

New Zealand: Massey High School Building Academy

Providing opportunities for young people to examine and explore the relationship between education and employment.

Massey High School - a socioeconomically diverse high school in western Auckland – has created a [‘building academy’ programme](#), where students develop work skills related to the construction industry during school hours and on school grounds. In 2019, the academy established a partnership and pre-apprenticeship programme with Kāinga Ora (the New Zealand state agency that provides rental housing for New Zealanders in need), the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) and two New Zealand private building companies. These partnerships provide secondary school students (ages 13-19) with skills training, experience, and pathways in construction, carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work.

Students in Massey High School’s ‘building academy’ utilize skills they learned from qualified teachers and industry professionals to build transportable houses for Kāinga Ora on school grounds. All instructors in the programme have had experience on commercial building and/or residential building sites, and most are certified Licence Building Practitioners (LBPs). In addition, there are a number of industry and tertiary education advisors. The academy also connects students with its subcontractors, and a number of students have found employment through these connections.

About half of the students in the Building Academy participate full-time (5 days per week). The remainder participate in a programme (such as multi-skills or introductory building) which allows regular school academic subjects to be studied. Coursework within the academy comprise of building theory, authentic house building experience, nail gun training, health & safety, working at heights, forklift driver’s licence training, first aid, site-safe certification, and construction site visits. In addition, students complete community service activity including community building and school development. The programme also has a large CAD (computer-aided design) component, and through this, students learn how to draft projects using 3D software as well as how to produce a scaled set of plans to read from. Students from other schools, including the Kelston Deaf Education Centre, also participate in the academy. The Kelston Deaf Education Centre students are supported by interpreters from their home school, and a number of them have gained employment on building sites.

After the houses are complete, they are then transported to New Zealand families in need, as far away as Gisborne (a six-hour drive from Auckland). Students who finish the programme graduate with a NCEA Level 3 (broadly the New Zealand equivalent of a ‘high school diploma’), in addition to trade-based qualifications such as Building, Construction and Allied Trades Skills (BCATS) L3/4 and micro qualifications from the various modules. In addition to their certifications, students leave the programme having the building skills to be immediately useful to a potential employer and the soft skills to cope with real world expectations. Transitions from education to employment have been extremely positive, and it is now common for businesses who have employed ex-students to approach the programme when they are looking to recruit.