Starter & Pathway Courses

Ngā Ara Whakauru me ngā Huanui

2027

STUDY GUIDE

Explore pathways to new opportunities.

- Levels of study
- Study and Employment Pathways
- Starter certificates
- Short courses
- Supported Learning
- Dual Enrolment

GET SET

Ara

ara.ac.nz

KIA ORA

Choosing what comes next can feel exciting, daunting and full of pressure — but it's also full of possibility.

We believe education should open doors, build confidence and lead somewhere meaningful. That's why our learning is grounded in the real world: practical, hands-on and shaped by industry, so you graduate ready to step into work, further study or whatever future you're aiming for.

More than a qualification, study is about finding people who support you, discovering what you're capable of and building a life that feels right for you. With flexible study options, supportive tutors and a welcoming community, we give you the space to learn in a way that suits you and a place to achieve success, your way.

Disclaimer The information contained in this document is correct at the time of production (July 2026). Ara reserves the right to cancel or postpone any of the programmes, and shall not be liable for any claim other than the proportion of programme fees that the cancelled portion bears. Some programmes may be dependent upon formal approval from NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority), TEC (Tertiary Education Commission) funding allocation, and the number of enrolments. Fees, programmes, entry and selection criteria, and dates, are subject to change. Please check the relevant programme pages at **ara.ac.nz** for up-to-date information and full entry requirements before applying to enrol. Information regarding English language requirements is available on each programme page at **ara.ac.nz**.

SUCCESS ISN'T ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL.

AT ARA, SUCCESS IS SHAPED AROUND YOU.

YOUR GOALS, YOUR PACE, YOUR LIFE.

SUCCESS. YOUR WAY.

LEVELS OF STUDY

With study options from Levels 1 to 9, there's a place to start and room to progress as far as you want.

Certificate
Level 1–4

Certificates are awarded in a variety of subjects at a range of levels and are six months to 1 year in length.

Diploma
Level 5–7

Diplomas are usually awarded at a higher level than certificates and are 1–2 years in length.

Bachelor Degree
Level 7

Degrees are awarded for advanced study that concentrates on general principles and essential knowledge. They are usually 3–4 years in length.

Graduate, Postgraduate
Level 7–8

Graduate and postgraduate programmes are for study after an initial degree. They are ideal if you want to broaden your existing knowledge or retrain in areas of demand.

Masters
Level 9

A Masters is awarded for study beyond an initial degree and will generally involve a combination of intensive study and supervised research.

The next step is a doctoral degree (Level 10).

ARA RAU, TAUMATA RAU

MANY PATHWAYS, MANY OPPORTUNITIES

STUDY AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

Get ready for higher-level study in your chosen subject area.

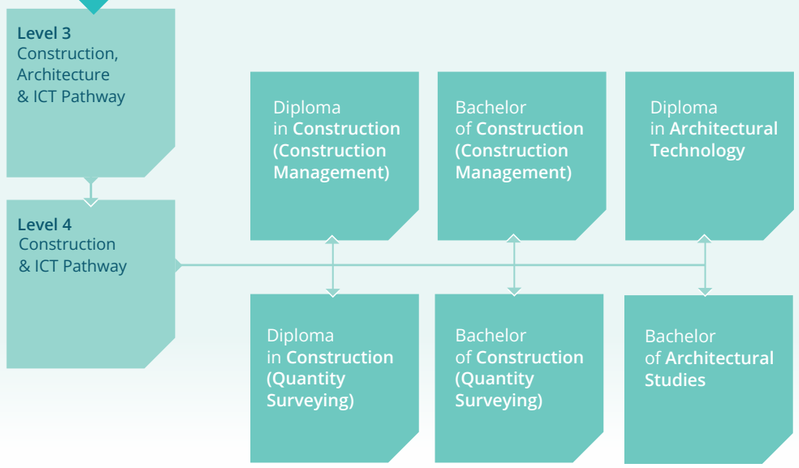
If academic requirements are a barrier, or you need to build your study skills before higher-level study, the New Zealand Certificate in Study and Employment Pathways can help you gain the confidence to take the next step in your learning journey.

