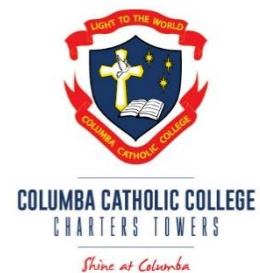




Careers Newsletter



Weekly Careers News for Columba Catholic College

September 8, 2025

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Charters Towers Regional Council – Trades Assistant

Western Truck Group – Townsville, Mt Isa and other sites – Apprenticeships - Multiple

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More details on each of these roles is available on the Columba Careers Website link provided above.

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Job Opportunities

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Events

This Week's Events

Arduino Intermediate Online Workshop for Students Aged 11-15 Interested in Coding

Organisation: ANSTO

Location: Online

Date: September 10 to September 24, 2025

Students will be stepped through the more complex and technical aspects of coding and designing projects with virtual Arduinos. Students with physical kits will be supported in setting up and using them at home.

Each week, students will be encouraged to complete extra coding challenges, as well as working on their own original games, in-between sessions.

What you'll learn:

- Connect and code your Arduino with more complex commands
- Use your own Arduino (if you have one) and solve common setup problems
- Understand what an Arduino is and how it works

- Build and simulate more complex virtual circuits (LEDs, sensors, buttons & more)
- Write and troubleshoot more challenging Arduino code
- Use digital & analog inputs/outputs effectively for a greater range of purposes
- Create and design mini projects in a safe, online environment with an experienced K-12 STEM teacher

What you'll need:

- A laptop or desktop with internet access
- A quiet workspace (headphones with microphone recommended)
- A physical Arduino would be great (but not required)
- Basic familiarity with Zoom or Teams
- Curiosity and a love for creating!

This is a small group workshop, so places are limited to ensure personalised support.

If this time does not suit you, or if the program is fully booked, but you are still interested in similar programs, [please complete this form](#).

[Find out more and register](#)

Retro Game Jam Online Workshop for Students Aged 11-15 Interested in Making Video Games

Organisation: ANSTO

Location: Online

Date: September 10 to September 24, 2025

Love the idea of making your own video games but not sure where to start?

Retro Game Jam is a guided online workshop where students use MakeCode Arcade (a free, browser-based block+text coding platform) to design and build their own retro-style video games over three sessions. Facilitated by a qualified STEM teacher with experience in digital technologies and game design.

Each week, students will be encouraged to complete extra coding challenges, as well as working on their own original games, in-between sessions.

Each week includes:

- Live, step-by-step tutorials
- Facilitated times to develop their own games
- Structured guidance to help them objectively debug and assess computer games
- Show & tell segments where students get to share, celebrate, and constructively critique the work they've completed between lessons

No experience is required - just a laptop and a bit of imagination.

If this time does not suit you, or if the program is fully booked, but you are still interested in similar programs, [please complete this form](#).

[Find out more and register](#)

Next Week's Events

Griffith Year 12 Academic Bootcamps

Organisation: Griffith University

Location: Griffith Gold Coast & Logan Campuses

Date: September 22 to October 2, 2025

Griffith's Academic Bootcamps are highly effective four-day courses run in the September school holidays, designed to help Year 12 students achieve their full academic potential in their final external exams. They aim to improve confidence and understanding in senior science and maths subject areas, reducing anxiety around assessment and preparing students for future tertiary study.

Week one: 22 - 25 September 2025

- General Maths
- Maths Methods

Week two: 29 Sept - 2 Oct 2025

- Chemistry
- Physics
- Biology
- Psychology

The 2025 Bootcamps will be held on campus at Griffith University Gold Coast and Logan during the September school holidays.

[Find out more and register](#)

University of Queensland Holiday Campus Tours for Future Students

Organisation: University of Queensland

Location: UQ St Lucia Campus

Date: September 22, 2025

Get a glimpse of the endless opportunities at UQ, whether you're interested in academics, sports or student life.

- Explore the St Lucia campus in a guided walking tour.
- Gain valuable advice and hear about the UQ student experience first-hand from current students.
- Have your questions answered by our Future Students Contact Centre team.

Open to high school students in years 10-12 and their parents and guardians.

[Find out more and register](#)

National Art School Bachelor of Fine Arts Online Information Session

Organisation: National Art School

Location: Online

Date: September 23, 2025

Join our webinar to find out what makes NAS different from all other Fine Art degrees.

The BFA degree is designed to impart the skills, knowledge and creative independence required to sustain a career as an artist. Our staff will talk you through undergraduate study options, the admissions process and then offer the chance for you to ask any questions you might have, so tune in.

[Find out more and register](#)

Westpac 2026 Young Technologists Scholarship Online Information Session

Organisation: Westpac

Location: Online

Date: September 25, 2025

The Westpac Young Technologists Scholarship is for talented and inquisitive high school graduates looking to strengthen their passion and expertise in technology and inspire good in the world of STEM. Applications for Westpac Young Technologists Scholarships are open from 2 Sept 2025 - 13 Jan 2026 and are valued up to \$20,000 each. With a weeklong disruptive leaders program in Singapore and access to mentoring and networking opportunities, this scholarship is a unique opportunity to strengthen your passion and expertise in technology and inspire new ways of thinking.

