

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS

When you leave school you will probably get into study or training that leads to a qualification.

## What kinds of qualifications are there?

There are:

- certificates and national certificates
- diplomas and national diplomas
- bachelors degrees
- graduate and postgraduate qualifications.

There are ten levels of qualifications in New Zealand. The diagram below shows typical qualifications at these levels.

Each level is based on the complexity of learning, with level one the least complex and level ten the most.

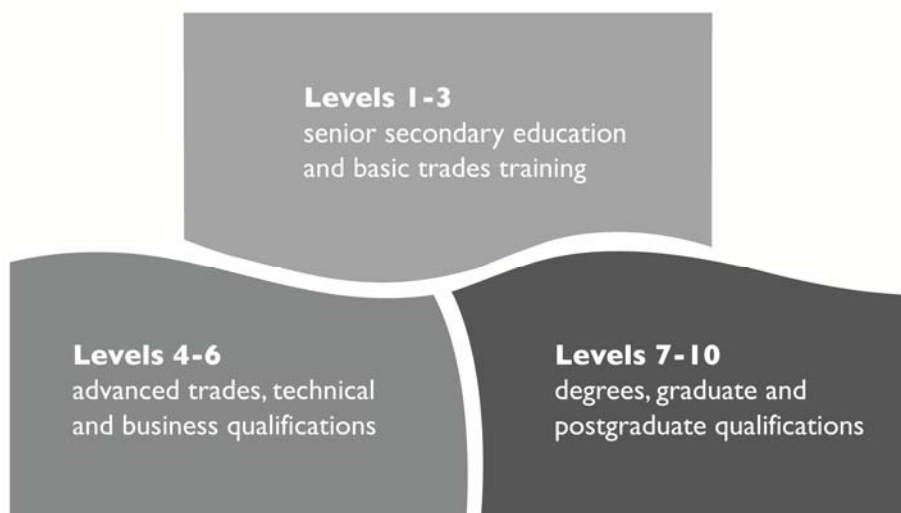
## How long do they take?

Completion times for full-time study are:

- certificates: a few months up to one year
- diplomas: one or two years but some can take longer
- bachelors degrees: generally 3 years but some can take 4 or 5
- graduate and postgraduate qualifications: months or years depending on the qualification.

Some qualifications can be done part-time over a longer period but it pays to check.

Some qualifications can be done through distance education.

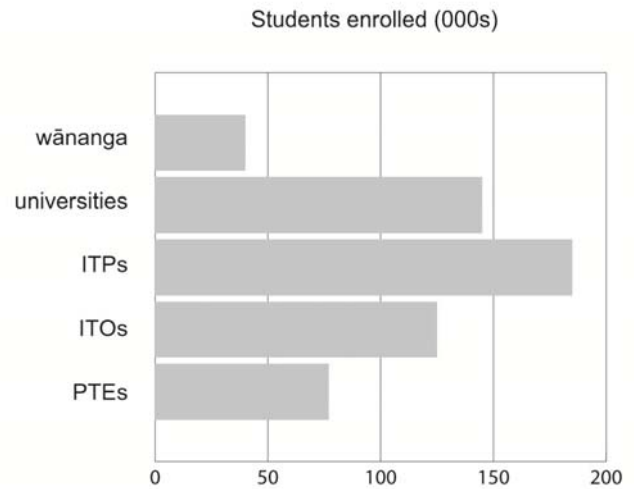


# Understanding your options

## Where can I get a qualification?

You have a choice of:

wānanga	3
universities	8
polytechnics and institutes of technology (ITPs)	20
industry training organisations (ITOs)	38
hundreds of private training establishments (PTEs).	



## Can I do any course I want?

Entry criteria vary from course to course and place to place.

- You might need a set number of credits in particular school subjects.
- When there are a limited number of places in a course, meeting the minimum entry requirements might not be enough.
- There may be extra selection criteria, eg. portfolios or experience in the workplace, and course providers may look for evidence of commitment or certain personal qualities.
- For any sort of workplace training, you need to get a job first.

