

# **Career Services available to Senior Students**

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**Principals' Sabbatical Project Term 2 2010**

**An investigation into where and how senior students make their career choices:**

- **Linwood College (a low decile co-educational school)**
- **2 single sex high decile schools**

## **Executive Summary**

A survey of 492 senior students in Christchurch confirms career education research which supports an integrated approach to career education in schools involving face-to-face career counselling and whole-staff involvement. An increase in funding to support an expanded specialist career service in secondary schools would be a worthwhile investment. Expected differences in career aspirations and support services sought by students from low decile backgrounds are evident in this research.

## **Background and Rationale**

The aim of this sabbatical research is to firstly investigate the range of career services available to secondary students; then sample senior Year 13 students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds from three different Christchurch secondary schools (a single sex boys school, a single sex girls school and a co-educational school), in order to determine the range and effectiveness of career services available, and see if there are any socio-economic differences in career aspirations and outcomes in the different schools.

Of particular interest is the role of the internet and of professional career coaches in the career education of today's senior secondary students.

## **Methodology**

All Year 12 and 13 students in each of the three schools were asked to complete a 2 page written questionnaire on a range of career aspects. (see Appendix 1). The students were supervised by either the Careers Coordinator or the Year 12 or 13 Dean. Only Year 13 students were able to complete the survey in the single sex boys school.

The author arranged follow up meetings with the Careers Coordinators to discuss the data and for the Coordinators to give feedback.

A literature search also formed part of the research.

## Findings: Summary Results of Student Questionnaire

### Question 1: Expectations Post School 2011+

	Co-Ed Yr 12	Co-Ed Yr12 %	Co-Ed Yr 13	Co-Ed Yr13 %	Boys Yr 13	Boys Yr13 %	Girls Yr 12	Girls Yr12 %	Girls Yr 13	Girls Yr13 %
Return to school	60	85	3	5	0	0	98	80	1	0.8
GAP Year	11	15	5	9	19	16	17	14	13	10
Uni	28	39	16	29	94	79	69	56	80	65
Poly	11	15	20	36	14	12	9	7	14	13
Other Tertiary	6	8	3	5	8	7	4	3	2	1.6
Work	13	18	6	10	10	8	4	3	2	1.6
Other	9	13	2	4	10	8	9	7	6	5
n	71		55		119		123		124	

*Note: Students were able to select more than one response.*

### Summary

1. Over twice the percentage of Year 13 students in the higher decile, single sex schools expect to attend university compared to the lower decile co-educational school (39% & 29% versus 79%, 56% & 65%; or 34% average vs 67% average). In 2010, the percentage of students attending university from the single sex boys' school reduced to approximately 50% as reported by the school careers' coordinator.
2. Proportionally more students in the lower decile co-educational school attend polytechnic at both Year 12 and Year 13, probably due to the free-fees LIFT scholarships available only to students in the lower decile, co-educational school (15% & 36% versus 12%, 7% & 13%).
3. Proportionally more higher decile students intend to take a GAP year after leaving school (Of Year 13 students 9% vs 16% and 10%).
4. More lower decile,co-educational school students leave school for work rather than proceeding to tertiary education. (18% & 10% vs 8%, 3% & 1.6%) The corollary to this is that it appears that the co-ed Careers staff spend more time on preparing students for work than their higher decile colleagues - not explicitly tested in this survey which is more oriented to tertiary pathways.

### Questions 2/3: Sources of Career Advice

#### Notes:

1. Students ranked their three most useful career sources from the following list:  
Parents, Friends, Careers Staff, Other Teacher/s, Internet, University Liaison Staff, Tertiary Open Days, Careers Expo, Private Career Coach, Other siblings
2. A first ranking was allocated 3 points, second 2 points and third 1 point. These numbers were added to get a total score for each career source.
3. Figures were standardised by dividing the total number in each career source category by the number of students in that cohort.

