

# AMY GROAT

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

### CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

#### Senior School Subjects

- Year 10: English, Music, Visual Art, Religion/CEPD, Woodwork, Mathematical Methods Units 1 + 2 Early Advancement.
- Year 11: English, Music Performance, Religion, Further Mathematics Units 3 + 4 Early Advancement.
- Year 12: English, Physical Education, Psychology, Health & Human Development, Sociology

**Why did you choose these subjects?** During Years 10 and 11 I had quite a large change of heart in what I was studying. Most of the subjects I began in Year 12 I had not done the Unit 1 + 2 component of (which was fine, I just had to put in extra work here and there but it was not uncommon). While every piece of advice you are given at school is incredibly valuable, I can't stress how important it is to listen to your own heart and really invest in the things you love.

This is why I made so many changes going into Year 12 because I realised I was just going along with what other students were doing, what teachers may have advised or older students/older friends of mine were advising. It's so important to take on this advice and then use it to ensure that you're shaping your VCE studies to set you up to be happy. I was in subjects that I may have been good at but I didn't enjoy and this made it hard to find the motivation and continue to work hard and do well. Having the confidence to ask questions about what different subjects involve and what you can gain from investing your time in them is also really important.

I think it's also important to remember that only you can shape your own future – only you can make life the best it can be and being able to listen to what your heart is saying and recognising where your interests lie is going to facilitate that. Don't pick a subject just because all of your friends are doing it or don't just pick a subject based on the amount it is scaled up. It's just not worth it if it means you are going to sit in a classroom for a year learning about something you're not interested in. Your health and wellbeing is first and foremost the number one thing you have to look after during your VCE and I really believe enjoying what you're studying is vital for this.

I think it's also really important to know that it is absolutely fine if you have no idea what you want to do. I sort of thought I wanted to be in health in some capacity but I was also interested in LOTS of other things. My mantra going into Year 12 was to pick subjects I was really interested in and do absolutely everything I could to achieve the best score I could. What that number was didn't really matter to me, I just wanted to finish knowing I had done everything I could of to achieve the best result I could. I can honestly say I wasn't really thinking of the university course I wanted to get into at this stage either.

If you have your heart set on something fantastic, but if you're not sure, keep your options open, keep up to date with what different courses are out there (i.e. keep chatting to the wonderful Careers Advisor!) and don't put too much pressure on yourself. Reflecting on my VCE experience I realised how young I was to be thinking about such big decisions and completing the amount of work I was. Everyone should be so proud that they have made it this far and make the most of the wonderful year VCE is!

**What resources did you use to choose subjects?** Definitely the Senior Course Guide and the teachers that taught the subjects – the expo's that happen at CCW are fantastic. Also talk to older students who are in the subjects currently or have completed them. Try and get as much information as you can and then spend the time to decide what you really want to do. Obviously as well if you have your heart set on a particular university course it's important to be aware if it has any prerequisites.

**What is your course like?** It's been fantastic! The first two years were a lot of foundation subjects such as sociology, physiology and anatomy to set you up to get into the more specific learning. From second year on we did a lot of specific Occupational Therapy learning and then went on four different eight-week placements. They have allowed the entire classroom learning to become real and worthwhile. The large amount of placement also allows you to build your confidence and develop your skills so you are ready to graduate and begin working!

While you obviously learn a huge amount about the career you've chosen, you also learn so many valuable things about yourself such as how to be resilient when things get tough and initiative to take control of your own learning and development

**What do you enjoy about your course?** Meeting new people and making new friends has been great and certain subjects are fascinating – I never thought I'd be in an anatomy lab looking at cadavers! The amount of independence you have at university is also very refreshing – you have a lot of control over your learning and shaping where you want your future to take you.

**How did the subjects at school prepare you for your course?** I've used all of my subjects at university. English has been useful for the amount of academic writing university can involve while subjects like Physical Education, Health and Human Development, Sociology and Psychology have certainly all informed the content I've learnt throughout my course. My particular course had no prerequisites – there was a recommendation of Biology to do Occupational Therapy but I have been fine without doing VCE Biology.

I think it's important to remember that when you pick something you really want to do and guide your future at university, you're going to put in the work required and be motivated to do well. I was certainly surprised by the amount of knowledge from high school I applied while at university, even if it's just being aware of something or having heard of something before.

**Course information:** Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, Charles Sturt University, <http://bit.ly/1S94OgS>