

New Zealand University Guide

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Contents

Part I: Choosing a University

Introduction 1

1 Identify your subject 9

2 Identify the programme 17

3 Choose the right university for you 46

4 How to get in 68

5 Application process 74

6 Financial 80

Part II: Understanding how University works

7 The approach to university 92

8 The structure and setup of the university 96

9 Student learning 99

10 Academic integrity 105

11 Exams 108

12 Things to know 111

The way forward 120

Part I: Choosing a University

Introduction

Here you are.

You may have finished secondary school and are now ready to embark on the next stage of your learning and development. For most of you, that next stage may be in tertiary education. If this is you, consider yourself at an advantage. This is a great time to be going into tertiary education, especially in New Zealand.

Government support of tertiary education is at an all-time high. The New Zealand government currently spends \$3 billion a year on tertiary education. Research in New Zealand has found that people with a degree are more likely to be in employment. You no longer need to go straight from school into the workforce. It has become diversified, more

competitive, with an emphasis now on acquiring knowledge and competency.

Leading companies in New Zealand are now more and more hiring entry level staff through graduate programmes and internships. Most university programmes in New Zealand now have scope for students to work directly with actual companies in their final year of study. A student now has a chance to build their reputation with a company before they have even graduated.

The transition from secondary school to tertiary education can be a confusing one. Like some people, you may feel a little ill-prepared to make a decision about whether to go to university. I can only remember having one or two classes with the career counsellor at my secondary school. It is expected that a Year 13 student should just know where they are headed next.

You may have questions such as: Do I want to spend the time and money on university? What do I want to study? Where is the best place to study a particular subject? Am I going to be able finance my studies? Is university going to be too difficult for me? If this sounds like you then this book can help.

This book focuses on universities. Although I have spent my own career working at private colleges, different types of tertiary institutions and universities, the latter gets the lion share of both students and funding from the government. There is a lot to be written in general about the field of tertiary education in New Zealand. However a survey of all these institutes would be a mighty task. The advantage of having a focus towards university is that more detail can be covered.

New Zealand universities are a great place to study. The quality of education in New Zealand is becoming recognised as being world class. New Zealand universities attract staff from all over the world, as well as some of the best academics in New Zealand. The wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring to New Zealand universities is second to none.

Aside from that, New Zealand universities offer a unique perspective on world education. We are growing our own ideas, as well as developing research and contributing on a global level. The tools that you need to succeed on the world stage are right here in your own country. The graduates and staff that New Zealand universities produce are of a very high standard.

The advantage of this book is that it starts right from the beginning. This book is about getting you into university and having the tools to succeed once you are there. It won't leave anyone behind. It is written with the school leaver in mind, but it can be just as useful for a person who has worked for a number of years and now wants to pursue tertiary education. Likewise, you may have done some study in New Zealand or overseas and now want to return to study, this book will work for you just as well.

One thing people worry about is whether they are smart enough for university. If there is one thing I have learned while working in the tertiary sector for all these years, it is that it is not all about how smart you are that will ensure your success. It is about how hard you work and what level of compatibility you have with your chosen subject.

If you don't understand a particular subject, it does not mean that you are not supposed to be at university. It is more whether you are compatible with that subject. You could be "bad" at maths and not understand it at all, but your English skills may be second to none. It means finding what you are compatible with. This ensures that you can succeed to your full potential.

This book will help you understand what you are compatible with and how that can translate into a programme you could study. Once you know the programme you could study, you can match this to a university. When you have identified that you have compatibility with a subject, all that matters from that point on is how hard you work.

Employers know that when they see your academic transcripts from university, C grades may indicate that is how much work you put in. Unfortunately they don't look at any other difficulties you may have been experiencing that year. This is why it is essential to recognise exactly what level of workload you are able to handle. You don't have to study full-time, you can study an appropriate workload to ensure the highest grades possible.

Above nearly everything else, what this book requires you to do is to look at yourself. This book will give you the information you need to know about how to enter and survive university, but it requires you to look inside yourself and see what information resonates with you. Not all of the content is going to be relevant, but what should be clear by the end, is a clear path about how to be successful at university.

After learning how to identify the subject area and programme suitable for you, we then explore the eight universities in New Zealand in detail. There are unlimited factors to consider when choosing a university. At the end of the day, for you, it may just be about being close to your friends or family. It may be the climate of where the university is located, or it may be the rent prices.

Every university in New Zealand is worthy of consideration of both your time and investment. There is not a university in New Zealand that this book would not recommend. Sure, some universities have strengths over others, but those that lack strength in one area, may dominate other universities in another area.

This book has not conducted its own survey of the universities in New Zealand. Rather, it has collated the existing evaluations about the universities in order to put them all in one place. It doesn't sell you one particular university, but rather gives you as much information as it can about each one. The aim is that after evaluating this for yourself, you will be able to make a decision as to where you want to go.

Once you have identified where you want to study. The book gives you a step-by-step guide as to what happens next. This involves the admission process, right through to financing your studies. The second part of the book will prepare you for university after you have gained admission.

The aim of the second part of the book is to ensure that turning up for your first day of class will not be quite so overwhelming.

You will at least have an understanding of the institutional processes that you can come to expect. These processes often do not become apparent to students until they are well into their degree.

University is a great place to be and many graduates of universities are proud of where they have studied. They may keep in touch with their lecturers and the university and are richly fulfilled by their experience. They bring the character of that university into whatever they do afterwards. As people, they become unique in themselves but are also able to move forward with a solid grounding of a university experience behind them.

If you are at the point where you are just about to embark on university study, this will be a unique experience that you may not have again. The level of energy that you put into university will likely match the level of reward you get out. With this book, university doesn't need to be about taking a plunge and seeing if you succeed. You get to take the plunge and have the tools at your disposal to allow your success to come easily.

Of course, there are limitations with what this book can cover. For instance, there are currently over 650 degree qualifications listed with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). Not all of these degrees will be currently taught, but it indicates the extent of what is on offer in New Zealand. For this reason, this book will only focus on the popular degrees and ones offered at most universities in New Zealand.

What will also become apparent is that each university may offer variations of the same degree. While Lincoln University

teaches the Bachelor of Agriculture, Massey University teaches the Bachelor of Agricultural Science. Surveying each one would be quite a detailed task.

If your chosen degree is not covered in this book, the process and evaluation style in which the degrees that are covered should give you some indication of what to look for. From reading the degrees covered, you may want to embark on your own evaluation using the university's resources available.

In fact, the best resource is actually your chosen university's website. You can learn more detail there about the programme and its structure that should help you to make a decision to enrol. Some of the information about the courses has been sourced directly from the university's graduate profiles which are also useful to look at if you can get hold of them.

When the universities are covered, you will notice an emphasis on institutional and teaching quality. These are the two elements which make a university stand out. At an institutional level, the things to look out for are what resources and support this university has on offer for the student. This book focuses on this, because it is a strong indicator as to the level that the university values their students.

Likewise in terms of teaching quality, this book will focus on what support staff are given by the university to be able to develop their ability to help students. As well as this, a good indicator is what steps that university is taking to be able to connect with students.

If nothing else, this book should give you an indication of what the tertiary sector is like. It should align you with the thinking process of what makes a great university. You should then be able to use this to your advantage and get the most out of your programme and university.

Chapter 1

Identify your subject

Where you are at now

Now that we are here, we should really begin with the question:
Do you want to do further study?

If the answer is “yes”, then you can think about what subject you are interested in. The following steps will not only help you identify your strengths, but also your passions. Once you have brought your strengths and passions together, it will be easy to match them to a subject, a programme and then a University.

If the answer to the above question is “no”, you don’t want to do further study, then you may want to consider taking some time before proceeding. Or you can keep reading: this book can actually give you an understanding about universities in New Zealand, if nothing else. From there you may later decide

that you want to pursue further study. Or, you may decide it is not for you.

Then again, you may not even have any interest at studying at this point in your life. You may want to work for a year or two and then study. You may want to go overseas and travel. These options are all fine and are actually very common. Your parents may not like this, but remember ultimately it is your decision.

Choosing your subject

The word “subject”, also refers to subject area, field or interest. This is a very broad term and it does not mean programme. A programme is a Bachelor degree, but a subject is just simply maths or health. You can always come back to this first subject if you have found that the programme is not right for you.

It is helpful to look at a subject as a category that can encompass a range of sub categories. Here are some examples. Remember, we are not talking about programmes at this point, just possible subjects.

Health	Engineering	Design	Teaching
Law	Mathematics	Architecture	Computing
Science	Sports	Music	Art
Literature	Business	Languages	Hospitality

These are just a few subjects, but there are many more. Within these subjects are sub categories that are a little bit more specific. Here are some examples:

Heath

- Medicine
- Psychology

Law

- Criminal law
- Tort law

Science

- Biology
- Chemistry

Literature

- Media
- English

These sub categories will usually end up closely matching the chosen field of work that you eventually choose. But don't worry if you are still drawing a blank as to what you should study even after seeing this list. This list is just to demonstrate that subjects contain within them specialised fields.

Strength and Passion

Before we look at your specific strengths and passions it is a good idea to note that strengths and passions are both very different. You can have strength in something, but if you are not passionate about it, it may not be a good idea to take the subject as a programme at University. The word "passion" in this sense can be likened to the will to succeed, devotion, motivation or love for something.

Likewise, you can be passionate about something, but if you have not demonstrated strength in this subject in the past, you

may struggle in that sort of programme at University. However, this is not to say that you should take these two measurements as the be all and end all.

Strength is just as important as passion. Strength in this sense equates to your level of skill, ability or capacity to understand something. By recognising your passion and strength you can determine your level of compatibility towards a subject.

There are other factors to consider also, but these are usually background factors. These background factors can sometimes persuade you to ignore your strengths and passions and lead you to enrol in a programme anyway. Such factors might include: larger salary incentives; what your parents want you to do; what your financial sponsor will pay for; what jobs are in high demand; what you have always dreamed of doing from an early age; or what your friends are doing (including boyfriend or girlfriend).

These factors can sometimes take over and result in you enrolling into a programme that is not suited to you at all. For instance, Emily was a student who had just turned 18 years old and went on to study design at university, but it was a long road getting there. She nearly ended up studying something else that she was not fully compatible with.

She was in her final year of secondary school and had two parents who were both accountants. They owned an accounting practice and it had always been a given in their eyes that she would eventually work there and take over the practice. Emily went along with this to some extent because

she had never really given too much thought before as to what she wanted to do with her life.

Emily had always been a natural at maths in school (a strength), but she spent most of her weekends sketching with a pencil on any surface that she could find. She would draw boats, houses, characters, anything. In her spare time while at secondary school she would learn how to use all the design computer programs and had even posted some of her work online, for which she received rave comments (a passion).

You can see that there was a disparity between her strength of maths and her real passion: they didn't match. Her strength was actually in both maths and design, but her passion was only design. Her attention wasn't suddenly pulled over to the television when a financial item came on the news. She didn't invade her parent's workspace all the time asking to be involved in audits. Instead she drew sketches all weekend.

Emily could have ended up enrolling into the accounting programme at university because it may have guaranteed her a good income. Like most people she probably didn't want to struggle with the prospect of not making it as a designer and remaining poor. With accounting, she knew her parents would be happy with her choice and she could always keep design as a hobby.

Perhaps if she had studied accounting, after ten years of working as an accountant she might have had enough capital to set-up a design firm of her own. Then, she could really do what she always wanted to do. Believe it or not, there are thousands of students who enrol into university every year who

take this route of picking the safest option, causing them to take the long way around to do what they really want to.

That is why it is important to listen to what your passion dictates, as well. It becomes quite clear when other factors take over from your strength and passion. If you are considering this route that is fine, but maybe just make sure you are aware of the reasons you are making a particular choice about what to study. If Emily did enrol in accounting she might not have even succeeded in that programme. Other factors often take over as well.

When Emily eventually did go to University, she became more independent. Sometimes university students move away from home and don't see their parents as much. They begin to meet different people with different interests and backgrounds. These people are not only from different parts of this country but also different countries altogether. Naturally people become influenced by the new people they meet. By not being around her parents as much Emily was probably able to see more clearly that accounting was never really for her.

Like Emily, you may begin to think differently than how you thought at secondary school. You may find that suddenly at university, the power is in your hands as to whether to turn up to lectures or not. It is here, that passion becomes really important. If the passion was never there for Emily, this would probably have begun to affect her studies. Luckily for Emily, she chose design so she was actually looking forward to going to class each day. She would put a lot of extra-curricular work into completing her assignments.

Sometimes after the first year, a student may withdraw from their programme. The motivating factor for this is usually because their grades were so low that they consider this to be “a sign”. If someone takes a programme that they are not suited to and fails all their papers in the first year we know that one of the reasons could be because they may have strength in this subject, but didn’t have passion for it.

Usually when there is no passion, the student will just not put in the work. Not because they are not good at the subject but because they just don’t care. Or they may unconsciously spend their time doing something else. For Emily, she might design birthday cards in her spare time. Therefore if you are trying to identify what your passion is, is a good idea to look at what you enjoy doing in your down time.

It is easy to identify your strengths. You simply need to look at your report cards and assessment results. Also, think back over the years to that time when your teacher complimented you on something. This comment will have stayed with you. Whatever they complimented you on, that is a good indicator of a particular strength that you possess.

Jock remembered a comment all the way back in Year 9 by his English teacher who said he was good at writing. For some reason, that stuck with him over the years. Then in Year 13 another English teacher rang him up after the NZQA results had come out and congratulated him on his English result. These were signs of Jock’s strength. After noting these comments as well as assessing what he was doing in his spare time, Jock formed a clear idea about what he wanted to study at university.

If you can stick to strength and passion as a guide, it will take a considerable unforeseen circumstance to prevent you from achieving success at university. Choosing a subject is a time to remain open: consider all the factors even the ones about money, parents and job success. Don't block any factors out. If you are open to everything you should see a clear path emerge from all of it. Those other factors that were initially deterring you may not seem that important any more.

Chapter 2

Identify the programme

A programme is course of study, usually comprising around 24 papers that runs for a period of time. For university, this usually equates to a bachelor degree. Typically a bachelor degree is three years, but can also run to four years or sometimes even longer.

