, heads of departments, year coordinators, VET coordinators.
Your senior studies plan

Most schools will require students to develop a plan for their senior studies. This is usually called a Senior Education and Training Plan (SET Plan). This plan will be based on:

• your career ideas
• your further study and training goals
• your learning style
• the requirements for the Year 12 certificates and qualifications you wish to achieve
• consultation with teachers, career counsellors/officers and parents.

The SET Plan should be revisited during Years 11 and 12 and adjustments made when necessary.

Useful websites

Australian Apprenticeships Pathways

Apprenticeships Info


myfuture. http://www.myfuture.edu.au

QTAC http://www.qtac.edu.au

QILT http://www.qilt.edu.au/

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/

Student Connect

TAFE Queensland http://tafeqld.edu.au/

The Good Universities Guide