Thinking of applying for a Westpac Young Technologists Scholarship, but have some unanswered questions? Register for the online information session that will cover everything from the eligibility criteria and funding guidelines to key attributes of a Westpac Scholar and tips to complete your application. You'll also get to hear from past scholars who can give you more insight into what to expect, and there will be time for Q&A at the end.

[Find out more and register](#)

Future Events

Scholarships

Griffith University George Alexander Foundation Scholarships for Students Relocating to Study

Organisation: Griffith University

Location: Australia

Value: Up to \$24,000 AUD

Open Date: July 1, 2025

Close Date: January 19, 2026

[Find out more](#)

Westpac Young Technologists Scholarship for Talented School Leavers in STEM

Organisation: Westpac

Location: Australia

Value: \$20,000 AUD

Open Date: September 2, 2025

Close Date: January 13, 2026

[Find out more](#)

University of Melbourne Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarship Program for Education or Accommodation Costs

Organisation: University of Melbourne

Location: Australia

Value: Up to \$36,000 AUD

Open Date: August 4, 2025

Close Date: January 13, 2026

[Find out more](#)

University of Sydney Scholarship for New Undergraduate Students in the Faculty of Science

Organisation: University of Sydney

Location: Australia

Value: \$7,500 AUD

Open Date: July 1, 2025

Close Date: September 30, 2025

[Find out more](#)

Flinders University Vice-Chancellor Domestic Academic Excellence Scholarship

Organisation: Flinders University

Location: Australia

Value: \$12,000 AUD per year

Open Date: August 5, 2024

Close Date: January 2, 2025

[Find out more](#)

Curtin University Sir William Tyree Women in Engineering Scholarship for Female and Non-binary Students

Organisation: Curtin University

Location: Australia

Value: \$60,000 AUD

Open Date: July 24, 2025

Close Date: November 24, 2025

[Find out more](#)

Competitions

Snowy Hydro “Powering Up the Future” STEM Invention Competition for Australian Students

Organisation: Snowy Hydro Limited

Location: Australia

Value: Up to \$3,000 AUD

Open Date: August 4, 2025

Close Date: September 28, 2025

[Find out more](#)

Hachette Australia Prize 2025 for Young Writers in Secondary School

Organisation: Express Media
Location: Australia
Value: See details
Close Date: October 12, 2025
[Find out more](#)

Weekly Posts

Work Experience

5 work experience ideas for students who love photography

Work experience gives you the chance to test-drive your career interests and build practical skills that you can't learn in a classroom. If you're passionate about photography and want to see what it's really like to work in the industry, there are several paths you can explore. Here are five work experience opportunities that can help you develop your skills and decide if photography is the right career path for you.

Find experience at a local photography studio

Working at a photography studio is one of the most direct ways to understand professional photography. You'll learn how to set up lighting, handle expensive equipment safely, and see how different types of shoots work - from portraits to product photography.

You can approach local studios about work experience programs, volunteer opportunities, or part-time positions. Even if you're just helping with basic tasks like moving equipment or tidying up, you'll be absorbing valuable knowledge about how the business operates and what makes a professional photographer successful.

Assist with event photography

Event photography is fast-paced and unpredictable, which makes it an excellent learning opportunity. Wedding photographers, corporate event photographers, and party photographers often need extra hands to carry equipment, help with crowd management, or capture different angles.

Start by asking family and friends if they know anyone who needs photography help for their events. You'll learn how to work quickly under pressure, adapt to changing lighting conditions, and develop the people skills that are crucial for working with clients.

Learn photo editing and post-production

Photography doesn't end when you take the shot - post-production is where many photos truly come to life. Learning industry-standard software like [Photoshop](#) and [Lightroom](#) is essential for any photographer, and these skills are highly transferable to other creative industries too.

Offer to edit photos for friends, family, local sports teams, or small businesses. You could even advertise your services online as you build your skills. This experience will teach you the complete photography workflow and help you understand how editing can enhance or completely transform an image.

Try freelance photography

Taking on small freelance projects helps you understand the business side of photography while building your portfolio. Start with simple assignments like headshots for LinkedIn profiles, photos for local business websites, or family portrait sessions.

Freelancing teaches you crucial skills like pricing your work, communicating with clients, managing deadlines, and delivering finished products. These business skills are just as important as technical photography skills if you want to make photography your career.

Attend photography workshops and classes

Photography workshops give you access to experienced professionals who can share techniques you won't find in textbooks. Many workshops focus on specific styles like landscape photography, street photography, or studio portraiture, allowing you to explore different areas of the field.

Look for workshops that offer hands-on practice and personalised feedback. Some even provide certificates that you can add to your portfolio or CV, which can be valuable when applying for jobs or further education.

Making the most of your experience

Getting the most from any work experience means being proactive about learning. [Ask questions](#) about equipment, techniques, and the business side of photography. Take notes about what you learn each day, and don't be afraid to request feedback on your own work.

