

What can I do with a degree in Cultural Studies?

Cultural Studies.



What is Cultural Studies?

In Cultural Studies, 'culture' is understood very broadly, but with a strong emphasis on everyday life.

Cultural Studies analyses many cultural forms: film and television, comics and graphic novels, advertising, art, new media, music, fashion, sport, leisure, and waiata to name just a few. These areas are shown to be extremely powerful political forces in shaping our societies and our identities.

The contemporary theories of culture view it as something dynamic, living and changeable. This leads to questions of how culture is produced, how we interpret culture, how culture can be preserved or destroyed.

Cultural Studies is interdisciplinary, drawing on the perspectives, methods, and theories of numerous fields of study. Students can focus their major on areas such as gender and sexuality, popular culture, human-animal studies, or build their own pathway.

Learn more

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

- Cultural Studies Association of Australasia
<http://csaa.asn.au>
- Association for Cultural Studies
www.cultstud.org
- New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies
www.canterbury.ac.nz/nzchas

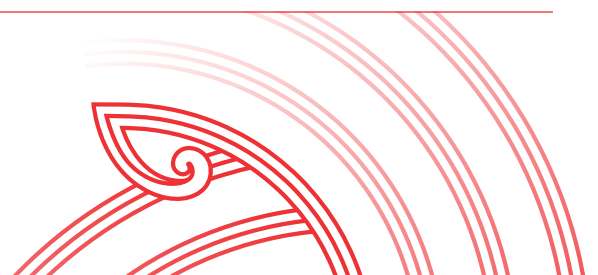
Career and study information

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/cultural-studies
- 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?

Through studying a degree in Cultural Studies, graduates develop a valuable set of skills and competencies transferable to a range of careers. These can include:

- Understanding how culture influences contemporary society
- Knowledge of contemporary cultural trends and theories
- Thinking critically and creatively, and challenging ideas
- Interpretive and analytical thinking
- Problem solving skills
- Bicultural understanding and multicultural awareness
- Oral and written communication
- Research and computing skills.

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?

A Cultural Studies degree can be constructed so that it is either:

- Generalised e.g. suited for a teaching career
- Specialised e.g. beneficial for digital, media, advocacy, digital humanities, bicultural, community, political, social, campaigning and environmental fields of work.

Cultural Studies leads to careers in fields where a wide analytic grasp of contemporary culture is required, for example:

- Media industries – such as journalism, publishing, writing, website design, advertising, public relations
- Museology or curatorship
- Teaching and education
- Advocacy or social services
- Travel and tourism
- Policy and governance
- Arts, event or project management.

Moving among such fields can be easy, due to the breadth and flexibility of a graduate's understanding of culture.

What jobs and activities might graduates do?

Graduates with this degree are employed in a range of jobs — 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?'

Policy analyst / advisor

- Identify and investigate issues and opportunities e.g. in society, law or governance
- Interpret and consult on existing policies
- Prepare reports and recommend changes

Community development worker

- Research the development needs of a group or community
- Provide practical solutions and create achievable plans
- Deliver programmes and community education

Advocate

- Build connections between individuals, communities and government
- Bring attention to issues, and influence decision-makers
- Communicate relevant information through public speaking, writing, or social media

Cultural or community support coordinator

- Administer support programmes for diverse groups e.g. refugees, youth, rainbow groups
- Help participants develop confidence and identify opportunities
- Build connections between people and agencies

Museum / art gallery curator

- Choose display items at museums or galleries
- Manage collections, exhibitions, and relationships with communities
- Conduct research and communicate details

Fundraising coordinator

- Help develop new income streams
- Grow support via communication and relationship-building activities
- Administer the contacts database

Digital content specialist, online editor

- Develop a brand's multi-channel marketing
- Increase web traffic and social media engagement
- Oversee digital marketing and online search

Tourism marketing officer

- Research consumer market and interests
- Manage customer networks and relationships
- Develop corporate brands and advertising media campaigns

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Accessible captioning coordinator
- Publisher/editor
- Technical writer
- Teacher
- Politics
- Advocate
- Social entrepreneur
- Arts administrator
- Community educator
- Translator, interpreter.

Further study options

Cultural Studies graduates can progress from honours through to PhD level in the subject. These degrees provide advanced research, project and writing skills. Postgraduate study can also lead to an academic career in teaching and research.

UC offers a number of postgraduate conversion qualifications e.g. in Teaching, Writing, Journalism, Policy and Governance, Social Work, Business, and Health Sciences.

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



Chloe

Community and Partnerships, Akimbo
Master of Social Work (Applied)
Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Studies and American Studies

What motivated you to study your degree?

When I first studied at Canterbury I completed a BA in Cultural Studies. I became fascinated with gender studies and as a young mum I began to take note of the inequality women experience in society.

What did you do after graduating with your BA?

I was a Parent Education Facilitator at Plunket. My role was to deliver parenting education information for first-time parents in a supportive environment. I aimed to connect parents and whānau with resources and activities available in their communities and promote positive parenting.

Why did you decide to come back to UC?

Working as a facilitator for Plunket I was constantly inspired by the mothers and parents I worked with. I became motivated to study more because I wanted a professional qualification that would enhance my career path and Social Work offered the kind of work I am interested in pursuing.

How did your studies inspire you to help others?

My main career goal is to work for an organisation that shares my passion for human rights and social justice. I wanted to get qualified so I can give back to my community and contribute towards positive change for the future.

As General Manager for Q-topia my studies have helped to develop my interests and skills in advocating for the recognition of gender and sexuality diversity, particularly in a health and social service context.

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:

Kaitoko | First Year Student Advisors
T: +64 3 369 0409
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