A bachelor degree is taken at undergraduate level. This means exactly what the name describes: “under graduate”. You are completing a programme and you haven’t yet graduated. You also have postgraduate level, which most commonly equates to master programmes. They are called post graduate because you have to have graduated usually with a bachelor degree before you can study them. There are exceptions to this, such as studying towards a master’s degree with the “prior learning” that comes with industry experience.

As well as bachelor degrees at undergraduate levels, you can have a variation of this called a “Bachelor with Honours”. This is typically one year longer than a normal bachelor degree. It bridges the gap into studying at a postgraduate level. So in the honours year, you may do level 8 papers.

Bachelor degrees are the main focus of universities as nowadays universities are moving away from offering certificate and diploma courses. This could be because the government are trying to focus their funding on degree study for universities. Typically such programmes (below bachelor level) are offered by polytechnics or private training establishments (PTEs).

Programmes at university are on a level system known as the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF). This runs from levels 1-10, and NCEA is levels 1-3 on this framework. The following describes how this works:

Level 4	}	Pre-degree	}	Undergraduate level
Level 5		Bachelor degree	}	
Level 6	}			
Level 7				
Level 8	}	Master degree	}	Postgraduate level
Level 9				

Certificate and diploma programmes are typically at level 4 or level 5 and 6 respectively. Talking generally here, as all universities are different: a bachelor degree is Level 5, 6 and 7. Year 1 is level 5, Year 2 is level 6 and Year 3 is level 7. However Year 2 can vary between levels 5, 6 and sometimes even level 7 papers, although this is rare. Each level of a degree comprises 120 points each year. This 120 points is further divided into eight 15 point papers. In New Zealand each paper at university is usually worth 15 points.

This means that you would study four papers in semester 1 (60 points) and four papers in semester 2 (60 points). That is 120 points for the year which is the normal course load for a full-time student. A three year bachelor degree will require you to graduate with 360 points. A four year bachelor with honours degree would require you to graduate with 480 points.

In most degrees, you will have a major. This is a subject that you will focus your degree on. So to graduate in a particular major, you would need to complete a certain amount of points towards that subject. A major will have a particular set of papers that specifically belongs to it: you can then choose from these which ones to complete.

A minor is similar to the major but you would complete a smaller number of points towards it. The reason for both the major and the minor is the way that degrees are structured, it focuses on one subject rather than a multitude of subjects.

Sian was studying a Bachelor of Science with a major in Chemistry. She was in her first year at university so was naturally unsure about which papers she needed to take. It was

still January so classes did not start until March, but she decided to go into the science school office at her university.

What she learnt was that a Bachelor of Science has many different majors. These include anything from Statistics to Zoology, but her university required all of these different majors to study a lot of the same papers in the first year. This meant that for many of her first year papers she would be in the same class as students studying other majors. She realised that it wasn't until she reached second and third year that she would really begin to specialise in Chemistry.

It was clear that her school wanted her to take two core chemistry papers in her first year. She learnt that each paper was worth 15 points. That meant that if she did those two core chemistry papers that would be 30 points. She heard somewhere that for the year, she needed to be enrolled in 120 points if she wanted to be full-time. So that meant that she needed six more papers or 90 points.

It turned out, the particular science degree at her university allowed Sian to take these 90 points from anywhere on the list of Year 1 papers. That sounded like good news to Sian, because although she wanted to major in chemistry, there were other papers in Biology, Ecology and Zoology that she also wanted to take. She ended up enrolling in six papers across these other majors.

Degrees are written and approved at one central organisation called Universities New Zealand. They are the representative body for New Zealand's eight universities. So essentially all the Universities are working together to offer the same

programmes, but with their own particular brand on each programme. Universities New Zealand is actually made up of all the Vice-Chancellors of the universities. So it is not some external body telling the universities what to do. It is the universities themselves agreeing together how they should structure courses.

Every new programme that is created or modified has to go through the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP). Once CUAP gives approval that new programme or change becomes current and the university can teach it.

As it was said earlier, there may be the same degree across all the Universities, but each degree is unique in its own way. This is because it has been developed over the years in that particular institution. Within each degree there are paper descriptors which are unique and have been written and developed by staff within that particular university.

The paper descriptors are not identical across all universities. They will be similar however, because students need to meet certain paper objectives to achieve competency in those papers. This will enable them to complete all the requirements of their degree.

The paper objectives belong to the larger degree requirements which are standard across all the universities. Audits are put in place to ensure that each University is adhering to the requirements.

Your programme should identify clearly what you are intending to do in the workplace, for example medicine or a

law degree. However this is not always the case. There are those that study philosophy and end up working in strategic communications at a large company. The skills you can acquire from a programme can really take you anywhere, if you can prove to those in the workforce that you can do a particular job.

Undergraduate degrees

In this section we examine the main undergraduate degrees but you can look up any degree that is not included at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz>

Bachelor of Architectural Studies

The pathway to becoming an architect in New Zealand has recently changed. Historically students would complete the Bachelor of Architecture which was a five year degree, as well as the required practical experience before being eligible for the initial registration with the New Zealand Registered Architects Board.

Students now are required to obtain a Master of Architecture degree before being eligible to register. The Master of Architecture is a two year postgraduate degree. Entry into the Masters programme is by way of completing the Bachelor of Architectural Studies, which is a three year degree. So all up, it still takes students five years: the same amount of time as before to register to become an architect. There is just a different way of getting there now.

The move to make the undergraduate degree three years as opposed to five could have been for a number of reasons. Perhaps five years was considered a long time to complete an undergraduate degree and perhaps some students were not lasting this long and dropping out. This way they can get out into the industry sooner and although they are not able to practise as an architect right away, they can begin to work in that environment. The advantage of the Master of Architecture is that it can be studied part-time.

The move may have also been prompted by the necessity to keep in line with other undergraduate degrees which are typically three years. Having a master's degree is highly valued by some employers. There are currently two universities in New Zealand that offer architecture, these are: the University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington.

Depending on which university you study at, the ability to specialise will vary. Both universities offer core papers that you will study in the first year, but only Victoria University of Wellington allows you to study one of four specialisations: architecture, architecture history and theory, interior architecture and landscape architecture. These specialisations will become more apparent from the second years onwards.

The University of Auckland keeps the degree core for all students throughout and there is not currently the option to specialise to the extent that Victoria University of Wellington does. In saying that however, the degree does allow you to choose one core elective paper in the final year.

Bachelor of Arts

This is typically a three year degree. It does not mean that you do a degree in Art, like painting. Arts is a term to describe a category of different subjects that can be classified under the broad term, Arts and Humanities. These types of majors don't belong to other categories. The majors include anything from Portuguese to Criminology.

An Arts degree has a reputation for not leading readily to a job in the workforce. This is by comparison to say medicine or law which have more of a clear and natural progression into a job at the end of the programme.

If you are studying something like Philosophy as part of a Bachelor of Arts (BA), it may be less clear what job you will go into when you graduate. But then again if you are studying something like public policy it may be clearer that you want to work in the public sector such as the government.

An Arts degree is very useful to take if you are interested in a particular subject. It gives you a specialised background in a particular area. This is actually surprisingly useful to companies. They recognise this speciality as you move further up the ranks in the company.

Bachelor of Commerce

The Bachelor of Commerce is regarded as being a highly flexible degree. Some universities offer up to thirteen majors, and others a bit less. Some of the common majors are: Accounting, Commercial Law, Economics, Finance, Human

Resource Management, Information Systems, International Business, Management, Marketing, Operations and Supply Chain, Management and Taxation.

Typically if you studied a Bachelor of Commerce, you would be interested in a career in one the above areas. You may end up working in a company and you may move into a management role or perhaps marketing. The skills you develop with a Bachelor of Commerce will give you a solid business understanding as well as communication, teamwork and leadership skills.

Choosing the Accounting major does not mean that you automatically qualify as an accountant after graduation. You will also need to gain membership with either Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ) or Certified Practising Accountants (CPA) Australia. To become fully qualified you need to complete two further years of distance education and practical experience which you can often complete part-time while working.

The same goes for Finance if you wanted to become a financial advisor for instance, there are various organisations to become a member of including the Institute of Financial Advisors (IFA) and the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute.

Bachelor of Design

Design is one programme that is quite unique within each institution. With ongoing technological advancement the content of design courses are constantly updating. Universities will often hold an industry advisory board committee meeting

annually. During these meetings they will invite members of the industry to give them advice about current trends so that the courses keep in touch with innovative practices.

There are a number of independent colleges that offer design programmes, but the programmes that are run at University are also useful to consider.

There are currently five majors of design at New Zealand Universities. However, this is likely to evolve over the years as design seems to be a subject that constantly changes. The five main majors are: Communication (formerly Graphic Design), Digital, Fashion, Product or Industrial, Spatial and Textiles.

Most of these programmes are studio based, meaning that you spend your time in large rooms in a creative environment as well as in computer rooms. You will rarely be in a lecture hall if you study this degree, except occasionally for minor or elective papers.

Graphic Design has recently changed its name at both AUT University and Massey University. It is now commonly known as Communication Design. For years graphic design was a brand that school leavers were familiar with and that was the most popular choice at design school. The name change is to keep in line with the changing industry, but also to be more specific about what it is you are doing when you move into the workforce.

Communication Design allows you to pick one of a number of majors, these usually include: Advertising, Digital Media, Graphic Design and Illustration. The design studio papers are

usually yearlong 30 point papers. Here you will learn the basic design concepts: including typographic, photographic and drawing elements. You will then practice these and also be given a project throughout the year to develop your own skills in these areas.

The other component is the media component. This is computer based and will involve learning the design computer programs. This is aimed at gaining technical skills because knowing these programmes will be expected in the workforce.

Digital Design is not just focussed on animation, but also cinema, gaming and mobile systems. In the first year there is studio software-based learning. You will learn about storytelling and moving image.

Fashion Design is structured in a similar way in that it has core studio papers where you will spend most of your time. Instead of a focus on learning computer programs emphasis is put on theory and developing an awareness of fashion. Fashion students typically work closely with students studying Textiles.

Product or Industrial Design is the process of designing an object that can be used by consumers. There is the split between studio papers and design programmes. Students work closely with companies and develop real world products.

Spatial Design is a relatively new major but is becoming increasingly popular. It grew out of architecture, but is quite distinct from it. Typically if you wanted to be an interior designer you would study spatial design. A basic definition of

spatial design would be that it teaches you to think differently as a designer or to look at design in a new way.

You will typically work on urban planning projects, such as designing a new park for a suburb. But not all students in this programme do this. Others are more interested in lighting and set design and they end up focussing on this aspect of Spatial Design in their degree.

Like most other design programmes, you will spend most of your time in a studio. That studio becomes your second home, it is like a living creative environment. You may find classmates don't seem to leave there much and spend hours there at night or on the weekend. There will likely be empty food containers and coffee cups strewn around and sections of the walls covered with inspirational pictures.

Entry into any of the design programmes will generally be by interview and the prospective student will be required to submit a portfolio of work. This used to be required in hardcopy but now in most cases it can be uploaded directly to the university website as a PDF file.

What to include in your portfolio: as much as possible, five pages is not really enough. You should try to triple that number of pages. This really shouldn't be a problem. If you are a serious designer you will probably have work everywhere, saved on your computer or in scrapbooks. You probably wouldn't want to include new drawings in the portfolio, but if you are doing this, just make sure you provide a good variety of work.

Some design schools will require your portfolio to be in as early as August the year before, so you will want to check the dates on that. They usually have different intake rounds if they are a large design programme. So if you are included in the first round, your portfolio may be assessed as early as September.

Once the portfolio is received, assessors will often first do a quick flick through the portfolio to get a feel for the work, and then they will stop on a particular page. You don't need to use this opportunity to impress them with your work on computer programs. The assessors are more interested in looking at raw, simple drawings rather than technical skills

What they are actually trying to grasp from asking you to submit a portfolio of work is a sense of who you are as an individual and how you express yourself creatively. They really want to be able to identify your thinking process when you draw. They also want to see your personality come through your drawings. Include the drawings that you have done as part of assessments, but also any sketches that you have done in your own time outside of school.

Do not worry if the drawings you submit are not very well drawn, as the assessors are not really worried about that. You will learn technical skill and how to draw at university. They are interested in seeing a motif that carries throughout your work. There should be something unique coming through, in terms of style. Your work should identify you, in the same way that it is easy to recognise a Pablo Picasso painting.

If you are applying for Fashion Design, it is not imperative that you submit drawings of clothes. Same goes for the other

majors, your drawings do not have to relate to your chosen major. Your sketches are enough: you haven't graduated from fashion school yet, so it is not necessary to make it seem as though you have. Again, you will learn the technical skill there, just be as honest through your work as you can be - flaws and all.

Sometimes a student will be accepted straight away on the basis of their portfolio, but this is rare. Most students will be required to have an interview. The interview panel will usually consist of up to three staff. These are normally lecturers that teach on the programme. The interviews will usually last 20-30 minutes. If you get called for an interview it means that they have seen your work and are interested in you.

It can seem overwhelming if this is your first interview, but really you can relax. It is actually more of a chance for you to get to know them and vice versa. You may be deciding between a few different design schools and will want to get a feel for how they teach. The interview is for them to determine two things: how mature you are and how your thinking processes work when you create.

How mature you are is all about demonstrating that you are ready to move to university level. University is a whole different ball game to secondary school. At secondary school you can sometimes get in trouble for not handing in work or not coming to class. At University, you will just be given a zero grade and if you fall behind, no one is there to force you to catch up.

There is a lot of self-directed learning in design at university level and it is important that you can demonstrate that you are able to work independently, as well as in a group. But the meeting of deadlines, and your ability to put in the work are key factors, as well showing initiative. If you can think of examples where you have previously demonstrated these traits and can share them with the panel, this will be helpful.

If you have a great portfolio but turn up to the interview giggling or appearing vacant and can't really give a reason why you want to study design, then they may not accept you. The panel wants to hear you talk passionately about your work. This allows them to understand your thinking process.

