



CURATED STREAM 9

AI for NEETS

Using AI to build a CV, find work, and prep for interviews

This stream is for you

Maybe you finished school but haven't found your thing. Maybe a course wasn't a good fit, or work fell through. You're not alone — thousands of young Kiwis are in the same place right now. AI tools won't get you a job on their own, but they can take a lot of the hard, boring work out of the way.

NZ\$111M

Budget 2025 funding for Youth Guarantee

Plus NZ\$213M tuition / training and NZ\$64M for STEM in 2025.



Build a tidy CV

Even if you don't have much experience yet.



Write the cover letter

Without the staring-at-a-blank-page feeling.



Practise the interview

Until you sound confident answering common questions.

You have more support than you think

There's a whole network in Aotearoa New Zealand built to help young people back into education, training, or work — and you don't have to do it on your own.



Youth Service NEET

MSD's free voluntary service for 15–19 year-olds. A coach helps you make a plan and stick with it.



Youth Guarantee

Free fees-free study at level 1–3 if you're 16–19. Trades academies, foundation courses, and second-chance learning.



Microsoft AI Skilling

National partnership offering AI training, with a deliberate focus on people who've been left out.



Institute of Data NZ

Six-month programmes in AI, cyber and software. 89% of graduates employed within 6 months.



NewZealand.AI

A hub for finding AI courses, training, and beginner-friendly explainers.



Work and Income / WINZ

Job-search help, training grants, and case managers who know the local employers.

What you'll do in this stream

Three short sections. Each one takes about 20 minutes. At the end you'll have a CV, a cover letter, and a bit of interview practice under your belt.

1 Step 1

Build a CV

Use ChatGPT to draft a CV from a few simple questions.

2 Step 2

Apply for jobs

Use Cover Letter Now to write a cover letter that fits the role.

3 Step 3

Practise interviews

Use Interview School to rehearse common questions until you feel ready.

Why these three?

Every job application asks for the same three things: a CV, a cover letter, and the ability to sit through an interview. Nail those, and you can apply for almost anything.

Tip: you can work through this stream in order, or jump to the section you need most right now.

Three AI tools you'll use today

These are all free to start. The free versions are enough for what we're doing.

ChatGPT

Made by OpenAI

chatgpt.com

USE IT FOR

Draft your CV. Now uses GPT-5.6 — current, with up-to-date knowledge.

Cover Letter Now

Made by Resume Now

coverletternow.com

USE IT FOR

Fill-in-the-blanks cover letter builder. Good designs out of the box.

Interview School

Made by Interview School

interviewschool.com

USE IT FOR

An AI interview coach. Asks you typical questions, records your answers, gives feedback.

All three work in any web browser. You'll need an email address — make a free Gmail account first if you don't have one.

Section 1

Build your CV with ChatGPT

Even if your work history feels short, you've got more to put down than you think

Before you start — what to gather

Don't worry if you can't fill every one of these. Just bring what you've got — ChatGPT will work with whatever you give it.



Your basics

Full name, suburb (you don't need to share a full address), email, phone.



School / courses

Any school you went to, NCEA level reached, plus any short course or certificate.



Any work or volunteering

Paid jobs, casual work, helping at the marae, sports coaching, animal shelter — it all counts.



Things you can do

Driving, cooking, te reo Māori, gaming, sport, drawing, fixing things, being good with little kids.



Things you're into

Hobbies, interests, music, what you'd happily talk about for an hour.



Two references

Two adults (not whānau) who know you and would say good things — teacher, coach, kaumātua, old boss.

Step-by-step: draft a CV in ChatGPT

ChatGPT is free at chatgpt.com. You can use it without signing in for short tasks — but signing up keeps your chats saved.

1

Open chatgpt.com

Click 'Sign up' (it's free) or use it without signing in.

2

Type your first prompt

Try: 'Can you help me write a CV? I'm 18 and applying for retail jobs in Nelson.'

3

Answer its questions

It'll ask about school, jobs, skills. Type what you can — leave the rest blank.

4

Read the draft

ChatGPT will lay out a CV. Check spelling, dates, and anything that sounds 'off'.

5

Ask for changes

'Make the summary sound more like me.'
'Add a hobbies section.' Keep tweaking.

6

Copy into a doc

Paste it into Google Docs or Word. Save as PDF when you're done.

Pro tip: tell ChatGPT what job you're applying for. It'll tailor the wording to that role.

A starter prompt you can copy

Paste this into ChatGPT to begin. Change the bits in [square brackets] to match you.

P R O M P T

Please help me write a CV. I'm [age] and I live in [city/town in NZ].

I'm applying for [type of job, e.g. retail / hospitality / labouring / care work].

Here's what I've done:

- School: [last school, NCEA level]
- Work / volunteer: [list what you've done – even if short]
- Things I'm good at: [e.g. being on time, talking to customers, lifting heavy things, te reo]
- Interests: [hobbies, sports, gaming]

Please write the CV in plain New Zealand English. Keep it to one page.



What happens next?

