

On Tuesday afternoon Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 gathered together to celebrate the end of the Gateway year. It is a chance to celebrate, say thank you to all those involved and also about sharing experiences for those who are new to Gateway and STAR.

We are fortunate enough that in our small school Gateway and STAR has been able to be offered and completed by every senior student this year. So what is Gateway and STAR?

Gateway it is a funded programme open to senior students enabling workplace learning and weaving that with school based learning and credits. This year each student completed a week-long placement at the beginning of March and then added 20 NCEA credits of learning through the year based on the placement and career path.

STAR is a different course but runs alongside Gateway. STAR (Stands for Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource) It is funding which assists TCAS to provide students with learning experiences that align with vocational pathways. There is a huge range of STAR courses available from Level 1 to 3 such as Sport Exercise and Health, Police Pathways, Building and Construction, Engineering, Hospitality and Bike Mechanics to name a few. STAR courses can be attended once a week or even a short course such as Barista and Bartending can be organised, which we ran in the holidays this year.

At the end of 2020 students were asked to fill in a questionnaire of interests and placement ideas. That led to 15 students being enrolled and we were able to provide placements within the vocational paths, to try to suit every student's passion. We have managed placements and learning for construction, hospitality, health, education, agriculture, science, service industry and animal health. These placements were based here in Owaka, Balclutha, Kaitangita, Kaka Point and Alexandra. These can be even further afield as Gateway can subsidise travel and accommodation.

Placements are helpful as they give a little taste of what a vocational pathway can be like. Some students enjoyed the variety of work while others realised that is not what they would like to pursue as a career. Either outcome is workable, it is about the experience. Students who completed Gateway all gave a short talk about where they went, what they experienced, what was enjoyable and what wasn't.

A big thank you to all the students who have put in a real effort with their placement and learning throughout the year.