

Educators' guide to Path Finder

Te aratohu kaiwhakaako mō te Tiro Whetū

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Overview

Tirohanga whānui

Path Finder is a tool on Tahatū Career Navigator that enables people to explore different pathways into career ideas.

It allows users to:

- start with a career idea
- explore study, training and work-based options
- identify useful school subjects
- build a personalised pathway.

At the end, a path summary shows their choices and suggests next steps, with links to further information.

Path Finder is based on New Zealand data that shows common pathways people have taken into jobs, while highlighting other possible options.

Why Path Finder matters

Te take e hira ana a Tiro Whetū

Path Finder supports people to make more informed and realistic career decisions.

It does this by:

- showing there can be more than one way into a career
- building understanding of study, training and work pathways
- linking subject choices to future opportunities
- encouraging people to think about next steps and actions.

For educators and career advisers, it provides a structured way to:

- guide conversations about career pathways
- challenge assumptions about 'one right path'
- support students to explore options that fit their interests, strengths and circumstances.

Path Finder works best when it's used as a discussion tool – helping students reflect, ask questions, and consider different possibilities – rather than as a fixed plan.

Getting started

Te tīmata

To become familiar with Path Finder, use the following:

- [Watch the video](#)
- [Read the guide](#)
- Try building a path to explore how the tool works
- Set up a My kete account to save paths and other items of interest.

How Path Finder works

Ka pēhea a Tiro Whetū e mahi ai

The study, training and school subject options shown in Path Finder are based on national data sources, including:

- Census data
- TEC qualifications data
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) achievement records.

This data highlights the most common pathways people in Aotearoa New Zealand have taken to reach a particular career, based on their highest qualification and learning journey.

Using Path Finder with students

Te whakamahi i Tiro Whetū ki ngā ākonga

Path Finder guides students through 4 key steps, with an optional fifth step on lead-in school subjects for students in Year 12 and under.

Step 1. Choose a career idea

Begin by selecting a career idea to work towards. This sets the direction for the pathway.

If Path Finder is accessed from a career idea page, this step is already completed.

Supporting students

- Encourage students to choose a career idea they're curious about.
- Students can access career ideas through [Explore career ideas](#) and by completing the [Interest quiz](#).
- Encourage using Path Finder for more than one career idea to compare pathways.

