



## **Factsheet – Making the big decisions – choosing subjects and courses**

When it comes to career and job choices the majority of people fit into one of two categories - those who take it as it comes and those who take responsibility for their own choices.

**One path** leads to accepting what is offered or suggested by others **and the other path** provides you with the freedom to take control, to search for, and dare to follow your dreams. It takes vision to look within yourself and to dream

Making the big decisions is never easy –

- What subjects do you need to study in Year 11 & 12 for the career you want?
- What training should you do? Course at University, TAFE or private provider/college
- What university, TAFE or private provider/college
- What job opportunities will it open up?

Decisions should not be based solely on:

- Parents perception of job prestige; job futures; salary or what they think a student should do or is good at
- Year 12 exam expectations
- Accepting any course, training organisation or university just because it was offered
- Accepting any course, training organisation or university because there is nothing better to do
- Being “good at” a subject without any understanding of the types of careers and opportunities it might lead to
- Peer pressure
- Taking an easy option – this course offers a lighter workload
- Glamourised perception of a profession or job.

The wrong course selection is often responsible for non-completion of courses. Time taken to explore the options and to understand what career or profession is the target and why, will help you to complete your course - although changing courses and majors is always a possibility. If unhappy a student should seek advice from careers & faculty advisers to ensure changes are made before it affects their chance of completion or their academic record and results.

Year 11 and 12 subject choices are very important as many post school training courses and careers have mandatory entry requirements. Choosing the wrong level of maths or science could mean that you are ineligible for what you want to do. Think about what you want to do or are interested in, choose carefully, do your research and where appropriate get advice from employers.

## **Making the big decisions – choosing subjects and courses (page 2)**

### **Post School Course Selection Checklist**

An understanding of the following will help students make informed choices.

- Career Goals. What kind of work do you want to do? Do you have professional goals?
- What do you know about the industry and required level of training? For more information you should talk to people working in your field of interest.
- How much does the course cost?
- How much study do you want to do?
- Do you want a course based on theory or practice?
- What level of academic study do you want to do?
- Realistic expectation of meeting entry requirements.

### **University, TAFE or Private Provider/College Selection Checklist**

Comparison shopping through course information booklets and websites, campus open days and talking to Guidance Officers and current students will help provide answers to the following:

- Is your desired course available – are specific specialisations on offer
- Environment and culture of the training institution and campus
- Accreditation and or reputation
- Practical issues including transportation, accommodation, living costs,
- Completion and graduate outcomes
- Equipment, facilities and services available
- Clubs & Associations and sports facilities
- Faculty to student ratio
- Campus size.

Just because you begin your journey in one direction, it doesn't mean that you can't take a detour at any time. So don't think of it as a one way street - it's not!

While trying to make these decisions you will no doubt seek advice from many people – your family, your friends, and if you're still at school, from your teachers. They will have some idea of your strengths, interests and talents but remember that ultimately it's your choice and nobody else can make the decision for you.

But remember, you will be the one doing the study, so it's very important that you think carefully about what you really want to do with your working life.

*Author* – Karen Penrose, Career Industry Council of Australia Project Director (Content checked November 2011)