

U-Skills 2026

Study Options



Kia Ora

Nau Mai Welcome

UCOL is excited to announce our 2026 U-Skills suite of in-school study opportunities for students still enrolled in a secondary school. U-Skills offers a range of short STAR courses, our more extensive One and Two-Days-a-Week Academy programmes through the U-Skills Central Schools Academy, or gain a New Zealand certificate qualification in one of the Tertiary Pathways study options.

With the support and guidance of our Transition Team, the U-Skills offerings focus on three key areas:

- 1. NCEA-related content**
- 2. Industry knowledge and experience**
- 3. Finding your passion and supporting you to succeed**

Check out the offerings available in 2026 on the following pages. We look forward to seeing you.

STAR

What is U-Skills STAR?

STAR are short courses designed to help you explore your career options. Usually one day per week 9am to 3pm for five or six weeks (you will be notified if this timeframe is different). Our range of courses gives you an opportunity to gain tertiary experience while staying at school.

What does it cost?

There is a fee for each STAR course which is funded through your secondary school (with their approval).

What will I gain?

STAR students experience a short taste of an industry or career option. From this, you may be able to decide what your next step is in your career or if you wish to do extra tertiary study. You will gain practical experience, providing you with information to support you in your future.

Interested?

If you are interested in attending a STAR course talk to your Careers Advisor or STAR Coordinator at school. If your school is happy for you to attend the course they will let us know.

For further details please phone - 0800 GO UCOL
(0800 468 265) and ask to speak to the STAR Coordinator in your region.

U-Skills STAR

Course	Level	Approx NCEA Credits	Manawatū	Whanganui	Wairarapa
Construction	2	11	●	●	
Plumbing	2	3	●		
Vet Nursing Taster	-	-	●	●	
Science Magic Taster	-	-	●		
Automotive Engineering	2	2	●	●	●
Collision Repair	2	3	●		
Mechanical Engineering	2	8	●	●	
Forklift Safety	3	7	●		●
Arts and Design Taster	-	-	●	●	
Performing Arts Taster	-	-			●
Art of Coffee Making (Barista)	2	4	●	●	●
Bakery	2	4	●	●	●
Beauty	2	3	●	●	●
Hairdressing	2	3	●	●	●
Y.E.S Business Opportunities	2	3		●	
Nursing Taster	-	-	●	●	●
Foundation in Health & Wellbeing	2	8	●	●	
Western and Alternative Health Care	3	5	●		
Early Childhood Education and Care	2	3	●	●	
The Human Body & Health	2	8	●		



U-Skills Trades Academy

What is U-Skills Academy?

Our range of U-Skills Academy programmes are designed to guide students through a vocational pathway, with the encouragement and support of your school. At Academy you will have access to experienced staff who have real experience in the real world. Our team have a range of skills to suit multiple needs and provide a supportive stepping stone, giving you a taste of tertiary education, without course fees.

Transition Coordinator

U-Skills students have a dedicated Transition Coordinator to help you:

- Set goals
- Complete individual education plans
- Develop literacy and numeracy skills
- Discover your pathway

What does it cost?

Zero Fees to students for all Academy programmes.

What will I gain?

Vocational Pathway and industry relevant standards which contribute to NCEA.

How does the programme work?

U-Skills Trades Academy operate either one or two days per week.

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

How am I eligible?

Year 11 – 13 at Secondary School.

What about transportation?

Transport assistance is available when you meet certain criteria.

Interested?

If you are interested in an Academy programme talk to your careers advisor at school and they will help you with the application process.

For further information about Academy programmes, go to ucol.ac.nz/u-skills or email: u-skills@ucol.ac.nz

U-Skills Trades Academy 1 Day

Course	Level	Approx NCEA Credits	Manawatū	Whanganui	Wairarapa	Horowhenua	Otaki College
Construction	2	25-26	●	●			●
Construction	3	22	●	●	●		●
Applied Construction Design	3	23	●				
Intro to Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying	2	22	●				
Gamification (Design & Development)	3	22	●	●			
Performing Arts	3	27			●		
Automotive	2	28	●	●	●	●	●
Collision Repair	2	27	●				
ICT Innovation	3	22	●				
Mechanical Engineering	2	28	●	●	●		
Electrical Engineering	2	23	●	●	●		
Hair, Beauty & Retail	2	24	●	●	●		
Barbering	2	28	●	●	●		
Café Skills	2	21	●	●	●		
Cookery	3	24			●		
Business Enterprise	3	24	●				
New Zealand Police Pathway	3	20	●	●	●		
Defence Pathways	2	25	●				●
Intro to Early Childhood	2	24	●	●	●		
Health	3	25	●	●	●		
Applied Laboratory Science	3	23	●				
Te Kura Tapere (Certificate in Introductory Conservation)	3	30			●	●	

U-Skills Trades Academy 2 Day

The Academy 2 Day option gives you the chance to work towards or gain an industry related tertiary qualification while also working towards NCEA Level 2/3 at school.