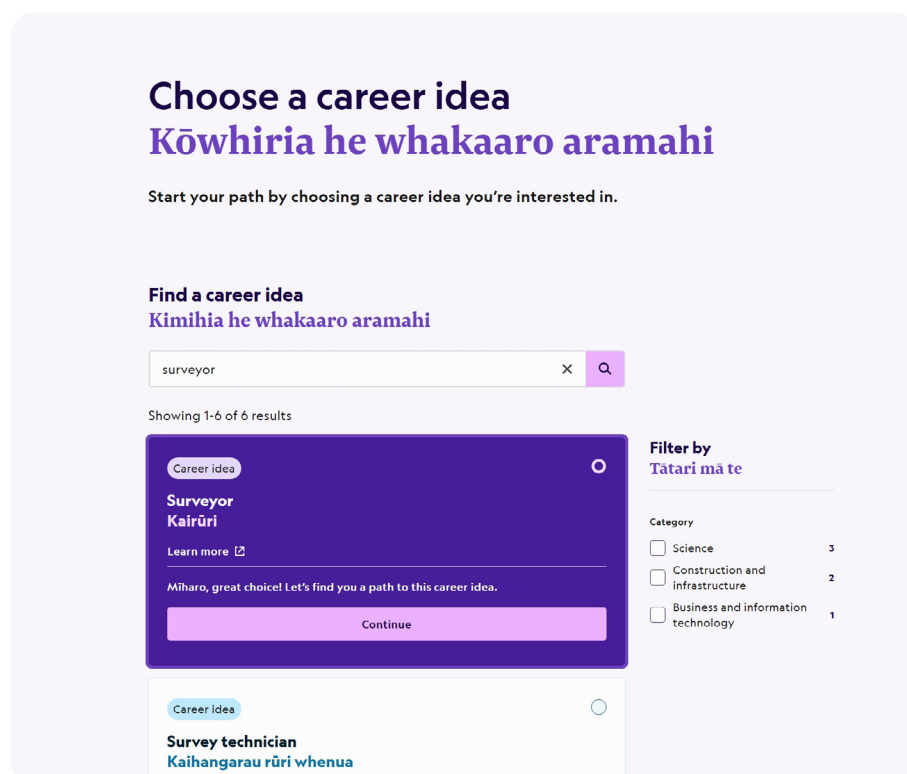


Fig 1. Example showing step 1. Choose a career idea

Step 2. Choose study or training

Next, select a study or training option to get into that career idea.

There can be multiple study or training options linked to a career idea. These are split into 'Most common' and 'Other options.' Sometimes there won't be multiple options, which usually means the career idea requires a specific qualification.

The options shown are based on actual study or training pathways people have taken into that career idea.

Note: Choosing 'Learn on the job' or 'Professional training or work experience' at step 2 will finish that path. Path Finder won't show any school subjects.

Supporting students

- Reinforce that there may be more than one pathway into a career.
- If subject selection is important (steps 4 and 5), encourage students to explore other options or create another path.
- Use this step to discuss the differences between study, training and work-based learning.

If 'Explore ways into this job' is shown, look at the career idea profile for extra information.

The screenshot shows the 'Choose study or training' step. At the top, it says 'Choose study or training' and 'Kōwhiria te ako, te mahi whakangungu rānei'. Below this, it states 'Here's the study or training others have done to become a Marketing manager. Choose 1 option.' There are two main sections: 'Most common' and 'Other options'. Under 'Most common', there is a card for 'Bachelor's degrees in Marketing and advertising' with details like 'Level 7-8', 'Study for 3 years', and 'Fees \$19K-\$26K'. Under 'Other options', there are two cards: 'Bachelor's degrees in Management and business studies' and 'Bachelor's degrees in Journalism, communication and media', each with similar details. A 'Back' button is at the bottom left.

Fig 2. Example showing step 2. Choose study or training

The screenshot shows the 'Explore ways into this job' step. At the top, it says 'Explore ways into this job' and 'Tūhura hura ara ki tēnei mahi'. Below this, it states 'Path Finder has no step-by-step path to show for Orthoptist. You can still find out what you may need to do this job and what you might earn.' There are three main sections: 'How can you get into this job?', 'You need', and 'You may need'. 'How can you get into this job?' lists 'a Bachelor of Orthoptics (Honours) from La Trobe University, Melbourne' and 'to pass a police check'. 'You need' lists 'a relevant tertiary qualification recognised by the University of Technology Sydney in vision science, health science, biological science or similar', 'a Master of Orthoptics from the University of Technology Sydney', 'experience in similar work', and 'to join a professional organisation'. 'If you're in school' states 'You need University Entrance to do the study or training for this job.' At the bottom, there is a section 'Explore this career idea' with a card for 'Orthoptist' showing 'Pay \$63K-\$102K yearly' and 'Training 3-5 years'. A 'Start new path' button is at the bottom right.

Fig 3. Example showing Explore ways into this job

Step 3. Choose an entry option

Next, select how to enter the chosen study or training option.

If a postgraduate option was chosen in step 2, the previous requirement to enter the postgraduate option is shown.

Example: To become an architect, you need a master's degree in architecture. To enter that master's degree, you would need either a postgraduate diploma or a bachelor's degree in architecture.

For career ideas that link to a study or training option with a NZQF qualification level of 1 to 7 (excluding graduate certificates and diplomas) the entry requirement into that study or training is split into 'In school', and 'Out of school' options.

Entry options vary depending on the study or training option and provider requirements.

- 'In school' are for students working towards NCEA (eg, University Entrance).
- 'Out of school' options like 'No study or training' are for those who have left school or are returning to study.

