

BRODIE ZIERSCH

ENGINEERING, SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY

Senior School Subjects

- Year 11: English, Mathematical Methods, VET Engineering Early Advancement Program Units 3/4, Music, Physics, Design Technology Materials
- Year 12: English Language, Mathematical Methods, Design Technology Materials, Music performance, Physics

Why did you choose these subjects? My goal has always been to study Civil Engineering at university. I've always been interested in the math/physics side of life and understanding how and why everything works like it does. Throughout year 9 and 10 I went to a lot of university open days and they all said that maths methods, physics and English were the three prerequisites to be able to study this course. The other subjects were just ones that I enjoyed doing.

What resources did you use to choose subjects? The main resources that I used were:

- Talking to lecturers and teachers at open days as they were teaching/experiencing it first hand.
- Looking through university brochures and researching on the university websites.
- Talking to the College Careers Adviser about my interests and ideas. She then gave me my realistic options and guided me into the correct approach from there.

What is your course like? Its another step up from high school in terms of pace and difficulty but its capable. At the moment I'm really enjoying it. There has been a mixture of theoretical and practical classes in every subject which is good so it always keeps you interested and motivated. It took me a few weeks to adjust to the university culture, for example how it's all structured and getting back into study after a gap year, but after I got back into the groove it was easy to stay focused. First year subjects include Electronic Systems, Energy and Motion, Engineering Mathematics, Engineering Project, Professional Engineering, Materials and Processes and Mechanics of structure.

What do you love about your course? The biggest thing for me is it's what I've chosen to do. At school I had to do mandatory subjects for example English, which I didn't enjoy, so when it came to writing assignments or any other homework my motivation to complete that was nil. At university you only pick subjects that interest you and match your course guide. So if I receive any practical write ups or just have some general study to do it makes it easy to complete as I don't look at it with a negative connotation and keep putting it off for another day.

Give students an example of a 'day in the life' of your course: At Uni you're able to swap and change your subjects so if you have part time work you can structure your contact hours around that or even if you want to sleep in every day you can! My usual start time is 10:30am. Most classes go for two hours and I have about 3-4 classes a day with Thursdays off. A typical day for me is:

- 10:30-12:30 is a tutorial class. So they're just like a normal school class with about 20 students in it where you can easily ask any questions that you may have.
- 12:30-1:30 I have an hour break. I live on campus so I just go up to my apartment and have some lunch and play some Xbox. Other students who don't live on campus either go to one of the Swinburne kitchens or go down the street and have lunch.
- 1:30-3:30 is a practical class. So it can be anything from material strength testing to making atom configurations with polystyrene balls.
- 3:30-5:30 is a lecture. So about 200 people in a lecture theatre with a lecture up the front working through a power point slide explaining processes and procedures.

How did the subjects at school prepare you for your course? In lots of ways. For example, I still use my Physics and Mathematics rules book everyday. First semester subjects are all just a refresher of Year 12 subjects so if you weren't 100% sure of a method or procedure its easy to pick it up the second time round.

What have been some of the highlights of your course so far:

- Working with like minded people who all have similar interests to mine.
- All the class content is online so if you're away you can easily catch up.
- Going into depth with subjects and really learning where formulas come from and the reasons behind everything e.g., Physics.
- Practical lessons. For example, in chemistry we do tensile testing, where we first work out the theoretical side of a material like its tensile strength and then we actually put the material in a machine and prove that our answers match the practical result.

What is the best piece of advice you've received about following your career goals: "Think about the end goal. The reason you're at University is for the final outcome. This is just a stepping stone into the bigger picture"- Ghandi.

What advice can you offer students considering studying the course: Go to as many university open days as you can. Only there will you have the chance to talk to current students and teachers who can answer any questions you may have. Also in Year 10 I did work expectance with a civil engineer which for me confirmed that that was the avenue in which I wanted to persue. For anyone studying at university I highly recommend staying on campus for your first year. Its such a great way to make friends and connections that will only assist you in the future. I wouldn't have half the friends I have now if it wasn't for all the event and parties that are hosted by Swinburne Residencies.

What are your future career goals: Finish my degree and then re-join the Defence Force full time (Brodie completed the Army gap year).

Course information: UniLink Diploma of Engineering, Swinburne University, <http://bit.ly/1YuGcjJ>