

🎓 Uni Choice Cheat Sheet

*A quick guide to choosing the right university for you
by Dr Jo Winchester*

Choosing a uni can feel like trying to pick a streaming service. There's too much choice, everything looks good in the brochure, and your friends all have different opinions.

This cheat sheet helps you cut through the noise. Use it before, during, and after Open Days to figure out where you'll thrive and not just where you'll study.

1. Know What You're Looking For

Before you start comparing universities, get clear on your “must-haves” and your “nice-to-haves.”

What matters most to you?	Why it matters	Example questions to ask
Location & lifestyle	Do you want to live at home, move away, or study online?	<i>How far is it from home? What's the public transport or parking like?</i>
Course design	Is the course practical, academic, or both?	<i>How many contact hours, and what are the assessments like?</i>
Support & wellbeing	What kind of help is available if you struggle or if you have a disability?	<i>Is there tutoring, mentoring, personal student plans or mental health support?</i>
Work experience	Does the course link to real jobs?	<i>Are there internships, placements, or industry partnerships?</i>
Cost & scholarships	How much will you pay?	<i>Are there equity or merit scholarships I can apply for?</i>
Community & culture	Will you feel like you belong?	<i>What do current students say about the vibe?</i>

👉 Tip: Choose the place that helps you grow as a person — not just the one with the flashiest logo.

2. Compare and Rank Your Options

Use this quick-score table. Give each category a score from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

University	Course	Location	Cost	Work Experience	Support	Vibe	Total

👉 Once you've added up your totals, notice your gut reaction. The one that excites you most — not just the one with the highest score — might be your best fit.

3. Ask Smart Questions

FUTURE OF WORK

When talking to staff or students, go beyond “*What ATAR do I need?*”

- What makes this course different from similar ones elsewhere?
- How much group work or practical work is there?
- What kinds of jobs do graduates actually get?
- Are there double degrees, minors, or electives I can try first?
- What happens if I change my mind after first year?
- If I don't achieve the ATAR I need for my ideal course, is there a pathway program?

👉 Ask a student, not just a staff member. They'll tell you the truth.

4. Think About Future You

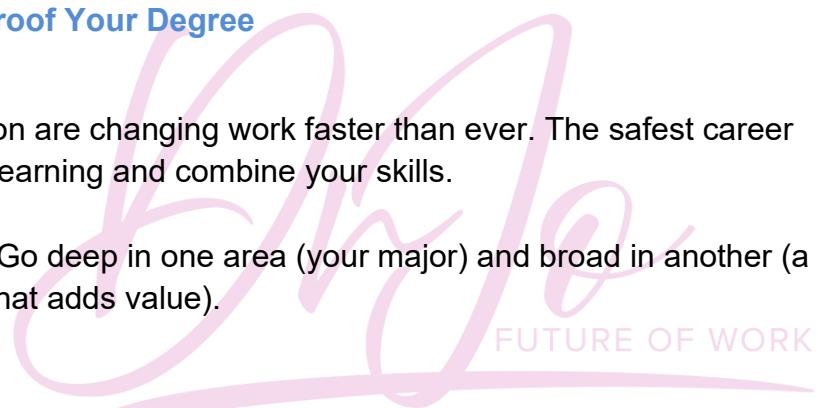
Don't just choose for now. Look to where you want to be in five years. Choose universities that:

- Offer industry connections or placements in your field.
- Teach transferable skills like communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.
- Support innovation, such as courses that adapt as industries change.
- Encourage you to build a portfolio or digital profile as you go.

5. Future-Proof Your Degree

AI and automation are changing work faster than ever. The safest career strategy? Keep learning and combine your skills.

Think like a “T” Go deep in one area (your major) and broad in another (a secondary skill that adds value).



Examples:

- Health + Tech → Health Informatics, Medical AI, Telehealth
- Design + Business → UX Strategy, Creative Entrepreneurship
- Psychology + Data → User Research, Behavioural Analytics

👉 If your chosen field is changing fast, learn the tech behind it. Take a short AI course, learn to code a little, or play with creative tools that boost your field — from Canva to ChatGPT.

6. Before You Enrol...

Run through this checklist:

- I've visited at least one campus in person or virtually.
- I've spoken to at least two current students.
- I understand how the course is assessed (not just the name of the degree).
- I've checked entry pathways, scholarships, and deadlines.
- I've thought about accommodation and travel.
- I feel excited (and maybe a little nervous) — that's a good sign!

Final Thoughts

The “right” uni isn’t the one that looks best on a hoodie — it’s the one that gives you energy, connection, and momentum. Your career isn’t a straight line. It’s a series of experiments that help you find where you shine.

Dr Jo Winchester

Future-Ready Educator

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