It's also a good idea to connect with other photography enthusiasts through local camera clubs or online communities. The photography industry relies heavily on networking and referrals, so building relationships early can open doors to future opportunities.

Want to explore more?

Work experience is a great opportunity to discover which area might suit your interests and skills best, whether you're interested in photography or something else entirely.

[You can find out more about work experience and search for opportunities on our website here.](#)

Skills for Work

How social media affects your job prospects

Social media isn't just about sharing memes and staying connected with mates anymore. It's become a powerful career tool that can either open doors or slam them shut before you even know they existed. Whether you're scrolling through TikTok or crafting the perfect LinkedIn post, [every digital footprint you leave could be shaping your future job prospects](#). Think of your online presence as a 24/7 billboard advertising who you are – and employers are definitely taking notice. In this blog, we'll take a quick look at how social media posts could have both positive and negative effects on your future careers.

The reality check: What employers are really doing

"Social media posts can reveal a more honest view of an applicant than what they might share during an interview."

Marlene Allen Murray, Business Litigation Attorney at Fennemore Craig

As far back as 2018, a [CareerBuilder](#) study of over 1,000 employers revealed some eye-opening statistics:

- 70% of employers said they use social networking sites to research job applicants during hiring process
- 28% say they use social media to gather more information before calling in a candidate for an interview
- 47% say that if they can't find you online, they're less likely to call you for an interview

- 20% of prospective employers polled said they expect applicants to have an online presence
- A whopping 54% of companies admitted to eliminating a candidate based on their social media fee

In 2023, [Zippia](#) research painted an even clearer picture:

- 57% of job seekers use social media to find job opportunities
- 73% of job seekers aged 18-34 found their latest job through social media
- 84% of organisations use social media for recruitment 67% of employers research potential candidates on social platforms
- 94% of recruiters use social media to find and vet candidates
- 71% of hiring managers believe social media profiles effectively screen applicants

As Jeff Williams from Paychex puts it:

"It's 2023, and what is posted on TikTok, Instagram, Twitter - and even Facebook for the nostalgic - is an accessible, non-invasive way of gaining insight on your candidate."

What exactly are they hunting for? Here's the breakdown:

- 58% said they're looking for information that supports your qualifications for the job
- 50% are looking to check your professional persona
- 34% are checking to see what other people have posted about you
- 22% are looking to see if there are any reasons not to hire you.

And [Queros](#) found in 2024:

- [57%](#) of job seekers surveyed [used social media to look for jobs](#)
- 73% of millennial job seekers (aged between 18 and 34) have found their latest job through social media
- [84%](#) of organisations use social media for recruitment
- [67%](#) of employers use social media sites to research potential job candidates and learn more about their professional and personal achievements
- [70%](#) of managers have successfully hired through social media and built a more inclusive workforce.

Ultimately, what this means is that if you're still in high school and are thinking about future career goals, it's going to be worth your time creating an online presence, even if it's just a professional account that you only use as job prospecting tool. Otherwise you could find that you'll miss out on opportunities.

The pitfalls: When social media works against you

Your digital reputation could mean more than you think - here are the main ways social media could affect your career prospects.

Inappropriate content

Those party photos from last weekend or that rant about your boss might seem harmless in the moment, but they're creating a permanent record of poor judgement. Employers aren't looking for saints, but they do want evidence of maturity and professionalism.

Questionable conduct

This extends beyond your own posts - being tagged in situations involving illegal activities or poor decision-making can raise red flags about your character and judgement. Even if you weren't the one posting, association can be damaging.

Poor communication skills

These shine through in every typo-riddled post and aggressive comment thread. If you can't communicate respectfully online, why would an employer trust you with their customers or colleagues?

Values misalignment

This can happen when your online persona clashes with a company's culture. That edgy humour or controversial opinion might not mesh with their workplace values, no matter how qualified you are. The harsh truth? Over a third of employers (42%) monitor current employees' social media, and [70% have disciplined or fired staff based on social media misuse](#) in the workplace - meaning your digital behaviour doesn't stop mattering once you land the job either.

The opportunities: Making social media work for you

On the flip side, there are lots of ways that social media, used appropriately, could help you to show yourself as a credible, proactive, forward thinking, and showcase your expertise or work experience, connect with other industry professionals, and ensure you stay updated on the latest trends and opportunities.

Showcase your professionalism

Platforms like [LinkedIn](#) can help you make a good first impression online. This isn't just about listing your achievements; it's about demonstrating your ability to communicate professionally, engage thoughtfully with industry content, and present yourself as someone worth investing in.

Engage with industry-specific content

This can help you position yourself as a keen and informed future professional. Following thought leaders, commenting meaningfully on posts, and sharing relevant articles shows you're genuinely interested in your chosen field, not just looking for any old job.

Build your personal brand

Consistently share content that aligns with your career goals: if you're passionate about environmental science, share articles about sustainability. If marketing excites you, engage with digital marketing discussions. Your online presence should tell a coherent story about who you are professionally.