Supporting students

- Reinforce that other entry options are available for 'No study or training'. When this option is selected next steps include links to foundational and bridging course options.
- Discuss where students are currently meeting entry requirements.

NZQF qualification levels

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Choose an entry option" with the Māori title "Kōwhiria he kōwhiringa whakauru". Below the title is a subtitle: "Choose how you'll get into your Bachelor's or Honours degree in Architecture. We'll show you entry options from school if they're available." There are two main sections: "In school" (I te kura) and "Out of school" (I waho i te kura). The "In school" section is highlighted with a purple line and a box labeled "In school". It contains a "Most common" section with a radio button selected for "University Entrance" (Urunga ki te Whare Wānanga). The "Out of school" section is also highlighted with a purple line and a box labeled "Out of school". It contains a "Most common" section with a radio button selected for "No study or training" (Te kore ake, kore whakangungu). Below these is an "Other options" section with a radio button selected for "Study" (Ngā pūkaitahi me ngā pūkairua whatutoto mō te Hoahoanga). The "Study" option provides details: "Examples: NZ Dip in Architectural Technology, NZ Dip in Interior Design (Residential), NZ Dip in Interior Design...", "Level: 5-7", "Study for: 2 years", "Fees: \$8.4K-\$15K", and a "Learn more" link. At the bottom of the interface are "Back" and "Finish path" buttons.

Fig. 4 Example showing Step 3. Choose an entry option

Step 4. Choose 3 subjects

Next, select 3 subjects that can contribute towards the chosen entry option. These school subjects reflect what people in Aotearoa New Zealand have commonly studied before moving into their chosen study or training option.

Supporting students

- Reinforce subjects are suggestions, not requirements.
- Encourage students to balance pathway-related subjects with their interests and strengths.
- Use this step to connect subject choices with future opportunities.
- If a student selects 'Special entry' discuss if your school may let them do the higher level of the subject without having done the lower level.

Choose 3 subjects
Kōwhiria kia toru ngā marau

These are the top NCEA subjects for students who did Bachelor's and Honours degrees in Journalism, communication and media with University Entrance. Choose 3 subjects.

Most common
E kitea nuitia ana

Subject	Checkbox
Media studies NCEA Level 2-3 Media studies is the study of how people and cultures are shown in different types of media. Learn how media is designed and produced and how to understand the... Learn more	☐
English NCEA Level 1-3 English is the study of the English language and how to understand oral, visual and written resources. Learn how to use and create communications in English and... Learn more	☐
Drama NCEA Level 1-3 Drama is the study of performance and how to express ideas, tell stories and entertain. Learn how to create, interpret and perform drama. Learn more	☐
Mathematics and statistics NCEA Level 1-3 Mathematics and statistics is the study of modelling data for meaning. Learn how to understand data and use it to solve problems. Learn more	☐

Other options
Ētahi atu kōwhiringa

Subject	Checkbox
History NCEA Level 1-3 History is the study of people and societies of the past. Learn how to understand historical ideas and events and what they mean today and for the future. Learn more	☐
Photography NCEA Level 2-3 Photography is the study of expressing ideas through images. Learn how to create photos using camera techniques, and develop and edit photos. Learn more	☐

[Back](#)

Fig 5. Example showing step 4. Choose 3 subjects

Step 5. Choose subjects at other levels

Based on the subjects selected in step 4, Path Finder can show related subjects going back to NCEA Level 1.

Supporting students

- Use this step to support subject planning conversations.
- Encourage students to reflect on how their current choices link to future options.

Path summary

Te whakarāpopoto ara

Path Finder creates a path summary when a student selects 'Finish path'.

Students can save their path summary in My kete to refer to. Multiple pathways can be saved, including paths with different options to the same career idea.

Once a path summary is created it can't be edited. But a new path can be made with different choices to the same career idea, and the old one deleted.

Path to Electrician
Ara ki te Kaimahi hiko

Ka mau te whā! Here's a summary of this path to save and share.

Work
Mahi

This is the career idea you're aiming for.