### Question 3: Most Significant Career Influences

Ranked Order	Coed Yr12	Coed Yr13	Boys Yr13	Girls Yr12	Girls Yr13
1	Parents	Other Staff	Careers Staff	Parents	Parents
2	Other Staff	Parents	Parents	Careers Staff	Careers Staff
3	Friends	Careers Staff	Uni Liaison	Internet	Internet
4	Internet	Friends	Internet	Careers Expo	Friends
5	Careers Staff	Internet	Friends	Friends	Uni Liaison

### Conclusions

1. Overall, parents are the most significant influence on students' career decision-making.
2. Careers staff also play a large role in career decision-making both directly and indirectly (eg via Career Expos, University Liaison visits etc)
3. A significant number of students in the low decile school leave school before the end of Year 12 and are not part of this survey. It is therefore impossible to quantify the impact of the Careers staff here in terms of supporting work experience, employment, Gateway, LIFT scholarship applications.
4. University Liaison visits and University / Polytechnic Open Days are of more use to Year 13 students than Year 12 students. (This is logical when considering that career decision-making is more imperative to Year 13s).
5. Conversely Year 12 students consistently valued the more general Career Expo over the Year 13s who appear to have a more targeted focus.
6. The internet plays a valuable supporting role, rather than being the main focus or influence on career decision-making (see also Question 4 analysis below).

7. Older friends and siblings also play a valuable supporting role.
8. The Careers' Offices are used more by Year 13s than Year 12 students – see also point 3 above.
9. The Careers' Office in the Boys School is widely used by the Year 13 boys.
10. In the Co-ed School there is strong careers' support for the students and the Careers' Office by other staff (possibly reflecting an emphasis placed on pastoral care in the school?)
11. The higher decile single sex schools have a higher proportion of students going to university (see Question 1 above) hence the greater influence by University Liaison staff.
12. Very few students access private career coaches – and of those who do, the written comments in Questions 5 and 9 suggest that the quality is variable.

#### **Question 4: Internet Career Sources used**

Internet Source	Co-ed Yr12	Co-ed Yr13	Boys Yr13	Girls Yr12	Girls Yr13
None	32	17	57	41	42
Career Services	16	17	36	46	34
Seek	13	6	11	23	17
Google	10	12	12	14	3
Uni Websites	6	12	11	14	11

#### **Conclusions**

1. Approximately 55 - 60% of students use the internet for career advice (based on numbers in Question 3 above).
2. The Careers' Service website has obviously been recommended by Careers' staff (as this is the most popular website accessed).
3. Written comments in Questions 5 and 9 suggest that students will use the internet for initial support but strongly favour intensive one-on-one face-to-face advice and career counselling. Students further comment that the internet career questionnaires are very general and often not particularly useful nor accurate in recommending possible career options.
4. The researcher suspects (based on data and comments in other parts of the questionnaire) that the number of students using google and other search engines is higher than actually recorded.

5. Year 12 and 13 students from the Girls School commented on using older friends advice via Facebook. This was not commented upon by the students in the other two schools, possibly reflecting girls' greater use of social networking sites.

### Question 6: Resume / CV

	Coed Yr 12	Coed Yr 12 %	Coed Yr 13	Coed Yr13 %	Boys Yr 13	Boys Yr13 %	Girls Yr 12	Girls Yr12 %	Girls Yr 13	Girl Yr13 %
Yes	33	51	24	60	74	62	79	66	58	62
No	32	49	16	40	45	38	41	34	36	38
n	65		40		119		120		94	

### Year 12 Overall

	%	%
Yes	112	61
No	73	39

### Year 13 Overall

	%	%
Yes	156	62%
No	97	38%

### Question 7: Sources of CV Assistance

	Coed Yr 12	Coed Yr 13	Boys Yr 13	Girls Yr 12	Girls Yr 13	Total
Parents	17	13	54	56	47	187
Friends	7	2	8	13	6	36
Careers Staff	6	5	8	9	19	47
Other Teachers	7	6	19	3	4	39
Textbooks	2	1	8	8	7	26
Internet	1	3	17	17	7	45
Career Coach	1	0	1	1	0	3
Self taught	1	4	2	3	1	11
Siblings	3	3	3	3	0	12

## Conclusions for Questions 6 & 7

1. As expected the percentage of Year 13 students with CVs overall was slightly higher than for Year 12 – but insignificant; but there were variations for both the co-ed students and the girls students. For the co-ed school there was a significantly higher percentage with CVs in Year 13 whilst this was reversed for the girls school students.
2. Parents are the main sources of CV support across both year levels and across all schools, perhaps indicating that CV creation is not explicitly nor systematically taught in schools.
3. The internet is the third most used source for CV creation but overall is not widely used.