If your portfolio really impressed the assessors, they will usually have printed it out or will have the PDF up on a screen. They will ask you questions about your work and invite you to talk about it. It is not important at this point that you have worked out a sophisticated answer. The panel is not looking for a clever answer, but rather they are interested in the way that you discuss your work.

It would be good to describe how you were feeling when you drew that particular piece of work. What you were trying to show and why you made certain decisions. Talk about the colours and why you chose those specific colours. What those colours mean to you can also be important such as what they reminded you of or whether they held a particular significance.

After the interview it can sometime take a few days to notify you of the outcome. Sometimes the panel tell you right there and then whether you got in. Be aware however, that you can

keep your options open and apply to as many design programmes as possible.

Bachelor of Engineering (Hons)

In New Zealand there are currently only two types of undergraduate engineering degrees: the Bachelor of Engineering Technology and Bachelor of Engineering (Hons). These degrees have been developed for the workforce, which separates engineering workers into engineers and engineering technologists.

The easiest way to describe the difference between an engineer and an engineering technologist is that an engineer will have the capacity to design concepts and bring them right through into reality. An engineering technologist will generally only have the capacity to apply another engineer's concepts and bring them into reality. The 'bringing it into reality' part relates to the practical application of an idea: testing it out and then building it.

In view of this, the scope of an engineer's training is wider than that of an engineering technologist. An engineer's training will typically develop a student's capacity to theorise, analyse and implement ideas. They also will be taught mathematics to a higher level. The engineering technologist's training will be more practically based and will focus on being able to apply these ideas and construct them.

There are many different branches of engineering. The most basic definition of engineering is: to find a solution to a

problem using a scientific or mathematical approach. So, a problem can pop up anywhere, like how to harness the sun's energy. In response, a solution has been created using mechanical engineering to capture energy by using solar panels and then developing it.

The different branches of engineering include: Architectural, Chemical, Civil, Construction, Computer, Electrical, Electronic, Maritime, Mechanical and Network. These are just a sample of the many branches.

The Bachelor of Engineering Technology is a three year degree. It requires you to be adept in both Physics and Mathematics. If you are thinking about taking this degree next year and are in your final year of secondary school now, you will need to make sure you are studying both these subjects. Although currently for Bachelor of Engineering Technology it only requires you to have Physics to Year 12. Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) requires you to have it at Year 13.

The Bachelor of Engineering Technology degree is more practically focussed. The curriculum does not concentrate so much on getting you to design and theorise, but rather to use existing theories and develop an application of those theories. You will not study maths to such a high level as in the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons).

In your first year of Bachelor of Engineering Technology you will cover the basic principles of engineering. So if you have chosen electrical as your major, you will focus on basic physics principles in the first year and calculus as well as computing, electronic and design basics which are all common to the

engineering programmes. The first year is generally quite similar across all the majors, with some exceptions.

In the second year, you begin to focus on specialised papers that relate to your major. You will learn practical deconstructing and constructing of materials. How it all works and how to test theories out. By the third year, you continue with this and get the freedom to choose which papers to do next, to a much greater extent than Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) students.

You will also complete your own project during the final year. You will be required to test an idea or theory and find a unique solution to a specific problem. You generally get to present this project to industry professionals who come to view these presentations at the end of the year. Companies love attending because it gives them a chance to recruit people who are on the verge of graduating.

The Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) lasts a year longer. A common misconception of students who complete the Bachelor of Engineering Technology is that if they want to graduate with Honours they can just transfer to the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) programme and only do one more year. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The programmes are structured differently from the first year, with a different focus.

Although some papers may be similar between the two degrees, Bachelor of Engineering Technology students are looking at a least another two and a half years, maybe even three years on top of the three years they have already

completed if they then want to go onto complete the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) degree.

If you are doing the Bachelor of Engineering Honours degree, you will be at an advantage if you are good at mathematics. Check out the latest programme requirements from your university, but it will usually require you to have done Calculus in the final year of secondary school. If you are not mathematically inclined, you perhaps may want to reassess your choice. This is not to exclude anyone from choosing engineering, but mathematics is really a language that you need to “get”. Perhaps if this isn’t you, re-examine your strengths and passion again or focus on the Bachelor of Engineering Technology degree instead.

If you can understand the mathematical concepts in the first year of Bachelor of Engineering Honours, the degree will become a lot easier for you. The mathematics papers will be the most important, because you will use these calculations in the other papers that you study.

You should be aware that a Bachelor of Engineering degree is not normally awarded to a student enrolled in the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in the case where they fail to meet the honours requirement. This means the student has not achieved a high enough GPA (General Pass Average? what does this mean?) in their degree to have the honours title attached. This remains the case even though they may have studied the same amount of time as a student who is awarded the title with their degree.

At the end of both of these degrees you are required to submit a work experience report before you can graduate with the degree. The work experience is taken at a company of your choice that you will usually have to organise yourself. It requires you to complete 600 hours of work experience if you are a Bachelor of Engineering Technology student and 800 hours of work experience if you are studying a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours).

This work experience is an Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) requirement. IPENZ is an organisation which represent professional engineers in New Zealand.

Typically a lot of men study this degree. However, there are increasing numbers of women now studying engineering.

Bachelor of Law

The Bachelor of Law degree is similar across all Universities in that you will study a 30 point paper across the whole first year which covers the legal system of New Zealand. Then you can fill the rest of your points up for the year (you need 120 points in total) with non-legal papers. Instead of calling it Years 1 to Year 4, the faculty refers to it as Part I to Part IV.

Because of the non-legal papers in Year 1, a lot of students study law as a conjoint degree with something else. Conjoint meaning that you will study two degrees together such as a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Science. If you take them together, it can take less time that if you studied them consecutively.

In Part II you would typically study four core law subjects: these are Contract Law, Tort Law, Criminal Law and Public Law. This may vary at some universities and you may instead do Property Law in Part II instead and one of the other core papers later in Part III. Part III and Part IV is when you begin to study law electives as well as finishing off the core law papers such as Equity and Jurisprudence.

When studying Part I to Part IV, you will be enrolled in various legal research and writing components. These aren't papers as such because they are normally not worth any points, but nevertheless you are required to complete them in order to graduate. They teach you how to write like a professional lawyer and are sometimes taught by practicing members of the legal community.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Laws, if you want to practise as a Barrister or a Solicitor in New Zealand you must complete a Professional Legal Studies programme. These courses take between 13-18 weeks and are run by the Institute of Professional Legal Studies (IPLS).

In the same way that if you studied engineering at university, you typically would have been good at maths at secondary school. If you are study law at university, you typically would have been good at English at secondary school. Writing will need to be your strength. It is not uncommon also to find that students who have taken part in public speaking competitions or who have been on the debating team at secondary school, will go on to study law.

Essentially, law requires you to be able to see beyond the normal limits of a situation. That is why law and philosophy often go hand-in-hand. To expand on that a bit more: a law student or lawyer will be presented with a problem. Their task is not so much to find one solution, but rather to find all the ways that the problem could be examined.

You have to have a logical mind and be able to see past the blind spots. This is an accomplishment that is difficult for many of us. Judges are normally experts at this and they have a special ability to see the bigger picture and all possible arguments both pro and con the case that is being heard. Judges normally wouldn't have blind spots that limit them from seeing all the various ways to approach a problem. It would seem that you either have this skill or you don't. Like mathematics, law is a language that you are just able to understand.

In saying that, this way of thinking can be developed. Don't let this dismay you if you think that you don't have these qualities. These skills can be taught at law school and you are able to develop an understanding of this language as you study it.

It is difficult to discover whether you will be good at law while you are still at secondary school. Usually you will find out in your first or second year of the degree if it is right for you. In addition, it is estimated that about 50% of students who graduate with a law degree don't actually go on to practice law. Having a law degree however is highly regarded in many other jobs because of the skills it imparts to those who study it.

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery

There are two Medical schools in New Zealand: at the University of Auckland and the University of Otago. Medicine is probably one of the most competitive degrees out there, not only in terms of initially getting accepted, but also working to retain your place once you are in the programme, for each successive year.

The degree takes six years. In the first year you will complete a general Health Sciences year. After the first year, students will do two years of theory work covering subjects such as the human body and its functioning. Here, you will also be introduced to communication skills and professional preparation.

Years 4, 5 and 6 are putting into practice what you learnt in Years 2 and 3. If you are studying at the University of Otago you will normally do a clinical placement in the South Island or Lower North Island in either Dunedin, Christchurch or Wellington. If you are studying at the University of Auckland you will do your placement somewhere around Auckland or in the upper North Island.

It is important to note that students coming directly from secondary school cannot gain direct entry into this programme, they must do the Health Sciences year first. To get into the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery after this, students should have completed their first year with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 6.0. This equates to a B+ average for the University of Auckland, which makes them eligible for an interview there.

For University of Otago, students are required to get a minimum of 70% or a B grade in every paper that they attempt in their first year of Health Sciences. As well as this, for both Universities, students must complete the Undergraduate Medical and Health Sciences Admission Test (UMAT). The UMAT tests allow for less restriction of entry into medicine and assess aspects like logical reasoning, problem solving, understanding people and non-verbal reasoning in prospective students.

The third criteria that currently only the University of Auckland uses for selecting students, is an interview. The qualities that an interview panel look for are: maturity, leadership, sensitivity, strong communication and an excellent level of learning. They also want you to demonstrate that you have interests in a wide variety of activities.

Students will only gain entry at the University of Auckland based on three different criteria. The weighting of the entry is split is 60% based on GPA, 15% based on the UMAT score and the interview will be worth 25%. For the University of Otago, 67% will be based on the applicant's academic grades and 33% will be based on the UMAT score. At Otago there are no student interviews prior to admission.

Bachelor of Science

The Bachelor of Science is a three year degree that incorporates a number of different majors. The majors common to the universities in New Zealand are: Animal Science, Astronomy, Biochemistry, Biology, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Ecology, Environmental

Science, Genetics, Geography, Geology, Marine Science, Microbiology, Physics, Psychology, Sports and Exercise Science, Statistics and Zoology.

The aims of this programme are to gain an understanding of the concepts, theories and practical results of the particular major that the student has chosen. The Bachelor of Science aims to enable students to meet the entry-level requirements of employers in science-based organisations and to develop research skills to the level required for employment or postgraduate study. An emphasis is placed on the student gaining an understanding of scientific methods and approaches to assist them in solving complex problems. There is an expectation that the student will develop logical, critical and analytical thinking skills along the way, as well as an understanding of the current global issues and debates surrounding their chosen major.

Biology is a subject devoted to the study of life that investigates the structure and functioning of all living organisms. It traces their evolutionary origins right through to their connections in the physical world as well as the chemical processes that result from this development. If this sounds like a major you could be interested in, the programme covers a range of papers including ecology, plant sciences, marine and freshwater as well as animal biology. It also explores animal biology, biotechnology, molecular biology, genetics and biomedicine.

A biochemist studies the chemical structure and functions of plants, animals and micro-organisms, such as bacteria. Someone who chooses this subject will have an investigative mind and be very observant. It requires patience and good

problem solving skills. You will study the chemical make-up of genes, proteins and molecules and the chemical process that are going on such as digestion and growth. You will learn about diseases and vaccines and other medicines.

At university you will develop a knowledge of physics, chemistry and biology. You will engage in experiments and spend lots of time in the labs. When you graduate from either biology or biochemistry you will probably work in a range of different industries, including government and research institutes.

Chemistry is the study of science involving atoms and molecules. It details their make-up and the processes involved, including interactions between molecules as well as chemical reactions. You will explore chemical models and come at chemistry as the central science, but drawing on related fields such as biology, geology, environmental studies, medicine and engineering.

Chemistry is a very practical major, so as a student you will gain experience in the laboratory: designing experiments, analysing chemicals, learning safe practice, as well as being trained in using instruments and calculating measurements to come to conclusions. There is also training in the use of computer systems for the data and computer modelling part of the programme. The aim of a graduate is to be able to communicate ideas clearly and to be numerically and computer literate.

To succeed in the industry chemists need to be able to pay attention to details. They also need to have the ability to think creatively and in contrast to a commonly held belief about

scientist in the lab, they must be well organised and able to communicate ideas clearly.

Chemists are employed in a variety of different industries. They may be hired to test the quality of a product by a paint company or supervise the process involved in the manufacturing of drinks or food. They may be employed by the government or may become involved in some area of research in the field of pollution for example. You would not become a dispensing or pharmaceutical chemist, which requires you to study a Bachelor of Pharmacy.

You will spend a lot of your time problem solving. You might be presented with a problem in your place of employment and you will draw on your training of understanding the chemical make-up of materials or elements and practical experiments in order to find a solution to that problem and help that company move forward.

Computer Science will cover the basic subject of computers and how computers work. Students will look at the architecture of computers, systems, software, programming languages, how data communicates as well as networks and robotics. It will also show you how computers manage information and you will learn about algorithms, data structures and data management. The contributions of computers to society will also be a focus of your degree: you will look at artificial intelligence, the internet, multimedia, graphics as well as the limits of computers.

A graduate of a computer science major could move into a variety of roles across a variety of different sectors. These roles

include: computer support, database or systems administrator, web or game developer, programmer and software designer.

The Earth Sciences major could incorporate Geology at your chosen university, or they may offer Geology as a separate major. This major looks at the earth and studies the processes that have shaped it, from its surface to the inside. There is an intention here for the student to develop critical thinking, and be involved in field observations and laboratory analysis. A student of this major would be involved with quantitative techniques and applying and analysing experimental design and sampling.

Ecology basically looks at organisms and their interaction with the environment. This is an interdisciplinary major and for the first two years there will be an eclectic focus including environmental science and statistics. Usually by your third year you will be able to branch out into one of a number of areas: conservation, behaviour, marine and quantitative ecology. The most common career pathway for this major usually takes the form of a researcher or working for government institutes such as Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Fisheries and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry or for local councils.

Psychology is a scientific approach to understanding the mind and behaviour. It is a scientific approach because it employs quantitative data as a means to observe and measure and then draw conclusions. There is also a more qualitative approach to this degree and that involves studying thinking, emotions and behaviour.