Career idea
Electrician
Kaimahi hiko
Pay: \$60k-\$70k yearly
Training: 3-4 years
Electricians test, install, maintain and repair electrical systems and equipment.

Next steps

- Learn more about this career idea
- Explore related career ideas
- Find job opportunities

Get advice

- Making a career decision

Study and training
Ako

You choose this study and training for your path.

Training
Apprenticeships in Electrical engineering
Ngā pūkanga mō te Pūhanga hiko
Example: NZ Cert in Electrical Trade, NZ Cert in Electrical Engineering (Electromechanical Maintenance and Repair)
Level: 4
Teacher: Learn
Fee: May apply
Can earn while you learn

Next steps

- Learn more about this training
- Find a job with an employer who will train you
- Find a sponsor for this training

Get advice

- About apprenticeships
- How to look for a job

Entry option
Kowhiringa whakauru

This is how you'll get into your study or training.

NCEA Level 2
Tāwhiriā NCEA 2
NCEA Level 2 is the minimum qualification for some jobs and tertiary study and training.

Next steps

- Talk with your school or kura to check this option is best for you
- Make sure you have enough literacy and numeracy credits

Get advice

- How NCEA works

NCEA subjects
Ngā marau NCEA

Here are your top subjects at your chosen NCEA levels.

Subject	Level
English	NCEA Level 2
Mathematics and statistics	NCEA Level 2
Physical education	NCEA Level 2

Next steps

- Make sure your school or kura offers these subjects
- If you choose special entry check it's available to you

Get advice

- Choosing NCEA subjects

This path is not saved
Sign in to save this path to your kete.

Share this path
Tīria tēnei ara

You can share this path with whānau, friends and anyone helping you make career choices.

<https://www.futurelearn.co.nz/path/361775000> [Copy link](#) [Email link](#)

Find another path
Kimihia he ara atu anō

Use Path Finder again to find other paths to this career idea or create a new path.

[Start new path](#)

Fig. 6. Example showing path summary to Electrician

Path to Registered nurse
Ara ki te Tapuhi rehita

Ka mau te whā! Here's a summary of this path to save and share.

Work
Mahi

This is the career idea you're aiming for.

Career idea
Registered nurse
Tapuhi rehita
Pay: \$60k-\$70k yearly
Training: 3-4 years
Registered nurses assess, treat and support patients in hospitals, rest homes and other health care facilities. They maintain medical...

Next steps

- Learn more about this career idea
- Explore related career ideas
- Find job opportunities

Get advice

- Making a career decision

Study and training
Ako

You choose this study and training for your path.

Study
Bachelor's degrees in Nursing
Ngā tohu Pātea mō te Tapuhihanga
Example: Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing), Bachelor of Nursing (Public), Bachelor of Nursing (Māori)
Level: 7-8
Study for: 3 years
Fee: \$22k-\$28k

Next steps

- Learn more about this study
- Find a place to do this study
- Check the provider's entry requirements

Get advice

- Factors for study and training
- Finding and applying for scholarships

Entry option
Kowhiringa whakauru

This is how you'll get into your study or training.

University Entrance
Whāngā ki te Whānau Whāngā
University Entrance (UE) is the minimum requirement to proceed directly from a New Zealand secondary school to a New Zealand university.

Next steps

- Talk with your school or kura to check this option is best for you
- Make sure you have enough literacy and numeracy credits

Get advice

- How NCEA works

NCEA subjects
Ngā marau NCEA

Here are your top subjects at your chosen NCEA levels.

Subject	Level
Biology	NCEA Level 3
Mathematics and statistics	NCEA Level 3
Health	NCEA Level 3

Next steps

- Make sure your school or kura offers these subjects
- If you choose special entry check it's available to you

Get advice

- Choosing NCEA subjects

This path is not saved
Sign in to save this path to your kete.

Share this path
Tīria tēnei ara

You can share this path with whānau, friends and anyone helping you make career choices.

<https://www.futurelearn.co.nz/path/361775000> [Copy link](#) [Email link](#)

Find another path
Kimihia he ara atu anō

Use Path Finder again to find other paths to this career idea or create a new path.

