

What can I do with a degree in Communication?

Communication.



What is Communication? Learn more

Communication is the process of planning and sharing information, ideas, and messages among individuals or groups. It encompasses verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual communication. Communication professionals are responsible for the shaping and promotion of an organisation's image to the public, shareholders and employees through planning and implementing communication strategies.

Working in a communication role requires a broad understanding of contemporary media culture and practice. In the Bachelor of Communication this includes studying digital production, risk and crisis communication, media audiences, advertising, and inclusive communication. Students can major in a specific area of communication practice.

Communication professionals from a diverse range of genders, ethnicities, ages, and cultures can help create content that resonates with a broader audience and connects better with the public they serve. This is particularly important in Aotearoa New Zealand where our cultural make-up is becoming increasingly more diverse.

It is important to do some research when planning a future career. Speak with, ask questions of, and follow relevant professional bodies, organisations, companies, thought leaders and industry professionals to learn more about:

- Career opportunities, work environments and salary information
- Education and training requirements.

Examples of professional bodies

- Public Relations Institute of New Zealand
www.prinz.org.nz
- International Association of Business Communicators www.iabc.com
- Screen Production and Development Association of New Zealand
www.spada.co.nz
- Marketing Association
www.marketing.org.nz

Career and study information

Some study pathways and degrees have a recommended school background, and some careers may require further study beyond a first degree or additional experience.

Gather helpful information from:

- Subject-specific content at
www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/subjects/communication
- Job profiles on career websites like
www.careers.govt.nz
- Job adverts/vacancy descriptions
- Industry professional bodies.

This resource is part of a set of brochures focused on subject majors; many can also be studied as minors.



What skills can graduates gain?

Communication graduates develop a broad range of globally transferable skills necessary for success in the communication industry. Graduate skills and competencies can include:

- Strategic communication planning and confidence in media outreach
- Content creation in a variety of formats for a variety of audiences
- Able to analyse audience activity, data, and the impact of communication
- Problem solving, attention to detail and meticulous proofreading skills
- Digital literacy, project management, planning and organisation
- Organisation and time management; able to manage multiple tasks
- Awareness of bi-culturalism and the use of Te Reo Māori
- Able to relate to and communicate with a wide range of people
- Analytical and critical thinking
- Able to work independently and collaboratively with others.

Applied learning

Communication courses include creating content and developing campaigns for community and industry groups. Students may also have opportunities to participate in an internship where they apply their learning to a professional situation and gain experience in industry.

What do employers look for?

Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, client/customer-focus, bicultural competence, cultural awareness, teamwork and initiative.

With technology, globalisation, and other drivers changing society, skills such as resilience, problem solving, and adaptability are important.

Skills that are likely to grow in importance include analytical and creative thinking, systems thinking, technological literacy, AI and big data.*

*World Economic Forum: www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/05/future-of-jobs-2023-skills

How can these skills be developed?

- Some skills are gained through studying
- Extra-curricular activities can help, such as getting involved in clubs, mentoring, cultural groups, part-time work or volunteering
- Be open to professional and personal development opportunities, whether it is undertaking work experience, overseas exchange, skills seminar, or joining an industry group.

Where have graduates been employed?

Graduates of a communication degree will be suitable for work in:

- Media and news outlets e.g. TVNZ, RNZ, Newstalk ZB, 39 Southern TV, Whitebait Media, Stuff, NZME
- PR, media and strategic communications e.g. Network Communication, Agency
- Creative and marketing agencies
- Web developers
- Government e.g. ministries of Education, Business, Innovation and Employment; Land Information NZ; Broadcast Standards Authority
- Educational institutions e.g. Universities
- Research centres
- Not-for-profits e.g. Planet Ark Environmental Foundation, Amnesty International
- Regional councils and affiliates e.g. Environment Canterbury
- Franchises e.g. Hurricanes, Red Bull Motorsports
- Private companies in retail, banking, healthcare, legal, tourism, leisure and other sectors
- Organisations abroad e.g. Australia, UK, USA, Canada, Malaysia, Thailand.

What jobs and activities might graduates do?

Communication graduates are employed in a range of roles within organisations that can include internal communication, corporate communication, government communication, advocacy, community relations, event management, content writing, data analytics, public relations, and marketing — see some examples below.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, and some jobs may require further study, training or experience. It is recommended to start with the section 'How can I gain a sense of career direction?'