New Zealand Certificate in Study and Employment Pathways

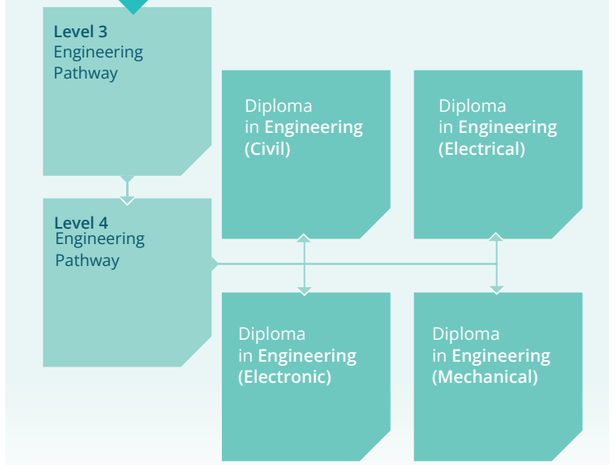
	LEVEL	LOCATION	DURATION	INTAKES
New Zealand Certificate in Study and Employment Pathways	3	Christchurch, online*	Full-time 6 months	February, July
New Zealand Certificate in Study and Employment Pathways	4	Christchurch, Timaru^ and online	Full-time 6 months	February, July

**Online study is only available for the Level 3 Health and Science and Level 4 Pre Health pathways.*
^The only Level 4 pathway available in Timaru is Pre-Health.