Network strategically

Use social media as a way to connect with professionals, alumni, and industry leaders. Social media breaks down traditional barriers, allowing you to learn from people you'd never otherwise meet. But remember – quality connections beat quantity every time.

Discover opportunities

There are some opportunities online that might never appear on traditional job boards. Many companies share openings on their social channels first, and building relationships online can lead to insider knowledge about upcoming roles.

Your action plan: Taking control of your digital story

Feeling overwhelmed? Don't worry – transforming your online presence doesn't require a complete digital makeover overnight. Start with these practical steps.

Audit your current presence

Google yourself and review all your social media accounts through fresh eyes. If you wouldn't be comfortable with your headteacher or your Grandma seeing a post, potential employers probably won't be thrilled either.

Update your privacy settings

Remove anyone you don't recognise from your friends list and be more selective about who you accept in future. You should also limit who can tag you in posts so that you're not unknowingly or unwillingly associated with content that might not sit well with others.

Create separation

Consider using a nickname for personal accounts while using your real name for professional platforms. This isn't about being fake, it's about being strategic.

Think before you post

Ask yourself: "Would I be happy for this to represent me in five years' time?" If there's any doubt, don't hit publish.

Be proactive

Take some time to curate your professional presence. Share achievements, volunteer experiences, and insights about your interests. Show potential employers the ambitious, thoughtful person behind the application.

Work social media to your advantage

Social media isn't going anywhere, and neither are employers who use it to evaluate candidates. Rather than seeing this as a threat, view it as an opportunity to stand out from the crowd in all the right ways. Remember, every post is a choice. Every comment is a decision. Every share is a statement about who you are and what you value. Make sure they're all working towards the future you want to create. By [being professional](#), respectful, looking for relevant content, building a positive personal brand, and networking, you'll be able to harness the power of social media to your advantage.

Want more?

[We have heaps of other blogs on professional development and careers for you to read on our website here.](#)

Apprenticeships & Traineeships

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships explained

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships offer high school students a unique pathway that combines traditional schooling with real-world work experience and vocational training. They're a valuable pathway for students who want to obtain their high school certificate while also building practical skills and earning money in their chosen field.

But what do school-based apprenticeships and traineeships involve and why might you consider doing one? We're going to cover all that and more, so let's take a look.

What exactly are school-based apprenticeships and traineeships?

As the name suggests, [school-based apprenticeships and traineeships](#) (also known as SBATs) allow students to combine their school studies with work and vocational training.

You can begin an SBAT in Year 10, 11, or 12, splitting your time between three key components:

- continuing essential school work
- undertaking formal vocational training (either in person or online)
- working part-time and receiving hands-on training and mentoring

They're perfect for students who learn best by doing, are keen to get a head start on their career, may be struggling with traditional school, or aren't interested in heading to university straight after high school.

The timeline and commitment

Like a regular apprenticeship or traineeship, SBATs typically take between 1-4 years to complete. The exact length of an SBAT will depend on the qualification you want to study and how much time you can dedicate to part-time work each week. Some students may need to continue their training after leaving school to complete their qualification.

During this period, you'll need to make a genuine commitment to both your education and your employer. You'll be learning to balance multiple responsibilities, which is excellent preparation for adult working life.

What can you gain from a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship?

By the time students complete Year 12, they could walk away with:

- a high school certificate
- a nationally-recognised qualification
- an ATAR (depending on their subject choices)
- paid work experience
- practical, industry-specific skills
- industry contacts and mentors
- a head start in their chosen career

Perhaps most importantly, many students receive full-time job offers from their employers once their SBAT is complete. If you show commitment, work ethic, skills, and you're a good fit for the team, you could walk into your first full-time job without the hassle of applications and interviews.

How long have school-based apprenticeships and traineeships been around?

SBATs are a tried and tested pathway with strong foundations, and have been [part of Australia's education landscape since 1996](#).

The numbers speak to their popularity and effectiveness: in 2023, [approximately 252,105 school students](#) undertook VET as part of their senior schooling, and 19,310 (or 7.7%) of these students participated in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

How are school-based apprenticeships and traineeships funded?

SBATs and other vocational qualifications for young people are designed to be accessible, so they're often [fully funded](#) by federal or state governments. This means there are typically no additional costs beyond normal school expenses, removing financial barriers that might otherwise prevent participation.

Who can participate?

To be eligible to undertake an SBAT, you must:

- be enrolled full-time at school
- be aged 15 or older
- have your school's agreement
- find an employer willing to take you on
- have parental permission (if you're under 18)

Most students who meet these basic requirements can participate, though it's a good idea to check specific requirements with both your school and in your state or territory, as these can vary slightly.

Who's involved in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship?

Similar to regular apprenticeships and traineeships, SBATs involve commitment and support from multiple parties.

The Apprentice Connect Australia Provider

[Apprentice Connect Australia Providers](#) (or ACAPs) provide you with free advice and resources to start your SBAT. They'll work with you and other parties to finalise your training contract, find an employer and Registered Training Organisation, and help you claim any financial support you're eligible for. Note that you can't start an apprenticeship or traineeship without an Apprentice Connect Australia Provider.