## What makes up a qualification?

You complete qualifications by gaining set numbers of credits, just as you do for NCEA. In universities you complete points, but the principle is the same.

- Each qualification set outs how many credits or points you need to gain and the subjects or papers that are available in the programme.
- In many degrees you will have a main subject or 'major', eg. history. You will take courses in your main subject each year.
- For some qualifications, eg. Bachelor of Science, you will have lots of choice about which courses you do to get the credits or points you need.
- For others you will have little choice, eg. National Certificate of Architectural Technology.

## Understanding 'tertiary' terms

### CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS AND DEGREES

These courses can be different in different places, even when they have the same or similar names, because they are designed by individual tertiary organisations.

- Offered at universities, polytechnics, institutes of technology, wānanga and some private training establishments.

### DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education allows you to live anywhere and still study for a qualification. You communicate with teachers and fellow students online and through the post. Short residential sessions may be an essential part of some courses.

### GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE COURSES

You generally need to have a bachelors degree to do these courses.

- Postgraduate courses involve more advanced study in the area of your first degree.
- Graduate courses involve study in an area other than the area of your first degree.

### NATIONAL CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS

These courses are similar wherever you go in New Zealand, because they are based on nationally agreed standards.

- NCEA is a national certificate.
- Offered at polytechnics, institutes of technology, wānanga and private training establishments.
- Workplace training programmes and apprenticeships often lead to national certificates.

### STUDY

When people talk about study they are often talking about learning at an education provider, eg, a school or university.

But, some study courses include on-the-job training through work placements.

### TRAINING

When people talk about training they are often talking about learning on the job.

But, many workplace training programmes include off-the-job study.

### WORKPLACE TRAINING COURSES

ITOs coordinate workplace training courses.

- There are ITOs for most industries – trades like building and plumbing, primary industries like dairy farming, and everything from retail to manufacturing. You can get industry training in some government and community workplaces.
- Workplace training may include taking courses at polytechnics.
- The Modern Apprenticeships scheme is a special workplace training scheme. There are a restricted number of places each year.
- A modern apprenticeship can take two to four years to complete.

# What do I need to do in year 11 to keep my options open?

## Think about ...

Start thinking about the way you might want to learn once you finish school. The tertiary study and training options available offer you different ways of learning.

- **Wānanga** provide learning in keeping with ahuatanga Māori (Māori tradition) and tikanga Māori (Māori custom).
- **University courses** have an academic focus – the content is largely theoretical – but many courses have a vocational element, for example, engineering, dentistry and physical education.
- **Polytechnics and institutes of technology** offer courses with a stronger vocational focus – skills and knowledge you need for a particular job. Most courses connect students with workplaces in the industry concerned.
- **Workplace training** through an ITO means you're getting a qualification at the same time as you're working. Workplace training may combine on- and off-the-job learning.
- **Private training establishments** (PTEs) often focus on a few specialist fields, such as hospitality, business, diving, drama and hairdressing.

## Think ahead ...

When you choose your senior school subjects, check out whether your subjects will allow you to get into the tertiary study and training pathways you might want to follow.

## Remember ...

There are tertiary study and training options that allow you to continue to explore what suits you as you go.

- **A general degree** is a degree that offers you a wide range of subjects to choose from, eg, a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science. It may be a good option if you know the broad area you are interested in, but aren't sure what sort of job you are heading for. You can try different things to work out which subject(s) you want to major in.
- **Pre-trade training** is a way of learning some theory and getting practical skills before you start industry training. It may be a good option if you want to try a certain job or industry without having to commit long term, or if you want to try different things to see what job you are interested in.

If you research your options well and still remain uncertain about what you want next, a well planned gap year could give you time to discover yourself: your likes and dislikes, your strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, there could be significant disadvantages. Make sure you get good advice and think it through.