[Start new path](#)

Fig. 7. Example showing path summary to Registered nurse

How to understand a path summary

Me pēhea e mārama ai koe ki tētahi whakarāpopoto ara

Path summaries show the career idea at the top followed by each step selected to achieve this goal, down to the study or training options and subjects.

Each path summary includes next steps, with links and suggestions to support further exploration and action.

Supporting students

- Ask students what stands out in their pathway.
- Use 'Next steps' to identify actions they could take, like checking provider entry requirements.
- Encourage students to reflect on whether the pathway fits their interests and goals.

Saving and sharing path summaries

Te tiaki me te tiritiri whakarāpototo ara

Students can save path summaries to My kete by clicking the heart in the top right corner.

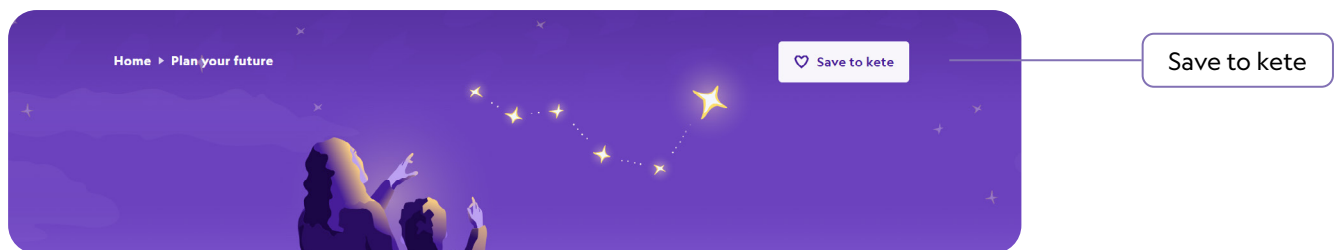


Fig 8. Path summary showing saving to My kete

At the bottom of a path summary, there's a 'Share this path' section using a link or email. This allows students to send paths to their whānau, caregivers and anyone supporting them to make career choices.

A student can make a range of paths across different career ideas using the 'Find another path' option.