The employer

Before you can start, you'll need to find an employer willing to hire you for the duration of your SBAT. Your employer is responsible for providing you with work, on-the-job training, and the same [minimum entitlements](#) as any other employee (such as wages, superannuation, and leave).

In some cases, your employer may also cover some of the costs of your training, like your education fees or necessary tools and equipment.

The training provider

As well as work, you'll also complete formal education as part of your SBAT, delivered by a [Registered Training Organisation](#) (or RTO). RTOs are educational institutions like TAFEs, universities, or private providers - in some cases, your training may even be delivered directly by your school.

Your RTO will work together with you and your employer to create a training plan, which covers everything you'll learn and how you'll learn it throughout your SBAT.

The school

Of course, you'll need approval and support from your school to undertake an SBAT. They can provide you and your family with information about how the process works, let you know which school subjects you still need to take, and create your new timetable.

The parents

Anyone under the age of 18 needs permission from a parent or guardian to undertake an SBAT, so speak to them early if it's an option you're considering. They can help you explore your options, find an employer, and work with the school to negotiate your new timetable. You might also need extra help from them to travel to and from work and your RTO.

The student

Last but certainly not least, you also need to be fully on board at each stage of the journey through your SBAT. You'll need to show up to school, work, and training, manage your time effectively, and let your school, employer, or family know if you need additional support.

Starting a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship

Starting an SBAT involves several steps, but you have plenty of support throughout the process.

Do your research

Before making a decision, explore different industries and careers to find something that genuinely interests you and offers good long-term prospects. You might like to check out resources like the [Pathways Explorer](#) or [Your Career](#).

Talk to your school

You should always begin by talking with your school's VET coordinator, careers advisor, or guidance officer to understand the available options and how they fit into your academic and career plans.

Find and apply for jobs

An ACAP is usually your first point of contact, as they can help you find suitable opportunities. [Group Training Organisations](#) (GTOs) can also connect you with employers looking for apprentices or trainees. Your school might also have existing contacts or employers for you to explore. This is also the stage where you (or your employer or school) will choose an RTO.

Sort out the practicalities

Don't forget the essential admin, like obtaining a [Unique Student Identifier](#) (USI), opening a bank account, applying for a [tax file number](#) (TFN), and exploring [financial support](#) options.

Sign your contract and enrol

Once your employer, RTO, school, and ACAP have finalised your [training contract](#), all that's left to do is for you and your parent or guardian to sign it and you're ready to begin.

Starting your career journey

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships offer an excellent pathway for students who want to combine academic achievement with practical career preparation. If you think it might be the right option for you, start exploring your options now so you can make the best decision for your future goals. You can find more comprehensive information and resources to help guide your decision on our [apprenticeships and traineeships page](#).

First Jobs, Skills for Work

How to nail your job application video

If you've been on the hunt for a job, you may have come across an employer asking you to submit a video as part of the application process. This can be a great opportunity to showcase your personality and skills beyond what's on your resume. But if you've never made one before, it might seem a bit daunting. Don't worry – we've got you covered with some tips to help you create a standout job application video.

Why do employers ask for video applications?

Video applications give employers a chance to see more of your personality and communication skills. They can also be a way for you to demonstrate specific skills relevant to the job. For example, if you're applying for a role that requires public speaking or presenting, a video is a perfect way to show off those abilities.

7 tips for creating a great job application video

Want to know how to create a video that will help you stand out from the crowd? Here are our top tips.

Understand the requirements

Before you start filming, make sure you know exactly what the employer is looking for. Read the instructions carefully. How long should the video be? Are there specific questions you need to answer? What format should you use? Following these guidelines is your first chance to show that you can follow instructions – an important skill in any job.

Plan your content

Just like you wouldn't go into a job interview unprepared, don't start your video without a plan. Write a script or at least prepare some bullet points of what you want to say. Practice a few times so you feel comfortable with the content.

Choose the right setting

Find a quiet place with good lighting to film your video. A plain background is usually best – you want the focus to be on you, not what's behind you. Make sure there's nothing distracting or inappropriate in the frame.

Dress appropriately

Dress as you would for an in-person interview. This shows the employer that you're taking the application seriously and understand professional expectations.

Check your tech

Before you start recording your job application video, test your camera and microphone to ensure they're working properly. Poor audio or visual quality can be distracting and may negatively impact your application.

Be yourself

While it's important to be professional, don't forget to let your personality shine through. Employers want to see the real you, not a robotic version reciting memorised lines.

Keep it concise

Respect the employer's time by sticking to the requested length. If no time limit is specified, aim for 1-2 minutes. Remember, you want to give enough information to interest them, but leave them wanting to know more.

What to include in your video

Your job application video should typically cover:

1. **A brief introduction:** State your name and the position you're applying for.
2. **Your relevant skills and experiences:** Highlight why you're a good fit for the role.
3. **Your interest in the position:** Explain why you want this particular job.
4. **A call to action:** Thank them for their time and express your interest in hearing back.