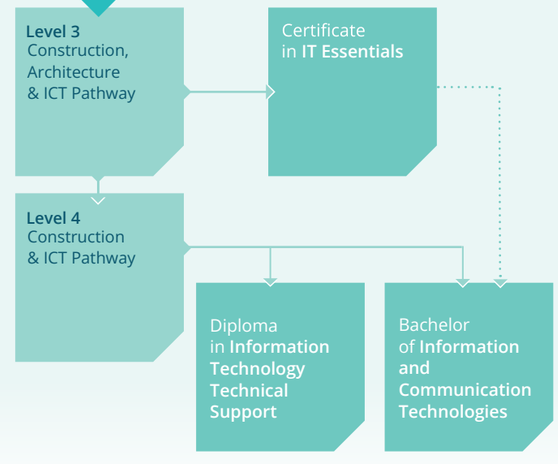
CONSTRUCTION PATHWAY



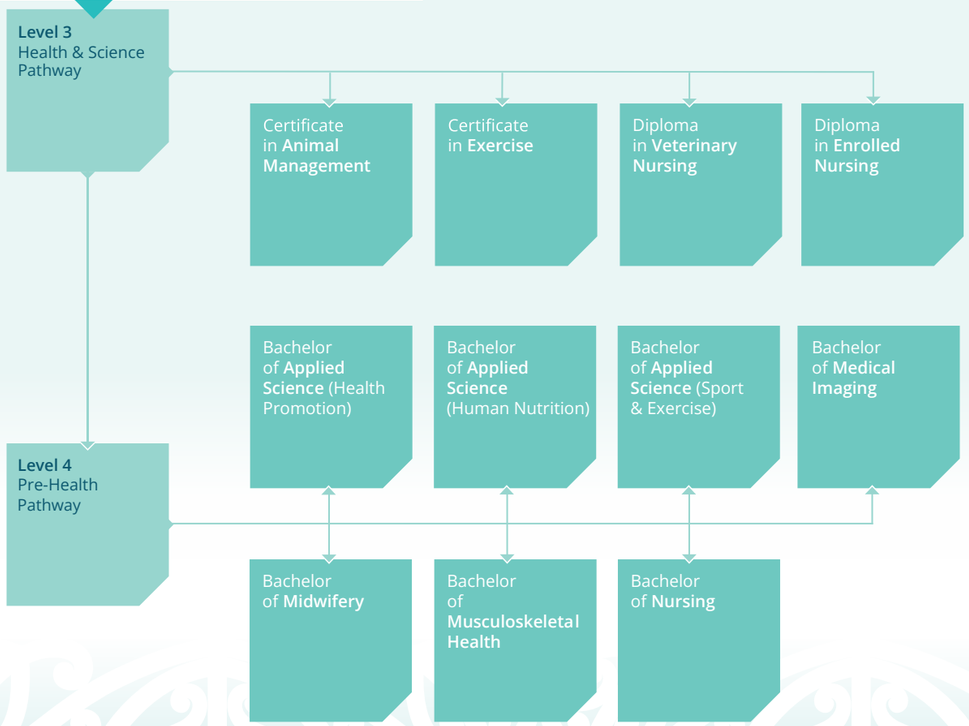
ENGINEERING PATHWAY



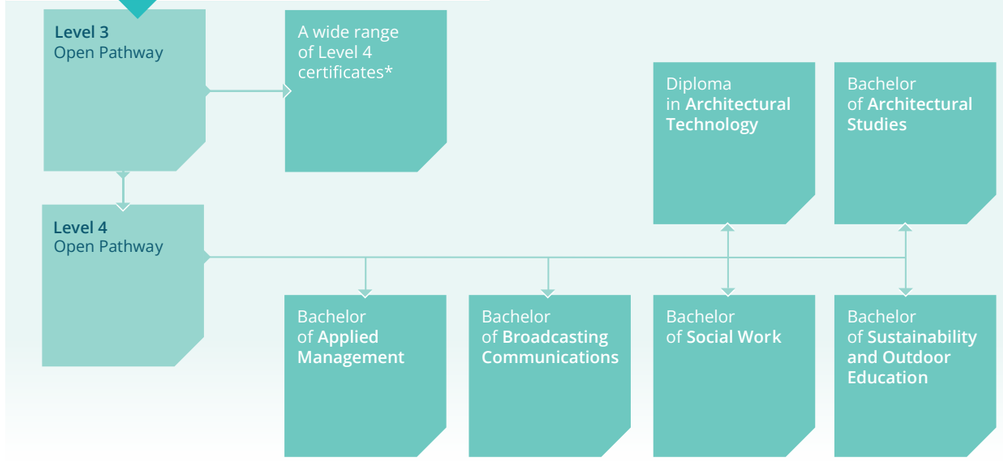
COMPUTING AND IT PATHWAY



HEALTH AND SCIENCE PATHWAY



OPEN PATHWAY



**Any Level 4 certificate requiring 10 x Level 1 literacy credits and 10 x Level 1 numeracy credits.*

Scan for more information on this subject

STARTER CERTIFICATES

Gain subject-specific skills you can build on.

A starter certificate is a great place to begin if you're new to a subject and you want to get a strong base of essential skills before moving on to the next level.

QUALIFICATION	LEVEL	LOCATION	DURATION	INTAKES	LEADS TO
New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills	2	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	Any Level 3 certificate
BUSINESS					
New Zealand Certificate in Business Administration and Technology	3	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months Part-time available	February, July	New Zealand Certificate in Business Administration and Technology (Level 4)
New Zealand Certificate in Business Administration and Technology	4	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months Part-time available	July	New Zealand Diploma in Business
COMPUTING & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
New Zealand Certificate in Information Technology Essentials	4	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months Part-time available	February, July	New Zealand Diploma in Information Technology Technical Support
FOOD & HOSPITALITY					
New Zealand Certificate in Food and Beverage Service (Barista and Restaurant Service)	3	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	New Zealand Certificate in Food and Beverage Service (Advanced Restaurant Service)
New Zealand Certificate in Baking	4	Christchurch	Full-time 1 year	February	New Zealand Diploma in Cookery (Advanced Patisserie)
New Zealand Certificate in Cookery	4	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 1 year	February, July^	New Zealand Diploma in Cookery (Advanced Cookery or Advanced Patisserie)
New Zealand Certificate in Food and Beverage Service (Advanced Restaurant Service)	4	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	July	New Zealand Diploma in Hospitality Management
HEALTH, SCIENCE & SUPPORT					
New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management (Companion Animal)	4	Christchurch	Full-time 1 year	February	New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing
New Zealand Certificate in Exercise	4	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months Part-time available	February, July	Bachelor of Applied Science (Sport and Exercise)
New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing	4	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 1 year Part-time available	February, July^	Bachelor of Social Work
LANGUAGE & EDUCATION					
New Zealand Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care	3	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 6 months	February	New Zealand Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 4)
New Zealand Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care	4	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 6 months	July	New Zealand Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care
New Zealand Certificate in Outdoor and Adventure Education (Multi-skilled)	4	Christchurch	Full-time 1 year	February, July	Bachelor of Sustainability and Outdoor Education
MEDIA, DESIGN & STYLE					
New Zealand Certificate in Beauty Therapy	4	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 1 year	February, July^	New Zealand Diploma in Beauty Therapy
New Zealand Certificate in Skin Care and Cosmetics	3	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	New Zealand Certificate in Beauty Therapy

