



# Vocational Programmes at Geraldine High School

**Vocational education and training pathways are supported through NCEA. We visited a few schools and kura to look at how their vocational programmes are preparing students for work, further training or study.**

[Vocational programmes at Geraldine High School](#)



## **Additional information:**

[Pathways](#)

(<https://ncea.education.govt.nz/pathways>)



Established in 2012, Geraldine High School Primary Industry Academy offers students practical, hands-on learning across a range of primary sectors - dairy farming, arable farming, sheep and beef cattle farming as well as the service industries that sit alongside those industries.

As part of their vocational education and training, the students are also tapped to help out after a natural disaster like clearing up debris and fixing fence lines after intense flooding.

Level 1 of the Primary Industry Academy programme introduces students to around 15 industries in the primary sector including beekeeping, agronomy, seed development, leathercraft, forestry, dairy farming, and deer genetics.

“The focus is on providing students a good grounding in permanent and temporary fencing, water supply and other basic skills, to help them prepare for the on-farm experience required at Level 2,” explained Sarah Foley-Smith, who heads the school’s Primary Industry Academy.

At Level 2, students learn on the job through farm placements. Depending on their interests, students are placed at dairy farms, arable farms, deer farms, sheep farms or beef cattle farms.

At Level 3, students work towards completing the National Certificate in Agriculture (Animal Feeding and Pastures).

Through its strong partnership with around 40 local employers and the local community, the school has been able to provide vocational education and training that has led to offers of school holiday jobs as well as full-time employment to its students.

“When the students head out to the farms and make a good impression and show good work ethic, we’re finding that a lot of the farms are creating jobs for the students they’ve got,” Ms Foley-Smith said.

“One thing that we really struggle with is to entice people into this industry. So to have young people on the farm, doing what they do, is really exciting,” said Sam Mallard, Manager of Align Farms Ltd, one of several farms in South Canterbury that help train students from Geraldine High School.

“They certainly enjoy it....It’s great for their self-esteem and it gives them total confidence,” said Kelly Bennett of Deer Genetics NZ Ltd.

Principal Simon Coleman said the school’s vocational programme has not only equipped students with employable skills but has given them a preview of possible career pathways.

“The main benefit of vocational training is students are actually working with a business organisation and becoming familiar with what that lifestyle looks like, what that job or that possible career could be,” Mr Coleman explained.

“Education has changed a lot in the last few years,” he noted. “We used to predominantly be offering a university-styled curriculum but across the country, most schools now are looking at the range of other opportunities that exist.”