

PRACTICAL PATHWAYS

BEYOND UNIVERSITY + APPRENTICESHIPS

Certificates • diplomas • applied degrees

Allied health • engineering • tourism & hospitality

For parents and whānau at a New Zealand boys school

The aim is not to lower ambition. The aim is to widen the map.



ONE DESTINATION IS NOT ENOUGH

Post-school planning should include several credible next steps.

University and apprenticeships matter — but they are not the only serious options.

Many young men are ready for applied study before they are ready for a traditional degree.

Certificates, diplomas and applied degrees can be direct pathways into work.

A “smaller first step” can protect confidence, motivation and future progression.

The strongest question is fit: interest, readiness, support needs and employment direction.



THE QUALIFICATION LADDER

Students can step in, step up, or step across as their direction becomes clearer.



More independent study • more complex assessment • more workplace responsibility

A student without University Entrance may still have certificate or diploma options.

A student with University Entrance may still choose a diploma or applied degree if the practical route fits better.

Attendance, communication and professional behaviour often matter as much as academic results.

PROVIDER STRENGTHS TO INVESTIGATE

Examples for families to explore — not a complete list of New Zealand options.

Otago Polytechnic

Health • engineering technology • veterinary nursing • applied science • cookery/hospitality

WelTec / Whitireia

Nursing • enrolled nursing • health & wellbeing • engineering • hospitality

Ara Institute of Canterbury

Health • medical imaging • engineering • hospitality • applied management

Queenstown Resort College

Hospitality management • adventure tourism • internships • degree pathways



APPLIED LEARNING HAS A DIFFERENT RHYTHM

It often feels closer to a workplace than a classroom.



PRACTICAL

labs • workshops • simulation • real equipment

PROFESSIONAL

attendance • safety • communication • uniform where required

PLACEMENT

clinical practice • practicum • internships • industry projects

EMPLOYMENT

role-specific language and direct job pathways

Parent lens: practical pathways reward reliability, maturity and willingness to learn in real settings.

ALLIED HEALTH + HEALTH CARE

For students who like science, people, practical skill and service.

Health assistance, support work, peer support, disability and community health.

Enrolled nursing and registered nursing.

Occupational therapy, medical imaging, midwifery and musculoskeletal health.

Veterinary nursing, sport/exercise/health and health promotion.

QUALIFICATION STEPS

Certificate L3–4 → Diploma L5–6 → Degree L7

Employment settings: hospitals, clinics, aged care, rehabilitation, imaging, primary care, disability, mental health, community and veterinary clinics.



EXAMPLES PARENTS CAN INVESTIGATE

Check entry criteria, closing dates, health checks, police vetting and placement requirements.

Provider	Certificate / pathway	Diploma	Degree
Otago Polytechnic	Health Bridging L3–4	Enrolled Nursing L5; Veterinary Nursing L6	Nursing; Occupational Therapy; Midwifery; Applied Science
WelTec / Whitireia	Health & Wellbeing L3–4	Enrolled Nursing L5	Nursing; Nursing Māori; Nursing Pacific
Ara Institute	Health / Science Pathways L3–4	Enrolled Nursing L5; Veterinary Nursing L6	Nursing; Medical Imaging; Midwifery; Musculoskeletal Health

Parent prompt: Is this a direct career qualification, a stepping stone, or both?

ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

For students who like applied STEM, design, making systems work and solving practical problems.



Engineering technicians support design, testing, CAD, site measurement and project documentation. Engineering technologists apply design, systems thinking, maintenance, troubleshooting and team leadership. Provider options usually include civil, mechanical, electrical or electronic pathways.

QUALIFICATION STEPS

Certificate L3 → NZ Diploma in Engineering L6 → Bachelor of Engineering Technology L7

Useful school subjects: maths, physics, digital technology, design/graphics, workshop technology and English communication.

EXAMPLES: CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA, APPLIED DEGREE

A credible route into infrastructure, manufacturing, design support and project work.

Provider	Certificate / prep	Diploma	Applied degree
Otago Polytechnic	Mechanical Engineering L3	NZ Diploma in Engineering L6: civil, mechanical, electrical	Bachelor of Engineering Technology L7: civil, mechanical, electrical
WelTec	Pre-trade / preparation options may support entry	NZ Diploma in Engineering L6: civil, mechanical	Bachelor of Engineering Technology L7: civil, mechanical
Ara Institute	Engineering pathways L3–4	NZ Diploma in Engineering L6: civil, electrical, mechanical, electronic	Bachelor of Engineering Technology L7: civil, electrical, mechanical

Employment settings: councils, consultancies, contractors, transport, water, energy, manufacturing, maintenance, CAD/design and project support.

TOURISM + HOSPITALITY

A people-focused pathway with regional, national and international mobility.

Hotel, resort and lodge operations.

Guest experience, front office, reservations, sales and revenue.

Restaurants, events, conference and functions.

Adventure tourism, guiding, visitor experience and risk management.

Pathways into entrepreneurship, management and global travel careers.

GOOD FIT FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE

confident communicators • organised • practical • culturally aware • calm under pressure • willing to work varied hours



EXAMPLES: SERVICE, MANAGEMENT, INTERNSHIPS

Programmes often include industry projects, work-integrated learning or paid internships.

Provider	Certificate / entry	Diploma	Degree / further pathway
QRC	Level 4 options in tourism / hospitality service	Hospitality Management L6; Adventure Tourism Management L6; paid internship	Degree pathways; Graduate Diploma in Tourism & Hospitality Management L7
Ara Institute	Food & Beverage Service L3–4; Cookery / Baking L4	Hospitality Management L5; Cookery L5	Bachelor of Applied Management: Hotel & Tourism Management; Event Management
Otago Polytechnic / WelTec	Cookery, hospitality and service certificates vary by campus	Business / hospitality-related diplomas in some contexts	Applied management pathways may support hospitality, operations or tourism leadership

QRC point of difference: management focus, Queenstown industry links and substantial paid internship hours on main diplomas.

WHERE THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE LIKELY TO BE

Employment still depends on attitude, references, location and willingness to start well.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Hospitals • clinics • aged care •
disability • community health •
imaging • mental health •
rehabilitation

ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Councils • consultancies •
contractors • water • transport •
energy • manufacturing •
CAD/design

TOURISM + HOSPITALITY

Hotels • resorts • lodges •
attractions • guiding • events •
airlines • sales/reservations

The qualification opens the door. Employability skills keep it open.

Attendance • communication • safety • teamwork • resilience • reliability

QUESTIONS THAT MAKE THE DECISION BETTER

The right pathway is realistic, motivating and expandable.

Will he enjoy the day-to-day work, not just the title?

Does he meet entry requirements now? If not, what bridge exists?

How much placement, practicum or internship is involved?

What costs sit beyond fees: travel, tools, uniform, laptop or accommodation?

What job could he apply for after year one, after the diploma and after the degree?

SIGNALS OF A GOOD FIT

**attendance • practical curiosity • communication • resilience •
willingness to start small • interest in real workplaces**



A PRACTICAL DECISION PROCESS

Move from “What should I be?” to “What should I try next?”

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|---|---------------------|---|
| 1 | SHORTLIST | 2–3 fields that match interests and school strengths. |
| 2 | CHECK ENTRY | NCEA level, subjects, literacy/numeracy and special requirements. |
| 3 | TEST REALITY | Open days, provider visits, taster courses and workplace conversations. |
| 4 | COMPARE | Job outcome, higher study, registration or degree pathway. |
| 5 | APPLY EARLY | Health programmes and accommodation may close well before start year. |

Final message: a good pathway is one a student will finish, use and grow from.