QUALIFICATION	LEVEL	LOCATION	DURATION	INTAKES	LEADS TO
New Zealand Certificate in Salon Skills (Introductory)*	2	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 6 months	February, July	New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Salon Support)
New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Salon Support)*	3	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 1 year	February	New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Level 4)
New Zealand Certificate in Creativity	4	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	Bachelor of Design (Fashion, Visual Art or Visual Communication)
New Zealand Certificate in Digital Media and Design	4	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	Bachelor of Design (Game Animation, Visual Art or Visual Communication)
New Zealand Certificate in Fashion	4	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	Bachelor of Design (Fashion or Visual Art)
New Zealand Certificate in Music	4	Christchurch	Full-time 1 year	February	Bachelor of Music
New Zealand Certificate in Performing Arts	4	Christchurch	Full-time 1 year	February	Bachelor of Music Theatre
New Zealand Certificate in DJ and Music Production	4	Christchurch	Full-time 1 year	February	New Zealand Diploma in Audio Engineering and Production
TRADES					
Trades Primer*	2	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 6 months	February^, July	Any Level 3 certificate
New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Engineering	3	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 1 year	January, February, August ^	Certificate in Light Automotive Engineering (Apprenticeship)
New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Collision Repair	3	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	New Zealand Certificate in Collision Repair or New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Refinishing (Apprenticeship)
New Zealand Certificate in Construction Trade Skills (Carpentry)	3	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 1 year	February^, March^^, May^, August^	New Zealand Certificate in Carpentry (Apprenticeship)
New Zealand Certificate in Construction Trade Skills (Joinery)	3	Christchurch	Full-time 9 months	February, May	New Zealand Certificate in Joinery (Apprenticeship)
New Zealand Certificate in Construction Trade Skills (Painting and Decorating)	3	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	New Zealand Certificate in Painting & Decorating (Apprenticeship)
New Zealand Certificate in Electrical Pre-Trade	3	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 1 year	February, August^	New Zealand Certificate in Electrical Trade (Apprenticeship)
New Zealand Certificate in Mechanical Engineering	3	Christchurch, Timaru	Full-time 1 year	February, August^	New Zealand Certificate in Mechanical Engineering (Apprenticeship) or New Zealand Certificate in Fabrication (Apprenticeship)
New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying	3	Christchurch	Full-time 6 months	February, July	New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing or New Zealand Certificate in Gasfitting (Apprenticeship)

**Available free through Youth Guarantee. Conditions apply.*
^This intake available in Christchurch only.
^^ This intake available in Timaru only.

SHORT COURSES

Add to your personal or professional toolkit.

Our part-time short courses and workshops range from hobby courses through to micro-credentials required for professional accreditation.

Here's a sample of the short courses we offer:

- Analytical Chemistry
- Barista Essentials
- Electrical Inspector Registration
- Electrical Service Technician Registration
- Hobby Furniture Making
- Quality Assurance
- Reading and Writing for Adult Learners
- Samoan Language
- Te Reo Māori
- Training for the Licence Controller Qualification (LCQ)
- Weekend Panel Beating
- Welding

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Enhance your sense of self-worth, learn new skills and develop your potential at the Next Step Centre for Women

SUPPORTED LEARNING

Prepare for study, employment and independent living.

