

Unsure what to study next year? Six things to consider as you make up your mind

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You will find a lot of careers related to certain subjects you did at school. Credit: Yan Krukov/Pexels, CC BY

As Year 12 students begin term 3, they will be thinking increasingly about what to do next year. Throughout August, [many universities](#) have

have open days as students investigate different courses and options for study.

This is a significant time for [young people](#) as they navigate study pressures with decisions about what to do beyond school.

If you are still making up your mind (and there is still plenty of time!), here are six things to consider.

1. There are lots of options

Your [personal interests](#) and ability are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a [university degree](#).

So your Year 12 subjects can help steer what you study after school. Many [high school students](#) will be familiar with the careers "[bullseye](#)" posters which help you see the links between school study, possible careers and what kind of study you need to get there. These posters cover a huge range of subjects, from biology to food studies, languages and physical education.

For example, if you love math, you may want to consider studying data analytics, engineering, economics or architecture.

Meanwhile, most careers can be done in a whole range of ways. For example, many archaeologists may not be excavating tombs in Egypt, but undertaking heritage site surveys for construction projects.

If you have a specific idea in mind—or even just a general area of interest—talk to your careers adviser at school. At uni open days, talk to subject-area specialists about what they do in their courses.

2. High school subjects are not quite the same as uni

Keep in mind the subject you love at school is likely to be a little different at university level, or may go by a different name.

For example, high school English is much broader than English literature at university. So if you love [creative writing](#) or essay writing at school, you may want to consider a creative writing or journalism course rather than English literature at uni.

To better understand what you might study, look at the specific subjects involved in possible degrees and talk to academics (the people who research and teach at uni) and current university students at open days.

3. Think about your uni as well as your course

On top of your studies, make sure you look at any additional opportunities that may be offered by a university.

Do they have opportunities to do study tours or a semester abroad? Do their degrees include industry experience? Do they have social or sporting clubs you would like to join?

4. Don't forget there are options with how you study

Along with the subject matter you will also be thinking about where you are studying and how you are getting there.

Not all students live close to their chosen university, where it's a simple commute to campus. Relocating can be expensive and we know this is made all the more difficult by housing and cost-of-living crises.

Full-time study might be supported by [Youth Allowance](#) or [ABSTUDY](#) for First Nations students.

A full-time study load is usually eight courses a year. But many universities now offer flexible enrollment patterns that allow you to spread your study over the year by studying fewer courses across more study periods.

Another option is studying part-time. Your degree will take longer to complete, but this might allow you to better manage your work and study commitments.

Don't forget you can also investigate doing degrees online, and make sure you check out any scholarship opportunities for which you may be eligible. Each university will advertise its own scholarships on its website, and some organizations also offer scholarships for study in particular fields.

5. The ATAR is not everything

There can be a lot of pressure on students to get a certain ATAR. But missing out on ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) entry for a certain course does not mean university study is out of reach.

Many courses use other entry criteria such as auditions or portfolios.

Many students also use [non-ATAR pathways](#) to get to university, including vocational, diploma or bridging studies to get to uni.

6.It's OK to change your mind

Starting a degree and finding it isn't quite the right fit [is a common](#)

[experience](#). In almost all cases, you will be able to transfer to another degree or another major within your current degree, and sometimes get credit for the study you have already completed.

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