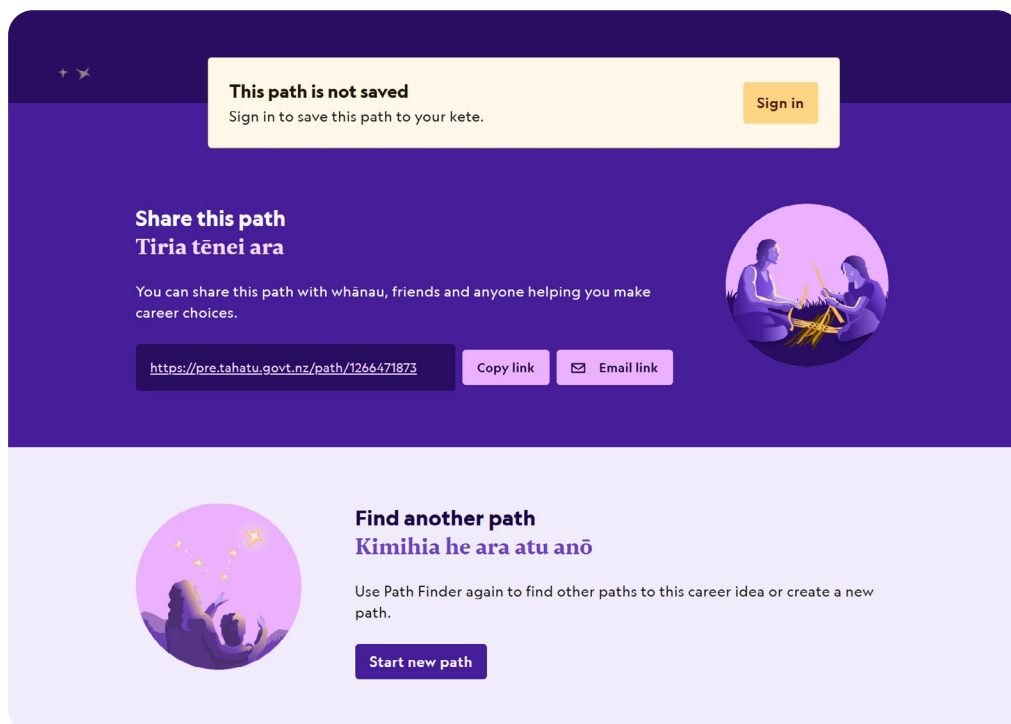


Fig 9. Share this path and Find another path sections.

Tips for using Path Finder

Ngā āwhina mō te whakamahi i Tiro Whetū

Tip 1.

Selecting 'Learn more' will open a new tab with more information about that option. Students can then decide whether to include it in their path. Path Finder progress will not be lost.

- For example, a student is shown both a diploma and bachelor's degree option to become a surveyor. By selecting 'Learn more' they can see that a diploma has lower fees and a shorter study time, while a bachelor's degree is offered by a provider closer to their home.

Most common
E kitea nuitia ana ?

Study

Bachelor's degrees in Surveying and mapping science
Ngā tohu Paetahi mō te Rūri me te pūtaiao whakamahere whenua

Examples Bachelor of Surveying, Bachelor of Surveying (Hons)

Level 7-8

Study for 3-5 years

Fees \$23K-\$37K

Learn more

Learn more

Fig 10. Example showing 'Learn more'

Tip 2.

Use the 'Need Help' section at the bottom of each step to answer any questions.

Tip 3.

Students can finish a path at any stage.

Activity 1. Comparing pathway options

Mahi 1: Te whakataurite kōwhiringa huarahi aramahi

Activity overview

Tirohanga whānui ki te mahi

Build students' awareness and understanding of different study and training pathways.

Activity type: Classroom **Time taken:** 15-20 minutes

Note: Do this activity before using the Path Finder tool. It will help students understand the range of options they may see when exploring paths.

Linked activities: Activities 1 and 2 in Tahatū activity guide 4 Study and training are recommended to be completed before doing this activity.

Activity: Comparing pathway options

Steps	Tahatū links and resources
Explain that there are often multiple pathways into the same job. These different options can be explored on Tahatū, particularly in the Path Finder tool. A discussion on the differences between options can help students make more informed decisions. Some common comparisons for pathways are below. 1. Certificate vs apprenticeships Example: To become an aircraft maintenance engineer, students could choose to complete an entry-level certificate or an apprenticeship. Discuss what factors might attract someone to a certificate or an apprenticeship pathway like: • how close the provider is to home • availability of online learning • hands-on learning opportunities • earning while learning. 2. Bachelor's degree vs postgraduate study Example: To become an ecologist, students could choose to complete a postgraduate master's degree or else the minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree. Discuss the factors that might influence someone to choose a bachelor's degree or a postgraduate pathway.	Tahatū onboarding activities Tahatu activity guide 4 Study and training activity 1 and 2 Skills employers are looking for
Bachelor's degree factors may include: • lower cost • shorter time before entering the workforce • ability to start earning sooner • more providers offering the qualification	Postgraduate pathway factors may include: • opportunities to specialise • higher earning potential • advanced knowledge or skills in a specific area

Activity: Comparing pathway options *continued*

Steps

Tahatū links and resources

Other pathways to discuss

Learn on the job and professional training or work experience

Discuss any known 'Learn on the job' career ideas. Explore the skills and experience employers look for in any role, like punctuality, communication and problem solving.

Discuss any professional training or work experience students may know of, like first aid training.

Tip: Details about types of professional training or work experience needed are in the 'How can you get into this job' section of career ideas.

Conversation starters

- Would a 'earn while you learn' job, like an apprenticeship, be of interest to students?
- Would a job that needs a postgraduate qualification be of interest to students? Why or why not?
- What study or training options have student's whānau done? Would they recommend that pathway to others? Why or why not?