Build your confidence and independence with supported learning designed to help you take the next step. You'll develop everyday skills for life, work and your role in your community and whānau, while exploring your pathway into further study or employment. With a mix of practical courses, you can ease into tertiary study, grow your communication and self-management skills, and gain experience that prepares you for the workplace. You can also build on your progress over time, adding more focused, work-ready skills as you move closer to employment.

Supported Learning study options at Ara

STUDY OPTION	LEVEL	DURATION	LOCATION	INTAKES
Preparation for Study for Supported Learners	n/a	Part-time 10 weeks per term*	Christchurch	Please enquire
New Zealand Certificate in Skills for Living for Supported Learners	1	Full-time 1 year	Christchurch	February
New Zealand Certificate for Skills for Learning and Working for Supported Learners**	1	Full-time 1 year	Christchurch	February
Hospitality Supported Learning***	1	Part-time 5 hours per week	Christchurch	Please enquire

**This study option comprises four courses*

***Cross credits available. Contact foundationskills@ara.ac.nz*

****Dual Enrolment programme*

Scan for more information on this subject

DUAL ENROLMENT

Learn with us, while you're still at school.

If you're in Years 11 to 13, you can try tertiary study early through a Dual Enrolment course. You'll spend a day or two at Ara each week, with the rest of your week in your usual classes at school. You'll gain NCEA credits and a head start in a subject you want to take further. All Dual Enrolment courses start in February and run throughout the year.

Scan for more information on this subject

Dual Enrolment study options at Ara

COURSE	LEVEL	DAYS PER WEEK	LOCATION
Bakery	3	2	Christchurch
Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing	3	1	Timaru
Carpentry	3	2	Christchurch
Cookery	3	2	Christchurch
Cookery and Restaurant Service Skills	3	1	Christchurch, Timaru
Hospitality, Cookery & Beverage	2	2	Christchurch, Timaru
Hospitality Supported Learning	1	1	Christchurch
Introduction to Agricultural Engineering	2	1	Timaru
Introduction to Automotive	2	1	Christchurch, Timaru
Introduction to Automotive and Autobody	2	2	Christchurch
Introduction to Barbering	2	1	Christchurch
Introduction to Beauty Therapy	2	1	Christchurch, Timaru
Introduction to Construction Trades	2	1	Christchurch, Timaru
Introduction to Construction Trades	2	2	Christchurch
Introduction to Electrical Engineering Trades	2	2	Christchurch
Introduction to Engineering Trades	2	1	Christchurch
Introduction to Plumbing	2	2	Christchurch
Salon Skills	2	2	Christchurch
Sustainability & Outdoor Education	3	1	Christchurch

Get a feel for tertiary-level study, explore a subject you're interested in or just try something new.

Experience Ara gives you the chance to do all of that and more, with taster days, short courses, holiday programmes, information sessions and lots of other cool stuff for students in Years 9-13.

SCAN FOR MORE INFO:

CREATE AN AWESOME LIFE FOR YOU AND YOUR WHĀNAU

Our free Māori and Pacific Trades Training courses are designed to lead to apprenticeships and job opportunities. You'll grow your understanding of your culture while gaining in-demand skills for employment, and you'll receive wrap-around support to ensure you succeed.

SCAN FOR MORE INFO:

or call us on 0800 24 24 76

FOLLOW ARA ON OUR SOCIALS

TO KEEP UP WITH ALL OF THE NEWS

NOTES

APPLY NOW
ara.ac.nz

City campus
130 Madras Street, Christchurch
Mon-Fri, 8am - 4.30pm

Manawa campus
276 Antigua Street, Christchurch
Mon-Fri, 8.30am - 4.30pm

Woolston campus
Ensors Road, Christchurch
Mon-Fri, 8am - 4.30pm

Timaru campus
32 Arthur Street, Timaru
Mon-Fri, 8am - 4.30pm

Connect with us:

Free call (New Zealand): 0800 24 24 76
Email: info@ara.ac.nz

Ara
Institute of Canterbury
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