Review before you submit

Once you've recorded your video, watch it back. Check for any technical issues, and make sure you've covered all the key points. If possible, ask a trusted friend, family member, or teacher to watch it and give you feedback.

Final thoughts

Remember, the video is usually just one part of the job application process. Make sure you've also prepared a strong resume and cover letter (if required), and don't forget to follow up after submitting your application – it shows initiative and genuine interest in the position.

Want more tips on finding and securing work? [You can read more blogs on our website here.](#)

Health & Wellbeing, Study Tips

Seven warning signs you're trying to do too much with your study

Balancing study with everything else in your life can be tricky, and sometimes you might find yourself pushing a bit too hard without realising it. Just like training for a sport, there's a sweet spot for studying between working hard enough to improve and working so hard that you actually get worse results. The good news is that feeling overwhelmed or out of balance isn't a personal failing – it's just a normal part of learning how to manage everything on your plate. Most successful students go through periods where they need to adjust their approach, and recognising when this happens is actually a really valuable skill.

The key is catching these signals early and making small adjustments before things become more challenging. A few tweaks to your routine now can save you from much bigger problems later, and learning to recognise your limits actually makes you more effective, not less.

Signs you might need to dial things back a bit

These warning signs are your body and mind's way of letting you know that your current approach might need some fine-tuning. You don't need to be experiencing all of these to benefit from making some adjustments – even one or two can be worth paying attention to.

Feeling constantly tired or run down

If you're consistently waking up feeling exhausted even after a full night's sleep or finding that you need multiple coffees just to get through the day, your current routine might be asking more of you than you can handle. This kind of tiredness is different from the normal fatigue you feel after a busy day – it's more like your energy reserves are running on empty.

You might notice you're falling asleep during study sessions, struggling to stay alert in class, or feeling like you just can't "switch on" even when you *really* try to. This is a classic sign that your body is telling you it needs more recovery time.

Finding it hard to stay motivated

When your usual study routine starts feeling overwhelming or pointless, it's often a sign that you've been pushing too hard for too long. You might find yourself procrastinating more than usual, struggling to start study sessions, or feeling like there's no point trying because you're too far behind.

This isn't laziness – it's usually your brain protecting you from overload. When motivation drops significantly across multiple subjects or activities you used to enjoy, it's worth taking a step back and reassessing your approach.

Having trouble concentrating

If you're spending hours at your desk but very little actual learning is happening, this could indicate that your brain needs a break. You might notice you're re-reading the same information multiple times without it sinking in, forgetting things shortly after learning them, or finding your mind wandering constantly during study sessions.

Concentration problems can also show up in other areas too, like losing track of conversations, forgetting what you were doing mid-task, or struggling to follow movies or books you'd normally enjoy.

Feeling more stressed or anxious than usual

While some stress is normal and can even be helpful for performance, chronic worry that interferes with your daily life is less than ideal. This can manifest as constant concern about your performance, panicking about deadlines even when you're prepared, or even physical symptoms like rapid heartbeat or difficulty breathing when thinking about schoolwork.

You might also notice your stress response becoming disproportionate to actual challenges – you might become overwhelmed by minor setbacks or unable to switch off from academic concerns during break times.

Neglecting other important things

When study takes over your life completely, other important areas often suffer. You might find yourself skipping meals, avoiding friends, putting off basic self-care, or becoming short-tempered with people you care about. While some temporary sacrifices are normal during busy periods, consistently neglecting these areas usually makes academic performance worse rather than better.

Pay attention to whether you're maintaining the relationships and activities that normally help you feel balanced and happy.

Experiencing unexplained headaches or physical symptoms

Frequent headaches, muscle tension, stomach problems, or other physical symptoms without obvious causes can sometimes be your body responding to ongoing stress. These often improve when you reduce pressure and create more balance in your routine.

Notice whether these symptoms follow patterns, like becoming worse during assessment periods then improving during holidays, or coinciding with particularly intense study schedules.

Not enjoying things that usually make you happy

If hobbies, social activities, entertainment, or other interests that normally bring you joy start feeling boring or like too much effort, this can be a sign that your overall stress levels are affecting your ability to feel good about anything.

This is particularly worth paying attention to because losing these positive experiences makes it much harder to cope with academic pressure and can create a cycle where everything feels more difficult than it should.

Simple adjustments that can help you feel more balanced

If you're recognising some of these signs, don't panic – they're actually quite common and can typically be managed with some straightforward changes. The goal isn't to completely overhaul your life, but to make some tweaks that help you feel more sustainable and effective.

Get back to basics

Before trying to optimise your study techniques, make sure you're covering the fundamentals. Your brain needs adequate sleep, regular meals, hydration, and some physical movement to function well. These aren't luxuries you can skip when you're busy – they're the foundation that everything else builds on. Even small improvements in these areas can make a significant difference to how you feel and how effectively you can study.