Course	Level	Approx NCEA Credits	Manawatū	Whanganui	Wairarapa	Otaki College
New Zealand Certificate in Infrastructure Works	2	40	●		●	●
New Zealand Certificate in Infrastructure	3	60			●	
New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care (Companion Animals)	3	23 (70 UCOL credits)	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Cookery	3	60	●	●		
New Zealand Certificate in Salon Skills (Introductory)	2	61			●	
New Zealand Certificate in Skin Care and Cosmetics	3	60	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Commercial Road Transport Skills	3	55	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care	3	60	●	●	●	



Scan here for Trades Academy study options in partnership with The Design School. These Creative Industries Pathways include Animation, Graphic Design, Digital Media, and Fashion and Textile.

How to apply

STAR Simply talk to your Careers Advisor or STAR Coordinator

Academy 1 Day or Academy 2 Day

Please complete the following steps:

- Complete the U-Skills Application form ensuring you and your parent/guardian sign and date the last page.
- You must also include a verified copy of your birth certificate.
- Ask your school to endorse your application and your school will email the application to UCOL.

Schools to email applications to:

uskillsenrol@ucol.ac.nz

Tertiary Pathways

Students and schools follow the above U-Skills application process; however, a specific U-Skills Tertiary Pathways Application Form is available. For further information, please email u-skills@ucol.ac.nz

You will either be:

Accepted upon application

This is usually if you have attended a U-Skills Academy programme the year before.

or

An interview may be required

Most students require an interview. A U-Skills Transition Coordinator will contact you with information on where to attend.

If you are accepted, you will receive an email or a text confirming you have been offered a place in U-Skills. Your school will also be notified.



Tertiary Pathways

What is U-Skills Tertiary Pathways?

U-Skills Tertiary Pathways are designed for students who have identified their career pathway and are ready to transition from school to tertiary study. You have the chance to gain a tertiary qualification and, in some cases, start your apprenticeship while still at school. You will be dual-enrolled at your school and UCOL, spending up to five days a week at UCOL as you work towards a New Zealand Certificate in a particular career pathway.

What will I gain?

A FREE relevant tertiary qualification while still at school, building on previous achievement and experience at NCEA and/or U-Skills Trades Academy.

Please note that, in most cases, the credits in these programmes won't contribute to NCEA.

Where does it lead?

Higher level of study (i.e. Level 4 and above), apprenticeships, or employment.

U-Skills Tertiary Pathways places are subject to availability and meeting entry criteria. Transport to UCOL's campuses isn't provided for these programmes.



U-Skills Tertiary Pathways

Course	Level	Math	Writing	Whanau	Waikato
New Zealand Certificate in Construction Trade Skills (Joinery)	3	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Construction Trade Skills (Carpentry)	3	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Building, Construction, and Allied Trade Skills	2	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing, Gasfitting, and Drainlaying (Pre-Apprenticeship)	3	●			
New Zealand Certificate in IT Essentials	4	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Engineering	3	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Collision Repair and Automotive Refinishing	3	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Electrical Pre-Trade	3	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Mechanical Engineering	3	●		●	
New Zealand Certificate in Arts and Design	4	●	●		
New Zealand Certificate in Beauty Therapy	4	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Nail Technology	4	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing	3	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Business (Administration and Technology)	3	●	●		
New Zealand Certificate in Business (Administration and Technology)	4	●	●		
New Zealand Certificate in Food and Beverage Service	3	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Food and Beverage Service	4	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care	4	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Study and Employment Pathways (Health Field)	3	●			
New Zealand Certificate in Study and Employment Pathways (Health Science Field)	4	●	●	●	
New Zealand Certificate in Study and Employment Pathway (Medical Imaging Field)	4	●			

Vocational Pathways Guide

The programmes in this guide are colour coded according to the Vocational Pathways.



Need More Information? We're Here To Help.

Visit any of our Information Centres



Whanganui
16 Rutland Street, Whanganui

Manawatū
18 Princess Street, Palmerston North

Wairarapa
143 Chapel Street, Masterton

Horowhenua / Kapiti Coast



U-Skills
Get Future-Ready

Private Bag 11-022, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand

u-skills@ucol.ac.nz

ucol.ac.nz/u-skills

This flyer is intended as a guide only. Programme details are subject to change. Please refer to ucol.ac.nz for the most up-to-date information. UCOL is a Business Division of Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skill and Technology.