## Summary

A study of individual students responses and comments on their completed questionnaires supports the conclusions made by the Education Review Office (2006), Bailey (2009), Walker, K et al (2006) and Career Services. The following statements are consistent across both the literature and this sabbatical survey:

1. All staff can play an important role in Career Education within schools due to the strong relationships already established with students, the regular contact they have with them and the effectiveness of the pastoral systems in schools. For this to be truly effective there is a great need to up skill teachers in how to give objective, up-to-date career advice, and to know when to refer the student on to the specialist Career staff.
2. Careers Staff play the vital and central role in Career Education. They are the specialists with in-depth training and knowledge, and the time allowance to spend with students and parents. Due to other staffing and budgetary constraints the time allowance given to Careers staff is less than satisfactory. However, given these constraints, Careers staff do a most admirable job. This fact is reflected in the statistic that few students in this survey used outside career coaches or relied on the internet for their main source of information and advice.
3. Students very strongly prefer one-on-one face-to-face career counselling. Many comments included wanting more quality time with Careers staff. This explains the high demand experienced by former teachers and specialist career coaches (Anyan 2008) in the North Island and is supported by Walker et al who state that the valued school career counsellors are those reported by students to spend the majority of their time with individuals in small groups.
4. The use of technology through on-line psychometric assessments are not favoured by students as a primary source for career advice. They are generally regarded as being too general in nature and not accurate enough. Dr Raimo Vuorinen of Finland quoted in Career Edge (2009) exhorts careers advisors to better make use of new technologies such as social networking sites (Facebook and Bebo). The girls in this

sabbatical survey certainly make better use of this technology compared to boys. The university websites are well used by university aspirants.

5. The new Curriculum provides an opportunity to develop Career Education in an integrated whole-school context through the key competencies and individual curriculum areas, linking with individual students' need to know themselves (via values, aspirations and attributes), their need to know their place in society so that they are aware of the possibilities and challenges open to them; and their need to form a plan for their learning. The significant number of students in this survey who did not have a CV and those who relied on parents and older siblings for this knowledge and information demonstrates a need for greater whole-school integration.

### **Implications for Linwood College**

1. We have a much more diverse range of students with a correspondingly greater range of needs, and therefore requiring a greater range of career advice than the higher decile schools.
2. The strong pastoral support services by the whole staff (built upon strong relationships between staff and students) offers significant potential to enhance career advice, and CV creation, to students, particularly through the ASPIRE mentoring programme.
3. Extra professional development in career coaching is needed to up skill all Linwood staff to ensure that all students receive quality and impartial advice. The Career Services In-depth Support for Career Education in Schools package is an attractive one for staff development.

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## Websites

- [www.avonside.school.nz/Career\\_Information.aspx](http://www.avonside.school.nz/Career_Information.aspx)
- [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)
- [www.careersoncampus.co.nz](http://www.careersoncampus.co.nz)
- [www.dreamcatcher.school.nz](http://www.dreamcatcher.school.nz)
- [www.seek.co.nz/career-resources/](http://www.seek.co.nz/career-resources/)
- [www.roguecc.edu/Counseling/HollandCodes/test.asp](http://www.roguecc.edu/Counseling/HollandCodes/test.asp)
- [www.whr24u.co.nz](http://www.whr24u.co.nz)



## Appendix 1

### Student Survey: Investigation into the Range and Effectiveness of Career Services available to Secondary Students

School \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Year Level \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1 What are your plans for 2010 and 2011? (tick any that apply)

Return to School	
GAP Year	
University	
Polytechnic	
Other Tertiary (please state)	
Employment (please state)	
Uncertain	

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 2 Where have you gained your career advice? (tick all that apply)

Parents	
Friends	
Careers Staff	
Other Teacher/s	
Internet	
University Liaison Staff	
Tertiary Open Days	
Careers Expo	
Private Career Coach	
Other (please state)	

#### 3 List in rank order up to 3 most useful sources of career advice to you

1
2
3

#### 4 Internet Career Sources Used

None	
Career Services	
Seek	
Other (please list)	

5 **Any comments about internet career support?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6 **Do you have a Resume or CV?** *(Please circle)*

- Yes
- No

7 **If you answered 'Yes' to 6 above, who helped you draw up your CV?**

Parents	
Friends	
Careers Staff	
Other Teacher/s	
Textbook samples	
Internet sources	
Private Career Coach	
Other (please state)	

8 **How satisfied are you with the career advice given to date? (Give a rating out of 10 where 10 is completely satisfied).**

         /10

9 **What extra career advice or services would assist you more?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10 **How ready do you feel for the next stage of your career or career search? (Give a rating out of 10 where 1 is Not at all prepared, 5 is feeling OK and somewhat prepared, and 10 is feeling very well prepared and very ready for the next stage).**

         /10

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.