Scale back temporarily

If you're showing several warning signs, this is probably a good time to temporarily reduce some pressure rather than trying to push through. This might mean asking for extensions on less critical assignments, reducing work hours for a few weeks, or focusing on your most important subjects while maintaining basic requirements elsewhere.

Reconnect with your support network

When we're overwhelmed, we often withdraw from the people who could help us feel better. Make an effort to spend time with friends, family, or other supportive people, even if you don't feel particularly social. Sometimes the best thing you can do for your academic performance is remind yourself that there's more to life than grades.

Review your expectations

Take an honest look at whether your current goals match what's realistically possible given your circumstances. Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is adjust your timeline or approach so you can achieve your aims more sustainably.

Build regular breaks into your routine

Instead of treating rest as something you earn after completing work, schedule it as essential maintenance. Plan complete rest days, social activities you enjoy, and hobbies that energise rather than drain you.

Get support when you need it

If these feelings persist for more than a few weeks or are significantly affecting your daily life, it's worth talking to someone. This might be a school counsellor, family member, doctor, or accessing mental health resources.

[Be You](#) offers excellent, evidence-based information and tools for supporting mental health and wellbeing in educational settings. They have practical resources for students and families about managing stress and building resilience.

Remember that seeking support shows you're taking your wellbeing seriously and want to develop sustainable strategies – many successful people have learned valuable skills from navigating challenging periods.

Moving forward

The most important thing to understand is that feeling overwhelmed sometimes is completely normal, and learning to recognise and respond to these signals is actually a really valuable life skill. You're not failing if you need to make adjustments – you're learning to work with your natural rhythms and limits, which will serve you well throughout your education and beyond.

[We have lots of other study tips for success on our website here.](#)

Study Tips

Should I drop a subject?

Feeling overwhelmed by your subject load? You're not alone. Before you consider making any major changes, let's explore whether there are better ways to manage your workload and keep your future options wide open.

Why you might be considering dropping out

It's completely natural to feel the pressure when juggling multiple subjects alongside everything else in your life. Common reasons students consider dropping subjects include:

- feeling overwhelmed
- discovering a subject isn't what they expected
- struggling academically
- realising their career goals have shifted

All of these are perfectly valid reasons - but rather than seeing this as a failure, think of it as your brain's way of telling you it's time to reassess and find smarter strategies. In most cases, there are other things you can do first to ease the burden without having to go to the extreme of dropping the subject entirely. If any of the above sound like you, here's what we recommend you do first.

Take some time to reflect

Dropping a subject is a big step and shouldn't be taken lightly. Once you know why you want to drop a subject, the next step is to reflect on how doing so will benefit you.

- Will it give you more time to focus on other subjects or personal commitments?
- Will it improve your mental or physical health?
- Will it open up more future opportunities?

- Will it help you enjoy school/university more?

Be realistic and consider the chances of your perceived outcomes actually happening. For example, if you want to drop a subject because it might help you focus more on your other subjects, but will you *really* dedicate the extra time to your studies? Or will you just fill the gap with video games and sleep?

Seek targeted support

Speak with your teachers about additional help or tutoring options. Many schools offer study groups, peer mentoring, or extra tutorials that can make challenging content more manageable.

Reassess your study methods

Sometimes the issue isn't the subject itself, but how you're approaching it. Experiment with different learning techniques and see if you find one that works better for you – visual aids for complex concepts, study schedules that match your energy levels, or breaking large tasks into smaller, achievable goals.

Talk to someone you trust

A guidance counsellor, trusted teacher, or family member can offer fresh perspectives and help you identify resources you might not know exist.

When dropping a subject might be the right choice

While we encourage persistence, there are legitimate situations where changing subjects might make sense.

If you've genuinely discovered your career interests have shifted significantly, switching to subjects that better align with your goals is just sensible planning. Similarly, if a subject is severely impacting your mental health despite trying various support strategies, your wellbeing must always come first. However, dropping a subject simply because it's challenging or because your friends are in different classes usually isn't the best long-term solution.

Key considerations before deciding

Here are some factors to think about or research in more detail.

Will you still be able to graduate?

Before you do anything else, it's *really* important to check that you will still be eligible to graduate (either from high school or from your degree).

Ensure you'll still meet the minimum subject requirements for your school certificate. Some subjects like English and Maths are compulsory, so you might need to explore different levels rather than dropping it entirely.

If you're at university, discuss any potential subject changes with the student support team. There may be core subjects you must take as part of your degree - so even if you drop one now, you may need to re-take it at some point in the future anyway.

Consider future pathways

Research whether the subject you're considering dropping is a prerequisite for courses or careers you might want to pursue later. Keeping doors open now prevents having to backtrack later.

Timing matters

Crucially, you'll need to find out about deadlines, whether the withdrawal will appear on your transcript, if any costs will have to be covered, and if there are optimal times in the school year to make changes.

Before making the final decision

As we mentioned earlier, unless you have a really good reason, dropping a subject should be the last solution - there are other steps you can take first that might help.