ChatGPT will likely ask a few follow-up questions — that's a good thing. Answer them in plain words. After two or three back-and-forths you'll have a usable draft.

Two things to watch for

AI is good but not magic. These two things catch a lot of people out.

It can make things up

ChatGPT can invent jobs, achievements, dates, or qualifications that aren't yours. This is called a 'hallucination'. Always read your CV line-by-line. If something isn't true, delete it.

It can sound too 'corporate'

Words like 'leveraged synergies' or 'spearheaded' don't sound like a real person. Ask: 'rewrite this in plain New Zealand English, like a 17-year-old would say it.'



Golden rule: your CV is YOU. Read every single line out loud. If you wouldn't say it that way in real life, change it.

Section 2

Apply for the job

Finding a job to apply for, and writing the cover letter that goes with it

Where to look for jobs in Aotearoa NZ

Most jobs are advertised online. Set up a free account on these so you can save searches and apply quickly.



Trade Me Jobs

trademe.co.nz/jobs

The biggest NZ job board. Lots of entry-level retail, warehouse and hospo roles.



Seek

seek.co.nz

Strong for full-time and trades roles. Has a 'no experience needed' filter.



Indeed

nz.indeed.com

Pulls in jobs from many sites at once. Good for casting a wide net.



MyMahi

mymahi.co.nz

Built for rangatahi — CV tools, job listings and youth-friendly employers.



Work and Income

workandincome.govt.nz

Jobs Online listings plus help from a real case manager.



Local notice boards

[shop windows / Facebook groups](#)

Cafés, dairies, supermarkets and 'Nelson jobs' Facebook groups still post here.

Set up job alerts. They email you the new listings the day they go up — beats refreshing the page every hour.

Cover Letter Now — six steps

Cover Letter Now is a guided builder. You answer questions and it writes the letter. Go to coverletternow.com.

1 Click Create My Cover Letter
Then 'Get Started' on the next screen.

2 Pick a design
Any clean, simple one will do. Avoid ones with photos or strong colours.

3 Fill in your info
Name, contact details, job title you're applying for, years of experience (zero is fine).

4 Choose your opener
Pick from a list of suggested opening lines. Adjust to fit you.

5 Choose body + closer
Same process — pick options, then click the pen icon to edit any line.

6 Download as PDF
Save it to your phone or laptop. Now you can attach it to applications.

Other builders that work the same way: My Perfect Cover Letter, Cover Letter Copilot, Zety, Resume.io.

What a good cover letter actually says

Four short paragraphs. That's it. The whole letter fits on one page.

1. Why you're writing

'I'm applying for the retail assistant job advertised on Trade Me Jobs.'
One sentence.

2 Why you'd be good at it

Two or three things from your CV that match the job. 'I love talking to people, I'm reliable, and I've helped on the front desk at my school.'

3. Why this place

One line about why you want to work HERE specifically. 'I shop at your Nelson store and the team always seems friendly.'

4. The wrap-up

'Thanks for considering my application. I'd be keen to talk it through if you'd like to meet.' Sign off with your name.

Keep it under 250 words. Hiring managers skim. The right four short paragraphs beat a long, padded letter every time.

Section 3

Prep for the interview

Practise with an AI coach until the nerves shrink

Interview School — how it works

Interview School is a free AI interview coach. It asks you typical questions, records your spoken answers, and gives feedback. Sign up at interviewschool.com.

1

Sign in and verify your email

You'll land on the 'AI Coach' page once you're in.

2

Pick an interview

Search or scroll — there are interviews for retail, hospo, trades, and bigger companies.

3

Start the interview

It works like a real one. The AI asks. You speak your answer aloud.

4

Replay your answers

Click the red button (bottom-left) to hear yourself. See the questions on the top-left list.

5

Wait for feedback

About five minutes after you finish. You'll see a grade and short comments.

6

Retake to improve

Try again. Most people improve a lot just by doing the questions twice.

The free tier gives basic feedback. The 'Live Coach' tab puts you on a call with a real human — that costs.

Questions to practise out loud

Try answering each one in 30–60 seconds. You can practise in front of a mirror, or run them past Claude or ChatGPT to get feedback.



Q 1

Tell me a bit about yourself.



Q 2

Why do you want this job?



Q 3

What are you good at?



Q 4

Tell me about a time you worked in a team.



Q 5

How would your last teacher or coach describe you?



Q 6

How do you handle it when things go wrong?



Q 7

Why have you got a gap on your CV?



Q 8

What hours can you work?



Q 9

Do you have any questions for me?

Question 7 — the gap question — is the one most NEET young people get asked. Have a short, honest answer ready.

Answering 'why is there a gap?'

You don't have to share more than you want to. Most employers just want to know you're ready now. Three honest ways to answer:

Health or family

'I took some time out to deal with some personal stuff. That's sorted now, and I'm keen to get into work.' Brief, honest, no detail required.

Tried something that didn't fit

'I started a course but it wasn't the right fit, so I stepped away to figure out what I actually wanted to do. I'm clearer now.'

Still figuring it out

'I've spent the last while learning some new skills [name one or two — driving, te reo, AI tools]. Now I'm ready to put them to use.'