Frequently asked questions

Ngā tino pātai

1. What's the difference between the study and training options?

Many study and training options can appear, showing different pathways into a career idea.

Students can select 'Learn more' on any option to compare them. Differences include the qualification level, study or training time, fees and provider.

2. Students are confused about the options. How can I respond?

Some students may be unfamiliar with NZQA qualification levels or tertiary study options. They may be unsure what to choose or think options must be completed in sequence.

To support understanding, use Tahatū resources like Activity guide 4: Study and training. Students can complete:

- Activity 1: Exploring qualification levels
- Activity 2: Study and training options

These activities help build understanding of qualification levels and terminology.

[Activity guide 4: Study and training](#)

3. Why is this study or training option showing?

Some study or training options may be unexpected or not clearly linked to the career idea. This is usually because a specific qualification is connected to both the career idea and the study or training option.

Tip: Use the 'Examples' on the study or training option to explain how it may link to the career.

4. This option isn't relevant to the student. What should I do?

- Try scrolling down and viewing any 'Other options' shown.
- If the student is out of school, they can explore the 'Out of school' entry options.
- If the student is still in school but doesn't want to complete the subject steps, they can skip them.
- Students can select 'Finish path' at any point after choosing a study or training option.

5. Why is the training time on the career idea different to the path summary study or training time?

The training time on a career idea can sometimes be longer to account for specialist training. This particularly applies to medical careers that include training as registrars. Path Finder shows study times for qualifications only. If the training time on a career idea is shorter it may be because a study option with a longer study time was selected.

6. Why are some subjects showing or not showing?

- Subjects are shown based on what students in previous years studied before entering the chosen study or training option.
- Subject names vary between schools so may not match exactly.
- If a subject isn't shown, it's usually because it hasn't commonly led into that chosen study or training option in the past.

7. Why aren't Gateway and Trades Academies showing up?

Gateway and Trades Academies are in-school training schemes, not NCEA subjects, so they don't appear in Path Finder.

8. Why can students only select 3 subjects?

- Selecting 3 subjects helps students identify key subjects linked to their chosen pathway – especially those shown under 'Most common'.
- This allows space in a timetable for other interests, electives or opportunities like Gateway or Trades Academies.

9. The subjects a student chose are repeated at Level 1. Why is this happening?

This is representative of how NCEA often structures subjects to branch out at Level 2.

10. Why doesn't Path Finder show required subjects for a course?

Subject requirements for courses can vary by provider. Students are encouraged to check provider entry requirements under Next steps. They can confirm any required subjects and check for other provider entry requirements like portfolios, CVs and rank scores. While not direct requirements, the 'Most common' subjects usually match the subject requirements for courses in areas like engineering and medicine.

Using Path Finder across year groups

Te whakamahi i Tiro Whetū whakawhiti rōpū ā-tau

Year groups may find value in different parts of Path Finder, from subject selection to identifying key next steps.

Students can use Path Finder to fill out parts of their career map

Path Finder terminology

Ngā kupu e whakamahia ana i Tiro Whetū

Learn on the job

For most people who went on to do that job, they learned the skills needed by working in the job and specific study or training wasn't needed.

Professional training or work experience

Professional training or work experience that exists outside the NZQA framework may be required to do that career idea. Examples include international or industry-specific certification, or time spent in a role or industry.

Most common

Options displayed under 'Most common' are what most people did before they went on to do the chosen career idea or study or training option.

There won't be a most common option if there is no clear common option in the data.

Other options

These show other ways you can get into the career idea or study or training.

Special entry

An option specifically surfaced for the subject selection step of Path Finder. It's for students who chose the subject at a higher level but may not have taken the lead-in subject at a lower level.

Note: If a user selects this option discuss if your school may let them do the higher level of the subject without having done the lower level.

Explore ways into this job

Some career ideas require specific experience or training or may not require formal qualifications. In these cases, Path Finder shows 'Explore ways into this job' with pathways information from the career idea profile instead.