

New Zealand: Manurewa High School's Passport to Employment programme

Offering secondary-school students opportunities to examine and explore the relationship between education and employment through first-hand experience of the world of work

The OECD's [analysis of multiple national longitudinal datasets](#) confirms part-time working and volunteering while still in secondary school as predictors of better employment outcomes in adulthood.

[Manurewa High School](#) - a large, ethnically diverse public secondary school in Auckland, New Zealand - has developed a "Passport to Employment" programme that offers students in their final year of secondary school a school-to-work transition experience of three days in the classroom and two days of paid work experience. The programme enhances career readiness through the combination of part-time work, a mandatory 20-hour community volunteering component, employment-related qualifications, and learning activities that develop self-awareness and confidence.

The programme was developed at the start of 2020 in collaboration with local business partners, and the curriculum itself is based on the school's trades academy model. To enrol in the programme, students must submit a CV application and then be interviewed by an employer partner. After places are offered, the students must then pass Drug and Alcohol tests and show that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Employment contracts are then finalised.

The employers - which to date, have primarily come from the logistics and wastewater industries - cover their own costs, including the wages of the student participants. The programme also provides for family engagement through social events, generally at the beginning and end of the year. Reflective practice is embedded in the programme, with students completing a journal on their experiences.

Students have the opportunity to gain qualifications and licenses while on the programme. Certifications are delivered by external providers, and include forklift license, First aid certificate, Load restraint certificate, Dangerous Goods certificate and MPI accreditation, which allows containers from overseas ports to be opened. The course is flexible to employer needs. For example, Mainfreight, a logistics company, funds additional qualifications that are customised to its workplace. Qualifications are completed in blocks of two weeks. Other employers may just provide the work experience component.

In addition to the part-time work, all students must complete 20 hours of voluntary work within the local community, as well as complete a youth employability certificate that focuses on seven soft skills:

- Self Management
- The willingness to learn
- Communication
- Thinking skills
- Positive attitude
- Teamwork
- Resilience

At the end of 2020, 16 out of the 20 students successfully completed the programme and were offered full-time employment across three businesses: Mainfreight, Hynds and Lineage. All 16 of the students worked throughout the entire lockdown period. As of the end of 2021, 13 of these students were still in full-time employment with the same companies. Some of the other students have proceeded to university study. Because of the success of the programme, the 2022 cohort will now have a choice of six business partners with two classes running.

For more information, watch the [video presentation](#) of the programme by the Manurewa High School team at the 2021 OECD Disrupted Futures conference.