

ALYSSA BARNARD

NURSING/MIDWIFERY, DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Senior School Subjects

- Year 10: English, Mathematics: Pre Methods, Japanese, Human Movement and Performance, Science, Photography, P.E. for Girls, Religion/CEPD.
- Year 11: English, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematical Methods, Japanese, Religion.
- Year 12: English, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematical Methods, Japanese.

Why did you choose these subjects? I really enjoyed Year 10 because I felt like I had the opportunity to explore different interests I had at the time and see what subjects would be worth pursuing in VCE. I basically just picked what I thought I would enjoy and get the most out of for the year. In terms of my VCE subjects I was looking at studying medicine so the bulk of them were prerequisites. In saying that, I genuinely liked Mathematical Methods, Biology and English.

I loved studying Japanese; I had been learning it since I started primary school. As for Chemistry... well that was hard work for me and the only one I never truly loved studying! If it hadn't been a prerequisite for medicine I would have changed it to something I enjoyed more like arts or humanities.

What resources did you use to choose subjects? I used the Senior Course Guide, went to career expos and spoke to different universities, teachers, senior students and my parents.

What was your course like? My course was very full on but very rewarding. The course content was insightful and engaging. Time management skills are necessary to ensure the requirements of the course can be met. In conjunction with classroom-based work, the course requires you to undertake clinical placement and continuity of care experiences with pregnant women and their families. A typical week for me involved maybe 2 or 3 days a week of classes that consisted of lectures, tutorials and practical sessions.

The reason for what seems like a small workload is that I was on work placement for a lot of the time at university so we usually did the bulk of the theoretical work at the start of the semester prior to placement. I felt like I was constantly being challenged to learn something new and by the end of the course, was drawing on all aspects that I had learned along the way. Even now in my grad year I am still learning and consolidating both practical and theoretical components

What did you enjoy about your course? The thing I loved most about my degree was that it was mostly hands on learning! The double degree meant I had more placement than if I had just done my nursing degree alone. I was able to do placement at a number of leading facilities both in Geelong, Melbourne and even Wodonga.

I was also accepted into a fellowship program at Epworth Healthcare where in my third and fourth year of university, I undertook my core nursing units and placement at Epworth Healthcare in Richmond. Fellowship programs are very rewarding. Aside from further developing and refining your knowledge and skills, they open up doors to career opportunities and connections.

Lastly, I loved the connections I made and the experiences I shared with the women and families of those whom I worked with on continuity of care experiences. Being a midwife and a nurse is a very special career. I look forward to knowing I can make a positive impact on someone's patient experience and sharing special moments with women and their families.

How did the subjects at school prepare you for your course?

- **English-** Learning to write all those university style essays! Referencing, referencing, referencing!
- **Biology-** A key subject when it comes to understanding pathophysiology, which is the foundation of clinical practice.
- **Chemistry-** it played a minor role in my first year anatomy and physiology class, however I will admit I have rarely utilised what I learned from VCE Chemistry in my degree.
- **Mathematical Methods-** Nurses and midwives have to do mathematics! We have drug calculations we need to perform all the time. They aren't complex like methods calculations are though, so if you were doing Further Mathematics you would be just fine. Aside from really enjoying algebra and a bit of a challenge, I could have just done Further Mathematics if I had decided earlier to study nursing and midwifery instead of medicine.
- **Japanese-** Learning a language is a valuable resource to have in your mental toolbox. I didn't need a language for university however I would have liked to have done a Diploma of Languages if Deakin had offered it at the time. The hospital I work at now is very multicultural. I wish I knew Arabic or Turkish to help make it easier for patients and myself.

What are you doing now in your graduate position? I am a Graduate Registered Nurse and Midwife at The Northern Hospital in Melbourne. This is a 12 month contract position allowing me to rotate through postnatal ward, birth suite, special care nursery, antenatal clinic and a surgical nursing ward so that I can consolidate the skills I learnt whilst at university.

What do you enjoy about your job? As a midwife I get to be part of a very intimate and special moment in a family's life, and for that I am ever grateful. I love hearing positive feedback and gratitude from families that I was there with them on their journey. Although nursing isn't as intimate, I still go to work knowing I get to work with patients and their families to improve their clinical outcomes and their patient experience.

Lastly, I love knowing I can travel the world with my work. There are so many career opportunities for nursing and midwifery that I can't see myself getting tired of doing my job for a long time!

Course information? Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Midwifery, Deakin University, <http://bit.ly/1LyKPHi>