Iwi communications

- Many iwi organisations have specific communication roles such as the ones listed in this brochure

Communications advisor / specialist

- Develop communication strategies, information and media for internal and externally organisational activities
- Research, write, edit and produce content for various audiences and mediums

Public relations officer, media assistant

- Manage the reputation of clients
- Liaise with and provide information to the media

Engagement / promotions / outreach coordinator

- Identify audiences and create diverse campaigns to increase engagement through various channels
- Develop strategies and organise events for positive interactions

Social media coordinator

- Manage social media accounts
- Create content and run social campaigns

Marketing executive, digital marketer

- Develop communication strategies, marketing campaigns, advertising and creative content
- Increase web traffic and digital engagement

Publisher / editor

- Edit and organise online and print materials
- Liaise with other staff to oversee production

Event manager / coordinator / assistant

- Turn event concepts into reality
- Plan, promote, run and evaluate events

Data analyst

- Identify trends and patterns within data
- Use data to inform potential business decisions

Copywriter

- Write and edit advertising material
- Follow clients brief and research product

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Executive account assistant
- Client / customer experience coordinator
- Brand executive
- Multimedia specialist
- Emergency Communicator
- Librarian
- Sales associate / coordinator
- Fundraising coordinator
- Merchandiser
- Teacher / tutor
- Teaching assistant.

Further study options

Completing a master's degree in a communication field can help students gain advanced skills in communication writing and editorial knowledge. This can help to prepare students for leading professional and business communication that may go out to large audience's or communities.

Further study may facilitate career benefits such as specialist skills, entry into a specific occupation, higher starting salary, faster progression rate, and advanced research capability.

It is important to determine which, if any, further study options align with future career aspirations.

For further UC study options visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study

How can I gain a sense of career direction?

Understanding yourself and others is important to gain a sense of direction. This grows with experience; therefore, trying new things and reflecting on an ongoing basis is important.

Career planning checklist

Discover and reflect on:

- Your values, interests, strengths, abilities, and aspirations
- Your connection to whānau, people, and places
- Lifestyle preferences and location
- The skills you want to gain, use, or enhance

Engage in a variety of experiences to learn about:

- How you want to contribute to society, the environment, and global challenges
- The tasks, responsibilities and work environments you prefer
- Your work values, priorities and interests

Learn more and gather career and study information

(refer to page one of this resource)

- Speak with people working in careers that interest you; check the realities of a job/career
- Gather information from various sources

Identify your next steps

- Talking to a career consultant can help you to identify your next steps. Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers



What have other students and graduates done?

Explore career stories of students' university experiences and UC alumni who make a difference globally in varied ways.

Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/about-uc/why-uc/our-students/student-stories



Laura

Communication advisor, Lyttelton Port Company

Bachelor of Arts majoring in Media and Communications with a minor in Marketing

How did you end up studying Communication?

When I started uni I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do. At high school I had enjoyed being creative and was good at English. I took a mixture of subjects starting out but settled on communication because it was creative and there was freedom within the degree. After my bachelors I did the Master of Strategic Communication which cemented what I wanted to do!

What are you doing now?

I am a communication advisor for Lyttelton Port Company. It's a new role and I communicate with a lot of different groups. I work on our newsletter which goes out to over 500 staff. I also work on our social media and internal communication such as dispersing health and safety information. An important part of my job is communicating with Banks Peninsula about what's happening at the port.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy that it's so varied and challenging. I have to work out what the best channels are to communicate effectively with different audiences. I talk to lots of different people every day and have some really interesting conversations. Communication is all about people!

What are your plans for the future?

When I finished uni I knew that I really wanted to work for a charity or community group. I would love to work on some of the big campaigns for fundraising or building awareness of issues. Right now I'm getting the experience and skills that I'll need for the future.

What would you say to anyone interested in a career in Communication?

Communication is a growing field and there's lots of different roles! It's fun, creative and so essential for companies. Keep an open mind as there's always going to be multiple ways to approach a task and you need to work out the best way to communicate that works for everyone. You need to be able to go with the flow and be adaptable! If you like writing and enjoy talking with people then communication is a great way to do both those things.

Career guidance

Career services are available for future and current students, and recent graduates. To learn more, contact:

Te Rōpū Rapuara | Careers

T: +64 3 369 0303

E: careers@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers

Helpful career insights

- Speaking with employers is key to finding opportunities; not all jobs are advertised
- Developing an online presence is useful as employers can search for future employees online
- Learning about recruitment patterns and where to find opportunities is important.

Study advice

Student Advisors at UC help with questions focused on starting, planning and changing studies. To connect with Student Advisors, visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/study-support-info/study-support

Future students – contact:

The Future Students team

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: futurestudents@canterbury.ac.nz

First year students – contact:

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