When in the industry somebody who has studied psychology can work in a range of roles. These include working as a clinical psychologist. Becoming a clinical psychologist requires taking a certain postgraduate pathway that only certain universities offer and it is quite difficult to gain entry. Another focus of psychology is counselling which is quite distinct from clinical psychology.

It is important therefore if you are planning to be involved with patients in the future that you are clear at undergraduate level which pathway you wish to take and how you can track that pathway. Other areas to consider are criminal, educational and organisational psychology.

Sports and Exercise Science is a major that focuses on exercise, movement, health, wellness and rehabilitation. There is also a focus on the science of sport. The major covers the physical processes that occur in the human body when playing sport, working or exercising. It also looks at the biomechanical and neuro-motor processes. There is analysis and evaluation of data.

Zoology is the study of the biology of animals. A student of this major will look at the genetic and psychological process in animal development, at the anatomy of animals and their behaviour. A graduate of this major may go on to work for a government organisation such as the Department of Conservation.

Chapter 3

Choose the right university for you

In this section we survey each of the universities in New Zealand and evaluate them in terms of what they can offer you in terms of their delivery of your chosen subject. Some material has been sourced directly from the university websites as detailed in the Bibliography which can be found at the end of this e-book.

There are currently eight universities in New Zealand with a university in each major city in New Zealand and two in both Auckland and Wellington.

Some universities cover all the general degrees whereas others have specific degrees that the majority might not offer. For this reason it can be difficult to compare Universities. We have

drawn on material from the various measurements used to assess university's standing in this chapter the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) and the Academic Quality Agency (AQA) Academic Audit reports.

The QS World University Rankings are published every year by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS). QS is a British Company that publishes informative publications and organises events for study abroad. Every year they rank hundreds of the universities in the world. They achieve the rankings by considering the university's overall standing and by its subject positioning.

It is estimated that of the 10,000 universities in the world, there are around 3,000 universities that are eligible for ranking under the QS system. There are currently around 700 universities that are ranked. If you are interested in their methodology for determining the top ranking universities, the information can be found on their website. Part of it involves conducting a survey of academic staff around the world. Under the QS system all of New Zealand's universities are ranked, meaning they are within that group of 700 universities. It is encouraging to note that each one appears among the top 550 of these universities.

In New Zealand, there is no national ranking system established as yet. The closest to a ranking system here is PBRF which ranks New Zealand universities on their research outputs. This means the quality and quantity of journal articles, conference papers, books, etc. that are published each year by academic staff that belong to that university.

PBRF is an allocated pool of money, around \$263 million dollars per year, which the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) of New Zealand splits between the eight Universities and one institute, Unitec, for research purposes. Although this is not a major funding source for New Zealand Universities, it is included as a way to measure how well the University is doing as a research institute. Having a high ranking for PBRF is important as it contributes to the university's overall reputation and advancement as a research institution in New Zealand and in the world.

It should be noted here that there is no specific national survey in New Zealand that assesses the quality of teaching in New Zealand. There are guidelines covered in the AQA survey. However, if a lecturer is not a strong researcher but is an excellent teacher, neither they nor their university, are currently recognised for this on a national level, except for the possibility of receiving a teaching award. There is no fund that exists for teaching excellence, the only current measurement in place that results in funding is the PBRF.

The amount of the PBRF funding is determined by a Quality Evaluation that since the fund's inception has taken place in 2003, 2006 and 2012. The Evaluation requires the university to categorise the number of research active staff on their teaching faculty. The staff are then required to submit portfolios which might include journal articles and any other publications that have been created during the allocated time frame.

The portfolios are then assessed by researchers in the pertinent fields and given an A, B, C or R ranking: A being the best. These researchers belong to other institutes both in New

Zealand and around the world. The culminated result gives an overall ranking for the University, which in turn determines the amount of money they are awarded from the fund, based on their performance in the evaluation.

Aside from PBRF, there is also the AQA Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities. This is a body that reviews and assesses universities in New Zealand. AQA's goal is to lead the way in the development of academic quality. They are also there to apply quality assurance and enhancements processes that assist Universities to improve student engagement, academic experience and learning outcomes. Essentially AQA is there to keep the universities in check. This body is made up of Vice-Chancellors from all the universities in New Zealand.

There is also a small collection of AQA staff that carry out the audits each year. They are responsible for co-ordinating the audits and recruiting academic staff from around New Zealand to participate in the process. They are concerned with ensuring that each university is on a par with the others and that they are upholding the quality standards expected of a New Zealand university.

Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

The Auckland University of Technology is the youngest university out of the eight universities in New Zealand. It first became a university in the year 2000. Before that it had a 120 year history as a technical school, then as a college, before being split into a technical high school and polytechnic in 1960.

In 1963, the polytechnic as it was became formally recognised as the Auckland Technical Institute. In 1989, the Education Act allowed polytechnics to confer their own degrees so they became known as the Auckland Institute of Technology. By 1999 the Institute had 26,000 students enrolled. The following year, they achieved University status.

The QS World University Rankings for 2014 place AUT University modestly between 501 and 550 out of a total of 700 Universities that are ranked. However the two areas where AUT is recognised worldwide are for the achievements of their Business school and their Art and Design school. In 2014, the QS World University Rankings placed AUT Business School's discipline of Accounting and Finance in the top 100 institutes in the world, ranking between 51 and 100. Likewise QS awarded AUT four stars overall (the star systems awards possible stars from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5+).

What makes AUT's business school unique is that they are the only University in New Zealand to offer the Bachelor of Business. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International has included AUT Business School in a group that includes only 5% of all business schools in the world. Both the Bachelor of Business in Finance and the Bachelor of Business in Accounting have been recognised by their respective professional bodies the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute and Association of Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA) as well as by other professional bodies.

In 2015, for the first time AUT University's Art and Design school was ranked 42nd in the world. Considering how young AUT University is, to appear on the worldwide rankings at this

stage of their development is very encouraging. The PBRF ranks AUT University eighth out of nine, a low ranking that is most likely attributable to their young age as a university. A strategy to develop research at the university has since been put in place.

AUT University's strength really lies in its strategy for the future. As a new university it aims to lead the way in terms of learning at university level in New Zealand. AUT University has reached a point where it is successfully developing policy and management. It is advantageous to be part of a university that has a strong policy structure at the base of its operations. A high standard of quality in operations has a ripple effect which impacts positively on its students and their learning quality.

AUT University aims to be a pioneer for new approaches to learning in New Zealand. As a student this places you at an advantage. AUT University's focus is on teaching in small classes, studios or professionally-orientated simulation work environments.

The university advocates blended learning which will benefit you as a student. It means that you get the traditional teaching methods of an older university combined with cutting edge technology to enhance the student's learning experience. Because of the small class sizes the teachers have the ability to be more concentrated on individuals.

As a first year student at AUT University, you will be given a great deal of student support. When a student first arrives, they are advised about all the support services available. There are

also good student mentoring programmes in place, as well as the First-Year-Experience programme which identifies first year students. This is particularly reassuring for new students, because often it can be overwhelming to enter university and not know how to seek out these services. Under this programme, students are contacted and then connected with services.

Under the Student Mentor Programme senior students are trained as mentors and are connected with first year students. The aim is to provide a supportive environment and advice about how the university works and what services are available.

AUT has aimed to make their institution more student focused by providing drop-in times and free services. Students have the benefit of teacher accessibility, both in terms of their time and space, but also in terms of their approachability.

AUT University has an embedded ethos of support for Māori and Pacific staff and students. The University aims to make the Māori language accessible and to produce fluent and confident speakers. It uses a variety of digital technologies to facilitate self-directed language learning, these include podcast, an online dictionary and tutorial exercises. It also currently offers courses in Te Reo Māori for zero-fees. It has been stated that kaupapa Māori is already an organic component of AUT University's identity.

AUT University has also taken a mature approach to supporting and engaging both Pacific staff and students. AUT University has a Pacifika Staff Network as well as an excellent equity staff network running through the faculties.

Staff at AUT University have the benefits of an extensive Professional Development programme. What this means as a student is that you benefit from lecturers that are constantly developing their ability to teach, engage and improve their ability to connect on a teaching level with students. There is leadership training available across the university as well as training to ensure that staff are up to date with current technology.

Lincoln University

Lincoln University became a University in 1990. It was founded in 1878 as an agricultural institute, as part of what was then known as Canterbury College. Eighteen years later, it became its own institute and was re-named the Canterbury Agricultural College and at this point it awarded degrees through the University of New Zealand. It became Lincoln College in 1961, as part of the University of Canterbury and then became a University in 1990. In 2011, Telford Rural Polytechnic became part of the university.

The QS World University Rankings for 2014 place Lincoln University at 411 in the world. The QS University Subject Rankings 2014 ranked Agriculture & Forestry at Lincoln University as appearing in the top 100 Universities in the world, rating it between 51 and 100. The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) positions Lincoln University at seven out of nine.

Lincoln University emphasises practical experience as an integral part of their teaching and learning. This enables

graduates to be immediately employable when they finish their programme. Students are often given professional and vocational practice which is embedded into the programme. An example of this is when students are involved in field days.

In addition to this professional aspect, Lincoln University places emphasis on interdisciplinary learning in their programmes. This means that a broad range of disciplines are studied in a degree.

Lincoln University has demonstrated that it integrates well with the surrounding Māori community. The University has also formed a range of partnerships and actively collaborates with these organisations. This advances the university's standing in land-based teaching and research. Lincoln University is connected to the agriculture sector, the dairy industry, the red meat industry and the Crown Research Institutes.

Massey University

Massey University became a University in 1964. It was named after the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, William Ferguson Massey. Like Lincoln University, it began as an agricultural institute, called Massey Agricultural College. Massey became a university in 1963 and was known as Massey University of Manawatu until it adopted its current name in 1966. In 1993, Massey University's Albany campus was opened and in 1999 it merged with the Wellington Polytechnic to form its Wellington campus

The QS World University Rankings for 2014 place Massey University at 346 in the world. The QS University Subject Rankings 2014 rated Agriculture & Forestry at Massey University as 19th in the world. Accounting and Finance as well as Education and Training both place between 51 and 100. The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) places Massey University at six out of nine.

In terms of facilities available to its students, Massey University has an excellent library service available. Massey University has good learning support systems in place. One of these services is a pre-reading service for helping students with essay drafts. The reason for this is that sometimes, when you write an essay at university you don't know if you are going the right direction. The pre-reading service helps students to head in the right direction until they become used to university level essay writing.

There are various mentoring schemes available at Massey. In addition, Māori and Pacific students are offered learning support through various networks. Another aspect of importance is that Massey recognises excellence in teaching.

It is not surprising therefore that Massey University excels in teaching quality. Some may argue that as a student in a lecture theatre, teaching quality is more valuable to you than the extent of that lecturer's research. The way in which a lecturer communicates ideas to students is very important. This focus on teaching quality therefore benefits the student's directly.

Massey University has a teaching awards framework that rewards teaching excellence, recognises good practice and

encourages improvement. There are also opportunities, incentives and support for teachers who succeed in the national awards.

University of Auckland

The University of Auckland opened in 1883 as Auckland University College. In 1962 the University became independent and no longer part of the University of New Zealand. By 1970 it already had 9,300 students enrolled. In 1986, the University of Auckland also began offering courses at Northland Polytechnic, Manukau Polytechnic and Auckland College of Education. In addition it acquired buildings from the Commonwealth Games Village to develop its Tamaki campus.

The QS World University Rankings for 2014 place the University of Auckland in the top 100 at 92nd equal in the world. The QS University Subject Rankings 2014 give the following subjects at the University of Auckland their respective rankings in the world: English Language and Literature 37th, Linguistics 36th, Modern Languages 45th, Biological Sciences 46th equal, Pharmacy & Pharmacology 39th, Psychology 34th, Accounting and Finance 24th equal, Education and Training 34th, Law and Legal Studies 28th equal and Politics 26th.

The following subjects were also ranked between 51 and 100 in the world: Geography, History and Archaeology, Computer Science and Information Systems, Engineering – Chemical, Engineering - Civil and Structural, Engineering – Mechanical, Medicine, Environmental Studies, Mathematics, Economics

and Econometrics, Sociology, Statistics and Operational Research. The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) ranks the University of Auckland second out of nine.

If you become a student at the University of Auckland, there are processes in place so that when feedback is received from students, that feedback is considered, and the results are reported back to students. They are informed of changes that might be made as a result of their feedback. This is a great system because often students will complete feedback forms and then will not receive any advice of what changes will be made as a result.

The University of Auckland also has a class representative system. A class representative is a student who puts themselves forward to be the spokesperson for a particular paper on behalf of all the students in that class. So if a student has a particular issue with a paper, they can bring their concerns to the class representative. The class representative will then put those concerns forward using a specific process. This system ensures that students have a genuine student voice at University.

The University of Auckland has very good libraries and learning services available. This is important because a good part of your time at university will be spent accessing libraries and learning services. The libraries have subject librarians and the University of Auckland regards these libraries as being a very important adjunct to student learning. Learning support staff stay in touch with the teaching, learning and research activities of the institution which means that the library staff are more informed about your programme and can help you more readily with your enquiries.

The University of Auckland also has provisions in place to ensure that Māori, Pacific and disabled students are priority groups and 10% of places in limited entry programmes are made available for these students under the Undergraduate Targeted Admission Schemes (UTAS). The University of Auckland aims to provide groups who have different intellectual traditions and different bodies of experience to have support and be included, in order to ensure that they will achieve success and overcome any barriers they might face. The University of Auckland also offers programmes to help students gain entry into the university when they don't meet entry criteria. In addition they have established mentoring programmes in secondary schools to encourage smooth progression into university.

If you are a student that belongs to one of the priority groups you can be assured that there is support in place once you are enrolled. Māori and Pacific students have general and faculty support services as well as transition programmes to ensure that first year students stay on track.

University of Canterbury

The University of Canterbury became a university in its own right in 1961. It was founded as Canterbury College in 1873. In 1933, it changed its name to Canterbury University College and in 1957, it became the University of Canterbury. Between 1961 and up until 1974, the campus gradually relocated from the centre of Christchurch to the suburb of Ilam.