ASK CLAUDE OR CHATGPT

"I'm 19 and I've been out of work / school for about [time]. Help me write 3 short, honest ways to answer 'why is there a gap on your CV?' in a job interview. Keep them friendly and confident."

Other AI tools worth knowing

ChatGPT is one chatbot among several. They're all free to start. Try a few and see which one you click with.

Claude	Gemini	Microsoft Copilot	Perplexity
Made by Anthropic claude.ai Especially good at writing and reading long documents. Has a 'Learning mode' that asks you questions instead of just giving answers.	Made by Google gemini.google.com Google's chatbot. Built into Google search results. Strong at understanding images and video.	Made by Microsoft copilot.microsoft.com Built into Edge browser, Windows and Word. Free, with web search and citations.	Made by Perplexity AI perplexity.ai More like a smart search engine. Every answer comes with the sources, so you can check them.

All four can read PDFs you upload, search the web, and answer in plain English. Pick the one that feels easiest to talk to.

Stay safe — and keep it honest

AI tools are powerful, but a few simple habits keep you (and your job application) on the right side.



Don't paste private stuff

No bank details, IRD numbers, or passwords into a chatbot. Treat it like a public space.



Keep it true

Never invent qualifications or jobs on your CV. Employers do check, and fibs come undone in interviews.



Write in your voice

Use AI to draft and tidy. Then read it aloud and fix anything that doesn't sound like you.



Double-check facts

AI can make mistakes — names, dates, even the name of the company. Always cross-check.



Strong passwords

Use a different password for each AI account. Turn on two-step sign-in if it's offered.



Ask a real person too

AI is helpful, but a careers coach, librarian or Youth Service worker is even better.

Pulling it together

By the end of this stream you've got the three things almost every job needs.



A one-page CV

Drafted in ChatGPT, edited until it sounds like you.



A cover letter

Built in Cover Letter Now, four short paragraphs, ready to attach.



Interview practice

A few runs through Interview School — common questions no longer ambush you.

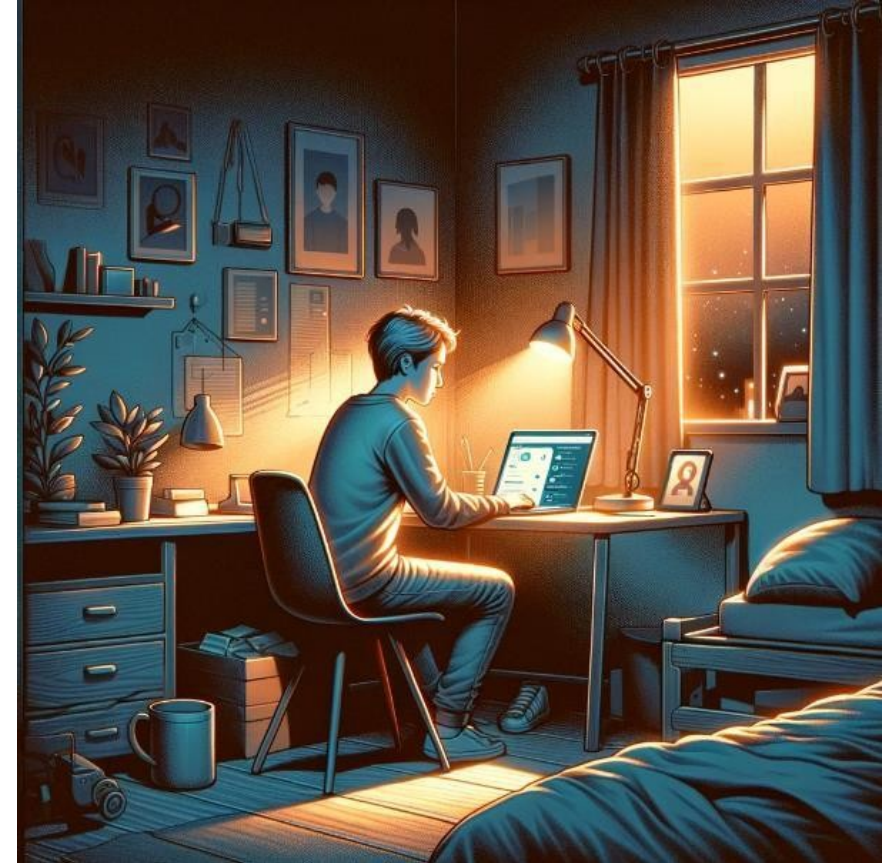
This week — three small moves

- 1 Pick one job board (Trade Me, Seek or MyMahi) and set up a profile.
- 2 Apply to two jobs — even if you're not sure. Practice is the point.
- 3 Talk to a real person — Youth Service, school careers advisor, or someone at WINZ.

One last thing

None of these tools is perfect. They get the boring stuff out of the way so you can spend your energy on the bit that matters — being you, in person, in front of someone.

You don't need to know everything about AI. You just need to know enough to use it. You now do.



Ngā mihi nui. Good luck out there.