- First, can you get more help? Speak to your teacher/lecturer to let them know you're struggling, and they may be able to help you get back on track. You might also like to consider external academic support, such as a tutor.
- Second, do you have a backup plan? What if you change to a different subject and end up hating it or struggling just as much? Or if you need to make up extra credits somehow, can you take intensive classes during the semester break?
- Lastly, are you doing it for the right reasons? Sometimes in life there are just things we have to do, even if we don't really like it. The subject won't last forever, and persevering can ensure you don't lock yourself out of any potential future pathways (plus, just think of how good it will feel when it's *finally* over and you can celebrate).

How to drop a subject

If you do decide to drop a subject after careful consideration, that's totally OK. Sometimes it really is the best option - and even if you change your mind down the track, there are always options to help you catch up on anything you might have missed.

If you're a high school student, talk to your school – they'll have all the information to help you understand the next steps, and can tell you what (if any) implications there may be for your high school certificate or future study options. Your school will probably have a procedure in place you need to follow, and they'll be there to support you with that.

If you're a university student, contact student support to ask about withdrawal procedures. They will be able to guide you through the process and provide advice on whether you can withdraw under special circumstances without penalty, for example in cases of serious illness or family bereavement.

Next, create a concrete plan for how you'll use the extra time productively. Will you dedicate it to strengthening your remaining subjects? Pursuing extracurricular activities that support your career goals? Or addressing other areas of your life that need attention?

Moving forward positively

Whether you decide to persist with all your current subjects or make strategic changes, remember that this experience is teaching you valuable life skills: self-awareness, problem-solving, and the ability to make informed decisions under pressure.

Focus on what you can control – your effort, attitude, and willingness to seek help when needed. These qualities will serve you well beyond school, regardless of which subjects appear on your final certificate.

Still not sure what to do?

[You can also find heaps more blogs on study and pathways on our website here.](#)

Job Spotlights

How to become a Chef

Chefs are the creative masterminds behind delicious meals in restaurants, cafés, hotels, and catering companies. They plan menus, prepare food, manage kitchen staff, and ensure every dish meets high standards of taste, presentation, and food safety.

If you love food, thrive in fast-paced environments, and enjoy leading a team, a career as a chef could be perfect for you.

What skills do I need as a chef?

- Creative and innovative
- Excellent time management
- Can work well under pressure
- Strong leadership abilities
- Great attention to detail
- Physically resilient
- Adaptable and reliable
- Passionate about food and cooking

What does the job involve?

- Planning and creating menus
- Preparing, cooking, and presenting food
- Ordering ingredients and managing budgets
- Leading and training other kitchen staff
- Ensuring food safety and hygiene standards
- Monitoring food quality and consistency
- Coordinating with front-of-house staff
- Managing kitchen equipment and inventory

What industries do chefs typically work in?

- Accommodation and Food Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance

What Career Cluster do chefs belong to?

This is a hands-on career that requires a high level of both technical skill and specialist knowledge, so most chefs fall into the [Maker Cluster](#).

What kind of lifestyle can I expect?

Most chefs work split shifts, with preparation time during the day and service during evening hours. Weekend and holiday work is common, as that's when hospitality venues are typically busiest. You'll be on your feet for hours, working in hot environments, and managing multiple tasks simultaneously. Chef salaries vary significantly based on experience, location, and type of establishment, but most chefs can expect to earn an average wage throughout their careers.

You won't be able to work from home as a chef, as you will need to physically be in the kitchen to prepare food and perform other important duties. But some experienced chefs do move into roles like food writing, recipe development, or culinary consulting that can offer more flexibility.

How to become a chef

To become a successful chef, you'll need to learn the practical skills required for the job. This is usually done through a combination of relevant educational training and hands-on work experience.

Many chefs start with formal culinary education through certificate or diploma courses at culinary schools or vocational institutions. These programmes cover cooking techniques, food safety, menu planning, and kitchen management, and are typically done as part of an apprenticeship, which combines hands-on experience with classroom learning.

Some chefs start as kitchen hands or commis chefs and work their way up through experience and on-the-job training. This pathway requires dedication and patience, but offers real-world learning from day one.

What can I do right now to work towards this career?

If you're in high school and considering a career as a chef, here are some steps you can take to start exploring:

- Start cooking at home regularly. Experiment with different cuisines, master basic techniques, and learn to cook without recipes.
- Look for part-time work in restaurants, cafés, or catering companies. Even roles like dishwashing or food service can give you valuable insight and help you decide if the environment suits you.
- Consider taking hospitality or food technology subjects at school (if they're available) to start learning about food safety, nutrition, and industry practices.

Where can I find more information?

- [Worldchefs](#)
- [Australian Culinary Federation](#)
- [New Zealand Chefs Association](#)
- [Institute of Hospitality](#) (UK)
- [Restaurant Association of Ireland](#)
- [American Culinary Federation](#)
- [The Culinary Federation](#) (Canada)

Similar careers to chef

- Pastry Chef

- [Baker](#)
- [Sommelier](#)
- Waiter
- [Dietician](#)
- [Food Technologist](#)
- [Barista](#)
- [Bartender](#)

Find out more about alternative careers on [our Job Spotlights page](#).

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