The QS World University Rankings for 2014 place the University at 242nd in the world. The QS University Subject

Rankings 2014 ranked Engineering - Civil and Structural at the University of Canterbury as the 19th in the world. Geography, History and Archaeology, Education and Training, Law and Legal Studies all ranked between 51 and 100. The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) ranks University of Canterbury four out of nine.

Whenever policy changes are made, the University has always been consistent in consulting with the University of Canterbury Students' Association (UCSA). It seems that students enrolled with the University of Canterbury are really engaged, 35% of students voted in the student body elections. You can also be sure that if you enrol there, your voice is likely to be heard.

One other area where the University of Canterbury seems to excel is in the area providing support activities for their students. The University has good support in place for students with disabilities. Students who fit into this category are provided with a Learning Support Plan. For students with financial hardship, UCSA and the University offers students the opportunities of scholarships, grants and recoverable loans.

The University also offers something called UC Pathways, which is a two-year programme aimed to help Year 1 student's transition to university study and gain the academic skills required to succeed. You can be sure that if you are concerned about making this jump from secondary school to university, the University of Canterbury will be able to provide that extra support that you might require. The programme aims to teach critical thinking, academic reading, writing and research as well as course planning and peer learning opportunities.

The Academic Skills Centre offers workshops and seminars for students and it operates at orientation or in the Halls of Residence. UC Skills are their web-based resources that are accessible online. It is estimated that a third of all the University of Canterbury students use these resources.

The University of Canterbury has also demonstrated a commitment to Māori and Pacific students. The University provide two dedicated study and social spaces for Māori students, as well as a separate house and other spaces for Pacific students. Māori and Pacific students are able to access free tutoring through specific study skills programmes available to them.

It can also be noted that the University of Canterbury aims to provide a safe environment, support and personal wellbeing to its students. There are various initiatives in place such as a search and rescue team, safety escort on campus as well as a rapid response unit for medical emergencies.

The residential halls have the Student Critical Incident Group, who ensures that any students of concern are identified, monitored and supported. This group has also developed the Student Emergency Management plan, which has a process to be followed in the event of an emergency.

With regards to personal support and the well-being of the students, there is UCSA advocacy, financial hardship grants, a food bank, childcare, emergency dental schemes, health counselling services, career advice, internship and employment support as well as Chaplaincy services.

The University of Canterbury has developed and implemented a comprehensive approach to emergency management. It has evaluated potential risks and the UC Emergency Management Statute and UC Emergency Management Policy that are in place are readily accessible to staff and students and are located under “Emergency Management” on the University of Canterbury website.

Following the Canterbury region earthquake of 2011, the Director of the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management praised the Universities response effort, planning, training, readiness and leadership. The University students and staff demonstrated resilience following the earthquakes and adapting to teaching in tents, via live-streams and e-learning.

University of Otago

The University of Otago is the oldest university in New Zealand. It was founded in 1869, but first opened in 1870. Two years later Law began to be taught and then in 1875 the first courses in Medicine began. The University began to award their own degrees in 1961.

The QS World University Rankings for 2014 place the University of Otago 159th in the world.

The QS University Subject Rankings 2014 give the following subjects at the University of Otago their respective rankings in the world: English Language and Literature 28th, History and Archaeology 30th, Psychology 19th and Law and Legal Studies 37th.

The following subjects were also ranked between 51 and 100 in the world: Geography, Modern Languages, Biological Sciences, Medicine, Accounting and Finance, Education and Training, Politics and Sociology. The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) ranks the University of Otago third out of nine.

The University of Otago has coordinated a coherent graduate profile document in which desirable attributes are embedded into the curriculum. This is to ensure that the attributes of a preferred graduate of the University of Otago can be instilled in students while they are still studying there. These attributes are then taken out into the workforce and become the defining traits of University of Otago graduates

The University of Otago achieves this by offering suggestions to staff about how their teaching might work towards achieving this goal, and then become integrated into curriculum planning. All this is important because as a student you are imbued with distinctive characteristics of the University of Otago when you go out into the workforce. Some of these attributes are: discipline, global perspective, interdisciplinary perspective as well as communication, environmental literacy and teamwork.

The University of Otago also provides a good level of support to its students. The Student Learning Centre focusses on first year students to teach the essentials of learning. There is library information, literacy tuition and learning hubs for study, socialising and cultural activities.

The University of Otago has a guide for students which outlines expectations of students, discusses transitioning to university and offers advice on how to succeed at university. There are also peer assisted study sessions and tutorials provided in the residential colleges.

The university has admission provisions to help Māori gain admission, in particular in the area of Science. There are University of Otago programmes that are run in collaboration with iwi and with secondary schools. Once Māori students are in the university system, there are concerted efforts put in place to ensure academic achievement is optimal.

The university has an active commitment to the wider community of Dunedin. University life is well embedded in the town and there are various outreach programmes to non-university groups. Campus watch ensure that good relationships are maintained with the city neighbours. Various university initiatives make a positive impact on local groups and businesses.

As a student it is important that your university is embedded in the culture of that town. Your time at university therefore not only becomes a means to gaining a qualification, but a more rewarding and enriching life experience.

University of Waikato

The University of Waikato opened in 1964. In 1998 the university merged with the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic. The QS World University Rankings for 2014 place the University at 401 in the world. The QS University Subject Rankings 2014 ranks

the University of Waikato in Education and Training at University of Waikato as the 46th in the world. The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) ranks the University of Waikato fifth out of nine.

The University has an impressive library, which has become adaptable to its changing use by students. As well as this, University of Waikato offers good student support. They aim to offer a unique Waikato experience not just limited to an accumulation of knowledge but which includes Māori values, activities and support services.

University of Waikato has demonstrated determination in managing ties with Māori iwi within the region. The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are embedded into the universities values. The support of Māori students is evident and makes this university distinct.

In addition, the University of Waikato has a presence in Tauranga and makes an educational, economic and social contribution to the Bay of Plenty region's goals. There is also strong community engagement in the Waikato region.

Victoria University of Wellington

Victoria University of Wellington began as Victoria College in 1897. The university was named after Queen Victoria as the year it opened was Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. In 1962, the university began to award its own degrees. In 2005, Wellington College of Education became part of Victoria University of Wellington.

The QS World University Rankings for 2014 rank Victoria University of Wellington as 275 in the world. English Language and Literature at Victoria University of Wellington is ranked as the 31st in the world. Law and Legal Studies is ranked as 49th in the world.

The following subjects were also ranked between 51 and 100 in the world: History and Archaeology, Psychology, Education and Training and Politics. The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) ranks Victoria University of Wellington first out of nine.

Every University has what is called a strategic plan. A strategic plan basically sets out the goals that the organisation has for the next few years. The strategic plan outlines how that organisation will reach those goals and what resources they will use to get there.

Both Victoria University of Wellington's strategic and operation plans are of a high standard. It is clear that Victoria University of Wellington has planned extensively for their future. What is also apparent is that the level of detail they have included in their plan will be able to guide staff in achieving their objectives. The strategies within the plan all feed into and complement each other.

What this means is, as a student of Victoria University of Wellington you are likely to work in an environment of clear and directed study. There is nothing worse than being part of a university that does not have this focus. It results in staff and faculties moving in many different directions.

Victoria University of Wellington has worked extensively with external stakeholders to define their goal of students having a ‘civic’ experience while studying. Their plans demonstrate a dedication to their students, a high quality of education and an excellent learning environment. The direction in which a university is headed is important as it sets the tone for the whole operation of the university.

At an earlier time, Māori and Pacific students were not afforded any preferential treatment in Victoria University of Wellington’s strategic documents. Now however, specific staff positions have been created and comprehensive support programmes have been developed. The university has also implemented community outreach programmes for Pacific children in order to encourage them into university study.

Part of the difficulty that comes with choosing a university is discovering how “in touch” that university is with trends in the workforce and how much their programmes reflect what is expected in the industry. To respond to this issue, Victoria University of Wellington has spent time developing an up-to-date graduate profile.

What is important is that Victoria University of Wellington’s staff and faculties are conversant with the graduate profile. That way the attributes of the profile can make its way down to the programme level. Learning objectives in the Programme and Course Design handbook, which staff use whenever they are developing or revising a new paper or programme, support the graduate profile for the University. The university has also been asking graduates to give feedback in the form of surveys

as to how specifically Victoria's graduate "attributes" have helped in their employment situations.

Victoria has developed a Student Mentoring Framework. This is important for students who need support academically. There is also technological assistance and Victoria University of Wellington has made improvements to its Facilities Management and Disability Services.

What is key for any University is to have teaching staff that are excellent. Victoria University of Wellington had made a strong commitment to their development of teaching excellence. Victoria University of Wellington trains its own staff to improve their teaching using their own Centre for Academic Development (CAD).

Tutors at Victoria will receive training and ongoing access to workshops. This is a great bonus because, often a tutor will come in and teach a tutorial for an undergraduate paper simply because they have good grades and are studying a postgraduate programme. With the tutorial training programmes, the tutor will also be taught how to be able to impart that knowledge. Sometimes at universities this important teaching element can be missing.

Academic staff development, teaching feedback services and digital technology for learning and teaching are also available to staff. This is important in achieving the goal of leaving no staff behind. If you do attend Victoria University of Wellington are likely to be getting a high standard of teaching quality.

Chapter 4

How to get in

Studying at university in New Zealand is becoming more and more a popular choice and student numbers are increasing each year. Part of this is to do with the expectations of the workforce. Most position descriptions for jobs these days may now not only list their preferred candidate as having a degree, but actually require it.

When you are applying for a university in New Zealand, you are competing not only with other New Zealand students but also International Students. Each university programme has what are called EFTS targets. EFTS stands for “equivalent full time student”.

This describes the students that the University will get funding for from the Government. A University will have “caps” or restricted numbers for most of their programmes. This means they cannot admit any more students over the “capped”

number. It makes sense, otherwise universities might just keep on admitting students. However, this is unlikely as their resources for delivering courses to students would soon run out.

There are certain limitations on universities resources. These limitations can include teaching resources such as lecturer availability to teach classes, as well as classroom and equipment allocation. What this all means is that places may be limited for some programmes and it may be more difficult for you to gain entry. To implement this, there are certain entry criteria students must meet in order to study at a university and gain entry to the chosen programme.

Usually the only way for a University to measure who to let in and who not to let in is by their academic performance at secondary school or that student's last institution that they studied at. For this reason it important to achieve your best at secondary school if you are intending to study at university.

University Entrance

University Entrance (UE) is a national standard that enables somebody who has not previously gained admission to a university in New Zealand to be deemed eligible to enter. It is a general requirement across all universities that you must meet first.

This does not include any other programme specific requirements that you must meet that are separate from UE. For example, for entry into Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) students must gain UE but also complete mathematics with

calculus and physics in the final year of secondary school. The latter two subjects are an additional requirement, but for now we are just talking about the UE general entry requirements into a New Zealand University.

UE can be gained a number of ways: the two main ways for secondary students are through the National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) and Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). You should know which one you are studying or have studied and which criteria you will need to meet.

It does not matter which curriculum you study in terms of getting admission into University. Studying one and not the other will not give you an advantage in getting in. The important thing to ensure is that you are up to date with that year's definition of UE for that particular programme, as it can change from year to year. It is important to ensure that you are enrolled into the correct subjects in your final year of secondary school so that you can be eligible for UE once you have been assessed.

Currently the UE entry specifications for NCEA require you to have the NCEA Level 3 Certificate. This consists of completing 80 credits, where 60 of those credits will need to be at Level 3 or higher. However, the other 20 credits can be from Level 2. You will also need to gain credits in the approved subjects (that you intend studying at university?). These must total 42 credits at Level 3 and should include 14 credits from one approved subject, 14 credits from a second approved subject and 14 credits from a third approved subject. A list of

approved subjects for that year are available from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) website.

In addition, you will need to complete Literacy and Numeracy requirements. You are required to complete a total of 10 literacy credits at Level 2, or higher including five reading credits and five writing credits. You will also need to complete at least 10 numeracy credits at Level 1, or higher. This can be achieved through a range of subjects or three specific numeracy Unit Standards, which can be accessed on the NZQA website.

The other way to gain UE is through CIE (Cambridge International Examinations). You will need to complete a minimum of 120 points on the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS) Tariff at A or AS level from an approved list of subjects. Basically the UCAS Tariff system converts A and AS level grades into points. They must include at least three subjects (excluding Thinking Skills) with grades D or above.

Literacy and Numeracy requirements will need to be met also. For literacy, the student must get a minimum grade of E in English Language and/or the English Literature subject at AS or A level. For the numeracy requirement, the student will need to have a minimum grade of D in International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) mathematics or any mathematics subject at AS or A level.

If you had a difficult year in your final year at secondary school and did not get UE there are a few other ways to get it. The first of which is commonly known as “Discretionary

Entrance”. This based on your Year 12 results. It is worth noting that the Discretionary Entrance regulations came into force in 2003, before CIE was offered in New Zealand. Therefore, the regulations as they stand, only make specific reference to NCEA.

The general requirements for Discretionary Entrance are set out below, but keep in mind that they are only minimum requirements and final admission will be at the discretion of the university you apply to. That is why each university has developed their own criteria for Discretionary Entrance. These are available on each university’s website.

The general requirements are that the student must be either a New Zealand or Australian citizen and must be under 20 years of age. The student must have a minimum of 14 credits in an approved subject at Level 2 towards NCEA. They must also have met the literacy and numeracy standards required for university entrance. The student’s application must be accompanied by a reference from the student’s school principle or other suitable person. There may also be an interview required.

If you didn’t study NCEA or did not do well in Year 12, there is another way you can gain UE. This is through a “Special Admission”. Special Admission requires only that you be over 20 years of age and be a New Zealand or Australian citizen. For Australian applicants their most recent year of schooling must have taken place in New Zealand. Again, gaining admission to the university this way does not guarantee you a place on the programme you apply for. As stated earlier with Engineering for example, you may be over 20 years old, but

did not study Maths with Calculus or Physics in your final year of school. In this case, you would not be able to enter the programme.

Chapter 5

Application Process

The application process can be an arduous one, or it can be relatively simple. Once you have established that you have met the entry criteria for both UE and the programme, you should apply for your chosen course as soon as you can. It is never too early to apply for the following year and I would suggest you do so as early as July. Most universities will have had their Open Day around this time, so shortly after this is a good time.

All applications for New Zealand Universities seem to be done online now. There are a few universities still requiring International Students to apply using a paper form, but this will probably be phased out once online enrolments become the norm for university applications.

If you go to the website of your chosen university, somewhere on the homepage will be the 'apply' link. We won't go into instructions for this, as each application process will be

different and most university websites are relatively easy to use and it is relatively straightforward to apply for a programme.

Once you have applied online, you will receive a confirmation letter by email very shortly afterwards. This is usually automated and indicates that your application is now in the system and underway. From this point onwards, you should also have individual access to the university's online application system. This is so that you can go in and check the status of your application at any time.

It is good to frequently check here to see how your application is progressing. Most universities will post correspondence on this system, as there is very little in the way of postal notification getting mailed to your house these days. For your initial offer of a place they may also post it. Other than that most correspondence will be sent to your email address.

For this reason, it is important to keep your email address up to date with the university. Also, ensure you check the junk mail box as some correspondence may go there. If you do not receive an initial email and don't seem to be receiving any correspondence at all, contact the university to make sure your email address has been spelt correctly.

If you are coming directly from secondary school, you do not need to provide copies of your academic transcripts once you have made an application, because your university will receive your academic information directly from NZQA and CIE as soon as it is released. You will however need to provide other specific documents as required.

If you are coming from another academic institution or an overseas secondary school you will need to provide certified copies of your academic transcript as well as certified copies of your passport or birth certificate, to the university. There are two ways to provide these documents: one way is to physically go to the university and give the original copies of your transcript to them. A staff member there will then take copies of these documents and return them to you shortly after on the spot.

The other option is to get a Justice of the Peace or a Lawyer to certify copies of these documents. They will sight the original and then sign the photocopy, which you should then submit to the university. It is not advisable to send original documents to the university and a certified photocopy is preferable

The time it will take to get an outcome to your application can vary depending on your chosen university as well as the period in which you applied. Firstly, if you are applying for entry but have not received the outcome of your final year from NZQA or CIE, the university will not be able to give you an outcome until these results have been released.

You can apply for a programme in say November using your NCEA results to gain UE, but obviously you will not yet have received the NCEA results. If this is the case, you will receive a letter in November from the university stating that they will not be able to assess your application until the results have become available.

The NCEA and CIE results are not normally released until mid-January. For Universities, this is called the “embargo

period”. What happens is that NZQA and CIE release the results to the universities before releasing them to the students. This gives the universities time to process the applications all at once so that all offers can go out at the same time.

If a student applies to multiple universities for the same programme, they would usually receive the results at the same time. Once the embargo is lifted from the universities, the offer or declining letters are sent out.

The application process has several stages and for most universities it is similar. It is important to note, that the faculties to which you are applying may not even make the decision themselves on whether or not you get accepted. This is done mostly in the central admissions offices now.

There are however, obvious exceptions to this such as for Medicine, where there are interviews and UMAT scores to be considered, or Design where there is a portfolio assessment. In cases where the admissions team do not feel qualified to make a decision, they may send it to the faculty for their consideration. But for the generic programmes a lot of the applications never make their way to the individual faculty. There is a set list of criteria that admission staff have available to them so that they are able to make an informed decision and then to issue an outcome.

As already stated, when you first apply to the university, your application gets sent directly to the admissions team. This team is separate from the faculties and often does not have direct contact with students. The contact is all made through email correspondence once a decision has been made about your

application. There is usually a student centre, who will act on behalf of the admissions team, but the student centre staff themselves are not admission staff. Student centre staff become the first point of contact for students.

Once your application is received, it will be assessed firstly for whether all the relevant documents have been included with your application. Documents like passports and transcripts will need to be there and if they aren't you will receive an email request to provide these. At that moment, your application does not go anywhere and usually will not move to the next stage of assessment until you provide those documents.

It is important therefore to check your email regularly after you have applied for a programme because sometimes an application can stay at the same stage and not move forward, because it is waiting for you to provide the relevant documents. All the while the student, who hasn't checked their email may think that it is just the university taking a long time to assess their application.

From the point you first apply, to the point your application has its initial assessment and all the documents are received, it can take anything from a few days to a few weeks. But as explained above, it can take sometimes upwards of three months if a student does not respond to the document requests.

If all the documents are present, the application will usually then go to the next stage of UE checks and programme eligibility. If it is straight forward and it is clear that you have the entry requirements of both UE and the programme, the

admissions team will generate an offer for you right there and then. In other instances where you don't meet UE and/or the programme requirements, the admissions team may generate a decline letter for you. At which point, your application to that programme ceases.

If you meet the UE requirement, but your background shows that it is not clear whether you meet the programme requirement, then your application might be passed to the relevant faculty for assessment. The Faculty will then make their decision and communicate this back to the admissions team, who will then send the decision to you. The "Faculty" is usually talked about in a general sense, but more specifically it here refers to the school that your chosen programme belongs to.

Your communication with the faculty or school does not normally begin until after you start your programme at university. There are exceptions to this, such as if you are receiving Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) credit for instance. When initially applying to the University right up until the beginning of classes, most of your contact is with central university staff rather than lecturers or other staff from within the school.

Chapter 6

Financial

Whether or not you have the financial means to enter University can make or break your decision to study. In 1989, the Labour Government of New Zealand introduced university tuition fees for all students. Before that, students could attend Universities for free. From that point on, the New Zealand university as we knew it would begin to change into the educational entity that we know it as today: a thriving business model.

New Zealand universities today essentially operate the same way that any other business would. They have marketing campaigns and each university competes for customers in the same way that the banks or mobile phone providers do.

The University of Auckland for instance in their marketing campaigns always accentuate their tradition and world

rankings, whereas AUT University focus their campaign on being the University for the changing world.

While fees for domestic students for a Bachelor degree in 2015 were around \$5,500, they are a far cry from the modest \$129 in 1989 or even \$1250 in 1990. On top of the fees, there is also the subsidy that the university gets from the government. Universities normally receive at least the equivalent amount in subsidy (of the fees that you pay) from the government, under the Ministry of Education (MOE), as long as you are enrolled with them and attending class.

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) measures valid domestic enrolments in units of equivalent full-time student (EFTS). One (1.0) EFTS unit is defined as equalling a student's workload undertaken by a full-time student for the year. The credit value of a paper which is assigned by Universities New Zealand is 15 points. This is a part of the EFTS funding system as one or 1.0 EFTS equals 120 points. This indicates that the student's enrolment is full-time and it is made up of eight 15 point papers. Each 15 point paper is worth 0.1250 EFTS and this paper value is essentially calculated using 1 (EFTS) divided by 8 (papers).

If a student takes seven 15 points papers, this is 105 points and is still considered to be full-time. This student will therefore be studying 0.875 EFTS. According to Studylink, a student is not considered full-time for the year when they study below 0.8 EFTS.

The way in which the EFTS value relates to funding, is that TEC will assign a per-EFTS funding rate to each course. To

do this, they place programmes into different funding categories. The first thing to be aware of in order to understand this is that TEC favours some programmes over others. The government, through TEC, identifies some programmes as being “high priority” by relating it to a workplace sector. They deem certain programmes to be more valuable to New Zealand at this point in time. The reasoning behind the prioritising of categories seems to be, that it will benefit New Zealand if more students graduate with a particular degree aligned to a workforce industry that needs more graduates. What this means is that the value that TEC place on this sector and therefore on the programme, then determines what funding category it is put into. To give you an example, the building sector in New Zealand at the moment is said to be booming in some parts of the country. The government therefore identifies that there is a demand for engineers to fill this demand. To translate this into funding, TEC places engineering into a high funding category. The funding scheme is known as Student Achievement Component (SAC) funding.

In 2015, a New Zealand university that admits an engineering student into their degree course will receive \$11,282 per student. This means that if you enrol into a university in an engineering degree, using the figure above, that University receives at total of \$16,782 for you alone for that whole year. That comprises \$5,500 from you and \$11,282 from MOE. The following year, they will receive that amount again and so on – until you graduate. You can begin to see the incentive that universities have to recruit you and keep you with them for three or four years.

However, if an engineering school has 1000 students, it does not necessarily mean the university will get \$11,282,000 funding in total, which is 1000 multiplied by \$11,282. The reason for this is that not every student is studying full-time or is worth 1.0 EFTS. A student may be studying part-time or 0.5 EFTS for example. Therefore, instead of the university getting \$11,282 in funding subsidy for that particular part-time student or somebody who studies four papers for the year, they will only get 0.5 of an EFTS worth, which is half or \$5,641.

This explains why the EFTS amount will usually look different than the head count of the students. So if an engineering school has 1000 students as a head count, then they may only have 988 student EFTS for example. Funding subsidies are measured in EFTS rather than in head counts.

Other programmes, like business might be put into a lower funding category. For example, in 2015 a New Zealand university will get \$6,135 funding subsidy for each student that they admit into a business degree.

Because of this money the university will receive for your enrolment, you should ensure that you get the most out of your university while you are studying there. You should also pick wisely as they are competing for your business in part to maximise their profit and to ensure their future growth as a university.

It used to be the case that universities would withdraw students automatically at the end of the year if the student received poor grades. However, this will happen less and less in the future due to the likely possibility that universities will lose that

student to another institution. This would mean that the new institution would gain that revenue stream for the next 3-4 years.

You would think with this guaranteed income from domestic students that this would be sufficient for universities. But there is something else that all universities also focus on: international students.

If a domestic student pays \$5,500 per year for studies, you would think that international students wouldn't have to pay too much more than that. After all they go to the same class as a domestic student, so there is not that much difference. They have to organise a few more things like student visas, so they might be charged a little bit more for that. Well actually, international fees are more like five times the fee that a domestic student pays.

In 2015, international student fees were set at approximately \$25,000-30,000 per student, per year. At present, at each New Zealand University there are usually around 80-85% domestic students and 15-20% international students. You can expect to see a significant number of international students in your class if you attend a university in New Zealand. This number is likely to increase over the coming years.

Studylink

Applying for a student loan from Studylink is the most common way for domestic students to pay their fees. One of the first things to say about Studylink is that they process hundreds of thousands of loan applications a year. That is why

it is important to apply to Studylink early: November the year before is normally recommended. To be eligible for a student loan you must either be a New Zealand citizen or else be a resident who has lived in New Zealand for at least three years.

Studylink is a service provided by the Ministry of Social Development. It provides student loans which cover the full cost of your course fees. These loans do not come to you, but are directly deposited into your university's bank account as your fees payment. This is done only after you nominate that university on your application form and your loan is approved by Studylink. You will of course have to have been accepted into that particular programme and university in order to complete this process. The other important thing to note is that you will need to apply for a student loan every year during your ongoing course of study. Studylink do not assume that you are going to study again the following year.

If you apply too late for your student loan, your university may not get paid on time. Fees are usually due on the first day of semester. If you have applied for your loan in February, your fees may not be paid to your university by semester start which is usually early March. Applying in February may not leave enough time for Studylink to process your application.

What is important to note here is that your university does not know that you have applied for a student loan. The university is only interested in your fees being paid by the first day of the first semester. If your fees have not arrived into their account by the beginning of semester, the university will treat you as a debtor.

You may have advised the university that you have begun the student loan process and that Studylink have not processed the payment, but they will probably not accept this as an excuse. The university's relationship is with you the student, not Studylink, therefore if you have not paid by semester start they will hold you responsible as a debtor, regardless of any applications you might have made to Studylink.

The debtor process will be enforced from early on in the first semester. Usually by week 3 of your course, you will receive an overdue fees reminder notice. Then by week 4, if you still haven't paid your fees you will receive a final reminder notice. This basically indicates that your fees will need to be paid immediately otherwise your university services will be suspended.

Your University services comprise the online services including access to the Learning Management System. Without access to this you cannot receive announcements, class notes posted by the lecturer, sit online tests or submit your assignments online. The university's final reminder letter will not normally state that you cannot attend class anymore, but without online access to these services it makes it quite difficult to be successful in your studies.

One of three things is normally happening at this point in the debtor process if a student has applied for a student loan. The first and most common problem, is that the student has applied for a student loan so late that it hasn't given Studylink sufficient time to process the application. Sometimes a student payment doesn't end up coming through to the university until week five, after the student's online services have been cut-off.

The next most common problem is that the student loan application may not have even been approved. The student will sometimes tell their university that they rang up Studylink and applied for a loan. However, applying for the loan over the telephone or online is only the first stage of the student loan application process.

After you contact Studylink for the first time on the telephone and nominate your programme and chosen university, they will send you a hard copy contract that you will need to sign and return to them. This contract gets sent to the physical address that you give them. If you have recently moved residence, the contract has probably been sent to your old address.

Your application will not move forward until you sign this contract and send it back to them. So while this process is going on, your university isn't any closer to receiving payment for your fees. If you have not signed a contract and sent it back to Studylink that will most likely be the reason your university has not yet been paid.

Sometimes it is not the contract, but some other piece of evidence that Studylink requires before they can move your application forward. It is important that you check in with them on the telephone or check your correspondence with them using their online system.

The third thing that might happen is that Studylink might have declined your application. This would normally be because you have studied at tertiary level before and your track record in some way has caused your application to be declined.

If it has been declined and it is already week 5 and you are not in the financial position to pay your fees, you should withdraw from your programme immediately to avoid a fail result appearing on your transcript. If you withdraw early enough, say in the first two weeks, the papers you were enrolled in would usually be wiped from your transcript.

If you withdraw after the first two weeks, but early enough to avoid a fail grade, a “W” grade will appear on your transcript. This W stands for withdrawal.

One important point to note is that nearly anybody can apply for a student loan. You can be studying part-time or full time. However you should be aware that if you have applied for two programmes previously at university level or with another tertiary institution, and on both occasions did not successfully complete those programmes, you will then be declined your third application for a student loan.

If you have completed one year of university but did poorly academically, perhaps failing more than half of the papers you were enrolled in, Studylink will normally allow you to apply for a student loan for the following year. However, they will monitor your progress after this second year. So, your grades will have needed to improve if you want Studylink to approve your student loan for the third year.

If you study part-time you will not be allowed to receive living costs. Living costs is a weekly allowance, separate from a student allowance and is basically money that you will need to pay back as part of your loan. The amount you can borrow for

living costs is up to \$175.96, but this amount is adjusted frequently.

A student allowance is similar, but it is money that is given to you and you do not have to pay it back to the government. If you qualify for a student allowance you normally cannot get living costs as well. If for some reason you are approved for both, the student allowance will off-set the balance of the living costs.

In order to qualify for living costs and student allowance you cannot study part-time: you must be a full-time student. Studylink measures this according to the number of weeks that your course runs for. This of course will vary depending on the length of your programme for a normal year of university. It means that you are required to be enrolled into a minimum of 0.8 EFTS for the year. What 0.8 EFTS translates to in terms of papers is to be enrolled in at least 7 papers for the year. That would normally be 3 papers in one semester and 4 papers in another semester.

Scholarships

There are a range of different scholarships available to students. There are national scholarships as well as scholarships awarded by the university that you apply to. The scholarship criteria may be based on your background, for example if you belong to a particular ethnicity and have achieved well academically at secondary school. Or the scholarship may be based exclusively on your academic performance.

Universities New Zealand has a list of general scholarships available, the deadline for these seems to be in December of the year before you intend studying, with the odd exception. These scholarships will list the subject that the scholarship is for and a list of these is available on their website.

There are a number of Maori scholarships offered through organisations such as: Māori Education Trust, Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Tapuae o Rehua and Kia Ora Hauora. Pacific Island students have an opportunity for scholarship through the Ministry of Education. The Careers New Zealand website has more information about these and other scholarships available to all students.

NZQA offers the New Zealand Scholarship Monetary Awards scheme to students in Year 13. All students who achieve the required level are not guaranteed the award. The Premier Award is for students who performed in the top 5 to 10 at Year 13 in New Zealand. They have the opportunity to receive \$10,000 per year at university for up to three years if they maintain a B average during this time. To receive this, in Year 13 they must have achieved “Outstanding” of at least three Scholarships in the same year. “Scholarship” is the highest grade a student can receive for a particular subject at school.

The Outstanding Scholar award is for the next 40-60 candidates of Year 13. The student must receive at least three Scholarships with at least three “Outstanding” levels in the same year. Alternatively they will have achieved more than three Scholarships and with at least one “Outstanding” level in the same year. The recipients will receive \$5,000 per year with the same conditions as the Premier Award. The next two

awards are the Scholarship Award and the Top Subject Scholar Award. There are specific requirements here also and the recipient receives \$2,000 per year with the same conditions as above.

There is also an award for students who achieve a Scholarship level in one or two subjects that year. They will receive a one-off payment of \$500, with a maximum of \$1,000 being awarded.

Part II: Understanding how University works

Chapter 7

The approach to university

This part of the book is design to introduce a few of these ideas to you. The main difference between secondary school and university is that at university you are treated like an adult.

To expand on this a bit more, at secondary school there is usually a punishment put in place for things like non-attendance, not submitting work, being disruptive, etc. At university these things are dealt with in a different way. First of all, how attendance is dealt with varies from programme to programme, but for lectures, nobody will probably notice that you weren't there, except maybe your friends. The same goes for not submitting work, you get a zero and your overall grade suffers.

It is probably a good thing in the sense that if you miss lectures or do not submit work you will learn directly for yourself the

negative aspects that this will have on your studies. Whereas a secondary school student may avoid missing classes, solely because they do not want to get into trouble. In this case, the lesson about learning being the student's own responsibility may not be absorbed.

Missing lectures and not handing in work can also have a ripple effect. If you fail the whole paper, it usually means you have to repeat it or another one in its place. So what was initially going to be three years study is now going to be three and a half years study and will cost more money. The only one who suffers here is the student themselves. The lecturers do not really care in the sense that they teach whoever turns up to their class.

This can be the hardest thing to adjust to. Suddenly this wave of independence has come into your life. But the truth of it is, it always takes a while for anyone to adjust to this change. Maybe in your first year, you will spend a lot of time socialising and your grades may be mediocre. Then in the second and third years your grades may improve as you settle into student life.

Occasionally in the first year, a common tale will spread around that a student didn't attend any of the lectures and just read all of the course notes online for a solid week before the exam and then passed or got a B+ in the paper overall. This seems to be a legend that perpetuates itself every year amongst first year students in campuses all over New Zealand.

Doing this is a waste of money as well as a reckless gamble on your academic success. This person should just take a year off. It is obvious they are not really ready to be a student at the

moment. It may be that they have to work to support their studies, or they are just relishing their newfound independence. But either way it would be preferable to focus on that instead of enrolling at university.

University is not just about passing the papers. The real purpose is to be able to absorb the material. The only way you can do this is through a gradual process. University teaching periods are usually 12 weeks, with new information being absorbed each week. The papers are designed to be comprehended incrementally, so that week by week a student can learn something new and then move onto the next stage of learning.

The content cannot really stick in your mind through only doing one week's worth of cramming. In the long run, if this is your strategy, you will probably average in the C or B grade range and may not recall the content later on when you actually need it in the workforce. But, ultimately it is your money so if this is your technique and it works for you then go for it.

This book advises you to attend every lecture, tutorial, lab, class or catch-up class that is offered. Hamish was a lecturer of Health Science and he once said to his class, if you turn up to all the lectures and do all the assessments, you are guaranteed to pass. He wasn't offering his students an unconditional pass, instead he knew from all the years he had taught and observed the regular students in his class, who in fact passed and who didn't. He saw a direct connection between students turning up to lectures and those who passed.

Chapter 8

The structure and setup of the university

Each university in New Zealand is quite large: they range from 10,000-30,000 students. This is of course a great deal larger than any secondary school. For this reason there are many individual schools, faculties and departments within each university.

Every university will be governed by a Chancellor and a Vice-Chancellor. The Chancellor is more of a public, ceremonial figure, rather than having the day-to-day involvement with running the university that a Vice-Chancellor has. The Chancellor will mostly attend major public events, including graduation and they will be the man or woman you shake hands with on stage when you graduate at the end of your degree. The Vice-Chancellor will usually be the person on stage reading from the list of graduates and calling your name out.

The Vice-Chancellor is also much more involved in the day-to-day running of the university. They are usually academics who have spent years in teaching or in management at multiple universities or institutions. They are elected to their role by a board or committee for a specific term which will be renewed by the board or the committee if they so choose.

A Vice-Chancellor is essentially in charge of the university in terms of the academic and administrative running of things. He or she is often not that easy to approach, mainly because of their extensive workload and also because they are in such an elevated position. To get to talk to the Vice-Chancellor, you would need to have exhausted all the other channels first.

The Vice-Chancellor will sometimes represent the university in the media and attend functions on the university's behalf. They are in charge of driving the vision of the university, in other words they are responsible for getting the university to where it wants to be in the next ten year period.

Below the Vice-Chancellor, there are normally two Deputy Vice-Chancellors but there can be more. There is usually a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), but there can also be one appointed for Strategy as well as one for Maori. The number of Deputy Vice-Chancellors differs in each university.

Then there are usually a few Pro Vice-Chancellors, in charge of a specific area relating to the university. These can include Pro Vice-Chancellors in charge of Research, Postgraduate, International and Maori. The staff appointed to the Pro Vice-Chancellor position sometimes split their role and are in charge of another part of the university as well.

Each University is made up of different faculties and within these faculties are different schools. Faculties can also be known at some universities as colleges and schools can sometimes be known as departments. In some cases, a college

can be fully functioning in itself but under the umbrella of the university.

Usually a faculty has an administrative function whereas the schools or department are where the actual teaching takes place. Each faculty has a Dean who reports to the Vice-Chancellor directly. The Dean is responsible for each of the Heads of School that are within the faculty. In each of these schools, there are programme leaders and lecturers who report to the Head of Department, who in turn reports to the Head of School. The Head of School reports back to the Dean of the faculty.

As well as these academic figures there are the administrative staff that operate the day-to-day functions of the university. At the very top there are various staff within the Vice-Chancellors office. Within the faculties there are Faculty Registrars as well as Managers. Within the schools, there are School Registrars as well as Managers. Supporting all these personnel are the rest of the administrative staff whose titles will vary in each university.

Each university publishes a copy of the University Calendar every year. This is quite a thick book, but can be downloaded from the university's website as well. The Calendar outlines the regulations and requirements for the individual qualifications offered at that university. In most cases it also contains information about staff at the university.

Chapter 9

Student learning

Universities in New Zealand teach on a semester basis. There are two semesters per year: semester one and semester two. Many universities also offer a summer school semester which is sometimes known as a third semester. The two main semesters during the year usually offer teaching for twelve weeks and then there are usually three weeks at the end of the teaching period devoted to exams. This includes exam and study leave.

The first semester for the year begins at the beginning of March, usually on the first Monday. The mid-semester break coincides with primary and/or secondary school holidays. The last day of semester is after the exam period and usually falls on the last Friday in June.

Following on from this, there is a three week break until semester two begins around the third week of July. During this

semester there is the same two-week holiday break as well as a three week exam period. The last day of semester two is usually the second Friday of November.

As mentioned earlier, there are many student learning support services available to a student once they are enrolled at a university. Students who are struggling might often not be aware that they have these learning support services available to them.

The primary learning tool available to students is the learning management system. These have different names at different universities, but a common one in New Zealand is “Blackboard”.

A student will generally attend two or three different types of classes depending on their degree. The three main ones are lectures, tutorials and labs. You might have only two of these for a particular paper or you could have all three. Nowadays at university, most PowerPoint presentations are uploaded online usually on the same day as the lectures they are associated with. These PowerPoints feature the slides that the lecturer references in class, but they don’t contain all that the lecturer says in their delivery.

However, a growing trend at universities is that lectures are filmed and can be viewed either via a live stream or through an uploaded video link following the lecture. These are usually available via Blackboard or the learning management system that your university uses. The advantage of these filmed lectures is that if you have to miss a lecture for whatever reason you can watch it online afterwards.

The downside of this is that it can be easy to get into the habit of not attending lectures. A pattern might emerge where you intend watching the lecture online, but never do. That is why it is important to physically attend the lectures and if you do miss one, schedule a specific time to watch that lecture online and ensure that you do, rather than putting it off.

As well as online lectures you should hopefully be able to locate a copy of the course handbook. This will have a different name at some universities, but it is usually a 5-10 page document covering course content that every paper on offer should make available to students. If you cannot locate it under your paper module using the learning management system you should ask your lecturer or paper leader for it. If there isn't one available, that is a serious oversight which you should follow up on.

The course handbook outlines everything about the paper you are studying. It explains the assessment structure, i.e. how the paper is assessed, including how much each assessment is worth in terms of the whole paper. It should also contain the due dates of each assessment, or at least in what week they are due. Specific assessment dates are sometimes announced later using the learning management system.

The course outline should also identify all the staff associated with this paper. It should contain the names of the paper leader and any lecturers who teach on this paper as well as any tutors who are assisting students. There should also be contact details for at least one member of the staff, preferably the paper leader, as well as their office contact hours.

The course outline should also contain the paper objectives which are the expectations of the paper. In other words it identifies what you should have learnt after taking this paper. The lecturer should have covered all these topics and ideally the student, after attending all the classes now understands these topics and has been assessed on them. Sometimes these documents also contain a marking guide.

The lecture itself is the main presentation of content for that paper. It is usually two to three hours long and will ordinarily take place once a week. If you have one hour lectures, it usually means that you have two or three of these spread throughout the week. The reason for this can often be that timetabling issues cause the paper to have the lectures broken up throughout the week.

The lecture usually takes place in a large hall with tiered seating. Some lectures can be delivered to a class of three hundred students. The lecturers usually speak with a microphone and will speak to the students the entire time. Other lecturers like the lecture to be more interactive and will engage with the students asking them to answer specific questions.

The paper leader will often take the bulk of the lectures throughout the semester and will then have other lecturers come in to deliver certain lectures. Tutorials are a lot more personal and are usually split into classes of 20-30 students. It is important that you attend tutorials not only because registers are often taken and it is sometimes a requirement of the paper, but also because they are really helpful in gaining full understanding of a subject.

The main purpose of the tutorial is to go over the content of the lecture in more detail. It is done so in a more concentrated environment. Sometimes content from lectures might not always stick, so the tutorials are a good opportunity to cement that information as well as to ask questions about the issues or topics that you don't understand.

Tutorials can be taken by lecturers, but more often than not, especially if it is a popular paper, they are taken by a postgraduate student. Postgraduate students are those that have already graduated from the degree you are studying and are now studying at the next "postgraduate" level in the same or a similar field.

Often they will get paid an hourly rate to take these tutorials so it is a good income to support their own studies. These students will often have a high GPA themselves and should be good at explaining ideas. They will often mark your assessments so that they aren't all sent back to the paper leader as this would result in too much marking for one person. If you have tests throughout the semesters, these usually will happen in the tutorial.

Not every paper will have labs, but labs are the third most common type of learning at University. Labs will have a different definition depending on the type of paper it is. One definition is that labs are there to put the theoretical knowledge that you learnt in lectures, into practice. So if lectures are the content and ideas, and tutorials help you to understand this content better, then labs will enable you to put these ideas into practice.

Some labs are held in an environment that contains different types of equipment and often technical staff will be present alongside the lecturer. The technical staff will often begin with a health and safety briefing and then will demonstrate how to use the equipment.

Chapter 10

Academic integrity

Academic Integrity is becoming a major topic in the international education world. There are now conferences held at universities all over the world, which staff can attend to learn about ways to combat cheating, plagiarism and dishonesty. Software, particularly Turnitin is being developed every year to assist with this. My advice is to learn exactly what the definition of academic integrity is at your university and follow it throughout your whole time at university.

A basic definition is: to ensure that you don't use somebody else's work and pass it off as your own. What is problematic is that in many cases students do not know, or claim not to know, that they are breaching academic integrity. They simply haven't had the experience with writing a university essay before and are dismayed to find that they have received low marks for their work.

Nearly every university should have a licence for a software programme called Turnitin. It is a programme whereby a student can upload their essay electronically and have it analysed by the software. After the analysis, a report is generated which usually contains a percentage. This percentage represents the amount of the essay, by word ratio that also appears in other sources of writing on the internet, other resources and previous academic essays submitted.

If your percentage is above 40% your work is most likely going to be reviewed by a staff member for plagiarism. It is important to remember however that you are allowed to reference, so a chunk of your essay will show up on the report. If you have referenced this correctly, then the staff member who assesses your work should see that right away. In this case, your essay will not be looked at any further in terms of academic integrity.

Ensuring that you reference material from other sources correctly according to your university's guidelines or programme requirements, is very important. Referencing is a standard way for acknowledging the sources or ideas that have contributed to your work. The common standard of referencing in New Zealand is called "APA 6th". APA stands for the American Psychological Association and they have basically developed a standard of referencing that has become popular around the world. The 6th, stands for the sixth edition or sixth version of this style of referencing, as it has developed over the years.

There is no need to go into the various rules here, because you will probably have an orientation class on academic integrity and referencing during your first week. Likewise, the rules and

examples of APA 6th should be located on your library or learning centre's website or through other resources.

Chapter 11

Exams

Exams are more of an ‘event’ during the semester, rather than just another period in the calendar. They happen twice a year at the end of each semester. They go on for a three-week period. Exams can be worth anything from 100% of the assessment for your paper, although this is rare, to 50%, which is much more common.

The exam period is also an exam study period. Like the exam period at secondary school, it means that those days that you don’t have exams you can study. The best strategy for exams at university is a simple one: treat your exam period like it begins on the first day of each semester. What this means is rather than waiting for the actual exam period to start your study at the end of the semester, start studying your subject in depth in the first week of classes.

If you begin “studying” for exams after your first lecture and keep this up for the whole semester, the extra stress of exam period will probably not be much of an issue for you. You won’t feel a sudden panic to try to cram everything into your head in the final weeks leading up to your exams. You should be so comfortable with the topic by that stage that, you will actually be looking forward to the exam and doing your best.

The actual exams, like secondary school, are held under strict conditions. There are invigilators and your bags are moved to the front of the class. You must take your student ID card in with you, and if you don’t it may be that you are not permitted to sit the exam. You may get 5-10 minutes reading time at the beginning of the exam. This is a great time to go over the questions and quickly plan out how much time you can spend on each one. Usually an exam will last two or three hours.

Exam results are usually posted on the learning management system, using your student ID number and then next to this a grade is awarded. This ensures privacy for students when checking their results. It depends on your university or the programme you study, but after the results are released you may have the opportunity to collect your exam script during what is commonly known as an “exam hand-back day”.

This is the period the paper leader has allocated in which students have the opportunity to either collect their exam scripts or come in to view them. The reason for a student wanting to view their exam scripts is that they might spot something incorrect in the calculations of the marking. On the odd occasion an exam mark may be calculated incorrectly, if a student comes to this viewing time and sees an error they can

submit their exam script for what is known as a “reconsideration of assessment”. Otherwise if there are no issues the student will normally take their exam script away with them.

The exam reconsideration is not an opportunity for students to submit instances where they disagree with how the marking has been carried out. But inevitably this ends up happening. Students will submit a reconsideration saying they thought the lecturer was “too harsh” in their marking for a particular question.

In most cases lecturers are doing what they can to actually be as generous as possible in their marking. There is the occasional lecturer who is quite strict. However as already stated, the way to deal with this is to not put yourself in the position where you need one or two marks to pass a paper. Studying from the beginning of semester, will ensure your effort comes through in your exam script. There will then be no need to go for reconsideration in the first place.

If your reconsideration comes back and there has been no change to the exam mark, you are able to appeal this result. The best way to learn about appealing is by contacting your student union.

Chapter 12

Things to Know

Student Union

The student union is an association made up of paid staff and volunteer students. Their role is to be the “student voice” on campus. It used to be that every student paid to be part of their University’s student union whether they wanted to or not, this was because the membership fee was included in their programme fees.

However in 2012, student membership with the student union became voluntary. This has inevitably caused financial hardship for student union offices.

Student unions are helpful in getting matters heard by the University. One student’s voice alone wanting to get something changed will maybe not make much of an impact. However student union members can attend meetings with

Heads of Schools and the Vice-Chancellor on your behalf. Their job is to bring forward any issues that students might have, to these meetings.

Student Unions can also be helpful if you run into some difficulty with your studies. Say your school withdraws you from your programme due to poor academic performance, you can then contact your student union and have them advocate on your behalf to get you back into the programme. Alternatively they can guide you through the appeal process. They have staff who have expertise in this area and who can help put forward a case for you to return to study.

Perhaps you might have difficulty with one of your lecturers and have tried talking to your school about it but it hasn't made much difference. Your student union can again, help represent or advise you in this matter.

The other main function of a student union is to organise student social events such as Orientation Week. This usually takes place the week before semester starts. Because there are two semesters in New Zealand universities, there are usually two separate orientation weeks per year. The major one is usually the one at the beginning of the year.

Orientation Week is a great time to get to know people, have a good time and get information about the year ahead. There are two parts to Orientation Week. There is the information giving part, where you attend seminars and meet staff from your school. They will give you information about your programme, the University and its services.

Some examples about the type of services you will be told about will be:

Library Services, such as how to operate the library database and where and when you can attend workshops to learn researching skills at the library. You should also be introduced to Student Learning. This will have a different name at each university but basically they will announce workshops you can attend. These will include exam skills preparation, time management and other similar topics.

The computer IT induction will introduce you to the online learning tools available at your university. There will also be workshops which will familiarise you with the university's student record system, which will probably be the system that you applied to the university with. You will use this system throughout your studies to access grades and add papers. You will also become familiar with the learning management system. You should be shown how to access your email account as well as any other online tools that will be useful in your studies. It is recommended that you attend all of these sessions

The other part of Orientation Week is the social aspect. Coming straight from school and adjusting to university life can be difficult, so this part of orientation week aims to break the ice and get you comfortable at university.

The type of things you can expect are comedy, magician, or hypnotist shows. There will also be games and fun activities that take place in the main plaza as well as parties and music

concerts. Each orientation will usually headline a reasonably well known band or group so look out for these.

Grade Point Average

A grade point average (GPA) is a numerical scale used to measure how successful you are doing in your programme across all your papers. In New Zealand there is a 9-point GPA scale while in places like the US for instance, there is a 4-point GPA scale.

In New Zealand each grade is given a number: A+ is 9 points, A is 8 points, A- is 7, B+ is 6, B is 5, B- is 4, C+ is 3, C is 2, C- is 1 and D is 0. You assign each grade you get for a paper its number and then add these numbers up. Once you reach the total, you then divide it by the number of papers. This includes any papers that you might have failed. This will give you an average grade.

If for example you receive 3.3 GPA, this is typically assigned to a grade range so that you can determine what overall grade to assign to it. The grade ranges may differ between universities but usually these are: greater than 8.5 A+, 7.5 – 8.49 A, 6.5 – 7.49 A-, 5.5 – 6.49 B+, 4.5 – 5.49 B, 3.5 – 4.49 B-, 2.5 – 3.49 C+, 1.5 – 2.49 C, 0.5 – 1.49 C-, less than 0.5 D.

Student exchange

You may want to study overseas during your degree and you can do so if your university offers an international exchange programme. One of the great things about international exchange is that you will only pay course fees to your New

Zealand University. You will not have to pay International fees to the university you study with overseas. However, there will be additional costs associated with travel and accommodation that you will have to pay for.

One of the first things to understand about an international exchange programme, is the key word 'exchange'. You exchange your place at this university with another. It will not always happen that another student will come from another university and take your exact place that semester. However, it illustrates the concept that you cannot just go and study at any university in the world. It has to be at a partner of the university you study at in New Zealand. It is called exchange because if you go and study at a particular university overseas, that partner university can then send one of their students to your New Zealand University. The two universities will need to balance these exchanges with each other.

Let's say that you want to go on an international exchange to Florence, Italy. The first thing you will need to check is that the university you study at in New Zealand has an exchange partner in Italy. Let's say that they do have a partner in Italy, but it is with a university in Milan, not Florence. This would then be the first compromise that you would have to make.

So let's say you are happy with Milan and decide to study at that university. The second thing that you will need to check is whether that university has an exchange agreement for your particular programme. For instance, if you study a Bachelor of Science in Physics you will need to check that the international exchange programme at that university in Milan includes your particular science programme or something similar.

Some partner universities may perhaps offer this programme as part of their general study, but it might not be included in the list of programmes made available to international exchange students. Let's say that in this case, the programme is available, the third thing you will need to check is whether that programme is being taught in English. If it is not, unless you can speak the language fluently, it is unlikely that you will be allowed to study there under the international exchange programme.

Going on an international exchange requires a lot of forward planning and effort on your part. The international exchange staff at your university may act more like facilitators. Let's say you have ticked all the above boxes: you have found a partner university, they teach a similar programme to yours and it is taught in English. Next you will need to get an idea of what papers you can study while you are there.

In most cases, the international exchange programme of the partner university will have a website which has all the papers available online for you to look at. If you are fortunate, they will have paper descriptors available also. A paper descriptor is usually a 1-3 page document that describes the content and learning objectives of the paper. You will need to read this document and then compare it to the paper descriptors of your own programme in New Zealand.

Naturally, what you are looking for are similarities within the two papers. That is both the paper that you would be studying in New Zealand and the paper that you are intending to study overseas. They both have to be very similar in order for the

exchange to be worthwhile. This requires you to firstly plan out your study in New Zealand before even considering an exchange. You will need to know precisely which papers you would be studying if you were to stay in New Zealand.

It is always recommended that you go on exchange in your second year. It is preferable that you complete all of your first year study in New Zealand and achieve good grades: around a B+ average. Exchanges normally last between 1 and 2 semesters. So you could go in the first semester of your second year and come back at the mid-year point ready for the start of semester two in New Zealand. Or you could stay there for a full year and come back at the end of semester two. Likewise you could go on your exchange in semester two of your second year and come back by the end of that semester or perhaps stay there over Christmas and come back at the end of semester one the following year.

This is of course all dependent on your budget and whether there are enough papers available for you to actually study for one or two semesters. It is also dependent on the university you intend to study at. You will need to go and see somebody in your faculty in the first instance: either the administrator, programme leader or head of department. For example, if you complete the first year in New Zealand with A grades, that staff member should be able to show you what you are going to need to complete as part of your second year. Alternatively you may not need a staff member to tell you this, as your programme outline might be available online.

Once you have a good idea of what papers you are likely to study if you were to stay in New Zealand, then you need to

locate the relevant paper descriptors. A staff member in your school will be able to tell you where these are located. They are likely to be on the learning management system or general website.

If you cannot find the paper descriptors online for the university you intend to study at overseas, you should contact the international exchange officer at your New Zealand University and ask them to contact their colleague at that partner university and request the paper descriptors for that programme. Once you have obtained these, you need to match the content and learning objectives up.

Let's say at this point you have matched up three papers. They look very similar and you are confident that the papers will cover the same ground as in your New Zealand course. You will now need to do two things. Firstly, you will need to check how many points a paper is worth at that particular university. In New Zealand, a paper is usually worth 15 points. If you are fortunate, the papers at your intended partner institute will have an equivalent value. They may have a different system such as 5 credits or something, but if the teaching hours are the same you can usually be confident that each paper has the same value. However, it is best to check this.

This is where the exchange officer at your New Zealand University will be able to assist you. They will advise you of each paper's equivalence. So if you would normally need to study four papers in New Zealand for a semester, it should be the same at your intended partner university. So in this case, you would take four papers per semester overseas. It is up to you to make sure that this is the case, as you do not want to be

studying less than a full-time course load, or one paper too many and then find that it doesn't match up to your New Zealand course.

If you have found four equivalent papers, the second thing you must do is to take the partner university's paper descriptors to your programme leader or head of department. They will need to approve these, or at the very least advise that these will be able to be credited back, in lieu of the paper you would have studied in New Zealand for that semester or those semesters.

One thing you also need to be aware of is that the grades you receive at your partner institute will normally not be included on your academic transcript of your university in New Zealand. Instead, your transcript for that semester may state international exchange and simply list 60 points, or however many equivalent points you passed and next to each paper will state 'credit'. So there will normally not be an A grade or B grade listed on your New Zealand transcript, even if you had received those marks at the partner institute.

You should receive an academic transcript shortly after completing your international exchange semester. This will either come directly to you or to the exchange office at your New Zealand University. It might be necessary to order one before you leave your partner institute.

The way forward

This book was designed with a number of aims in mind. If you were coming from a place where you didn't know if you wanted to study or what to study, it took you through different ways of identifying your own strengths and passions. The important thing to remember here is to go with what life is telling you to do, or with your compatibility, rather than being overly swayed by background factors.

Once you identified your compatibility, we explored the major programmes available in New Zealand today. The aim here was that you could identify the important factors to look for in a degree. Along with understanding your own compatibility, you may then be more comfortable with making a decision about which degree you want to study.

Of course, all universities in New Zealand are worthy of your consideration. A brief survey of their strengths aimed to give you a bit more of an insight into each one. However, because of the nature of universities in New Zealand, you should be

aware that they are a tight-knit group and ultimately it will come down to how much work you put into your studies.

Once you had defined your subject area, chosen your degree, and were confident which university you wanted to study at, we then navigated you through the next step. We identified the different ways you could get into university. The most important point here is to make sure you are doing the required subjects in your final year of secondary school in order to be able to enter your chosen programme at university.

Next we went through the application process and what steps you should take. Finally, we went through the financial processes surrounding university study. The lesson with all of these processes is of course to apply to your chosen university course as early as possible.

Going to university can be a pathway of uncertainty. However, we offered possible approaches that you could take with your studies. We went into the structure and set-up of the typical university in New Zealand and went on to discuss the student learning resources available at university. We suggested that it is always preferable to use these.

We navigated through the difficulties of academic integrity and advised that it is important to learn what this means at your university. We likewise gave you an understanding of how the exam system works. We finally touched on several other aspects of university that you might come across during the course of your study.

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