

# What can I do with a degree in French?

# French.



## What is French?

French is a truly international language and is useful in travel, culture, trade, science and sport on several continents. Knowing French can enhance one's employability in a global environment and create stronger intercultural communication in an increasingly digital world.

French culture is influential and its history fascinating. Studying French will offer students insight into the French-speaking world, which unites diverse cultural, linguistic, socio-political and religious groups: from Canada and the Caribbean, to our neighbours New Caledonia and Tahiti, as well as many French-speaking nations in Africa.

The French programme at UC offers courses to 400-level in French language, French and Francophone culture, as well as Translation Studies which incorporates a course on digital tools, thus future-proofing students from all disciplines with the skills and knowledge to better understand our world via stories and engage in work experiences.

## 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

- Te Rōpū Kaiwhakaako Reo o Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Language Teachers [www.nzalt.org.nz](http://www.nzalt.org.nz)
- Te Rōpū Kaiwhakamāori ā-waha, ā-tuhi o Aotearoa The New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters [www.nzsti.org](http://www.nzsti.org)
- Te Rōpū Kaiwhakaako Reo Ingarihi Ki Iwi Reo Kē TESOLANZ [www.tesolanz.org.nz](http://www.tesolanz.org.nz)
- Export New Zealand [www.exportnz.org.nz](http://www.exportnz.org.nz)

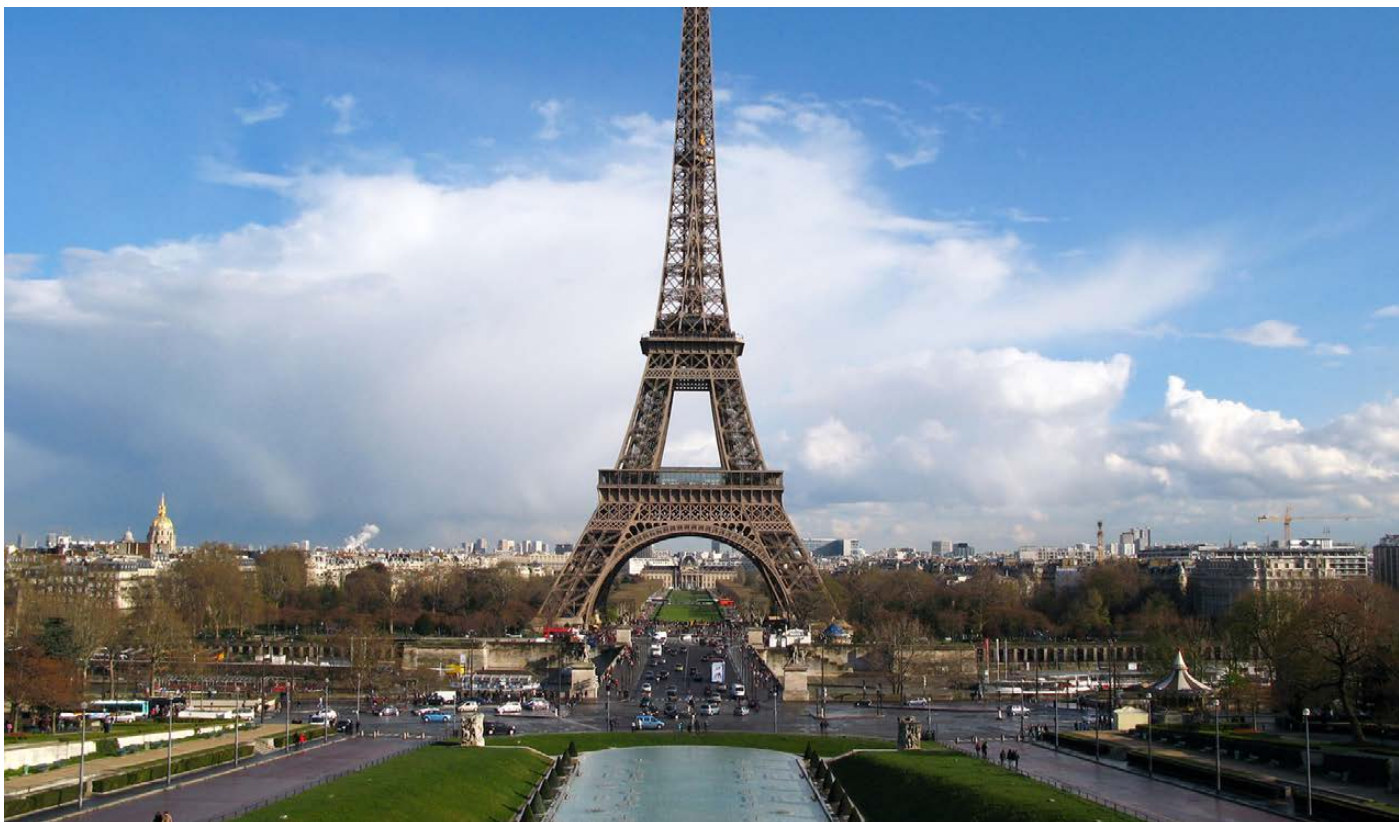
## Career and study information

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/french](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/subjects/french)
- Job profiles on career websites like [www.careers.govt.nz](http://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 French, graduates develop a valuable set of skills and competencies. These can include:

- Reading, writing, listening and speaking French
- Well-developed communication skills
- Interpretive and analytical thinking
- A better understanding of the global interactions which shape contemporary society
- Thinking critically and creatively, and challenging ideas
- Problem solving
- Research and computing
- Time management, planning and organisation.

### Practise your skills at work or in France

Applied learning opportunities are available through:

- Internships with potential employers
- Immersive experiences in French language and culture, including study exchange partnership programmes with universities in France and the Pacific.

These experiences can deepen graduates' skillset, working knowledge, and employability.

### 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](http://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 degree in French can lead to a variety of career options, for example:

- Focusing on language or linguistics-related fields such as immigration, language teaching, interpreting/translating
- Entering a vast array of sectors that value the transferable skills of graduates, such as librarianship, policy and governance, international relations
- A popular combination is the study of a European language such as French with that of a professional degree such as Law, Accounting or Teaching and Learning.

As one of the world's important languages, French opens doors to careers in:

- Diplomacy
- Journalism
- Media and communications
- Education
- Trade
- Tourism
- Research
- Culture
- Legal services
- Business.

## 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

### Secondary school teacher

- Prepare and deliver learning experiences in specialised subjects
- Understand the learning needs of rangatahi, observe progress to personalise support
- Promote the wellbeing of rangatahi

### Teacher of English for speakers of other languages

- Assess a student's reading, writing, speaking and listening skills and needs
- Design and prepare learning materials
- Present lessons, including on local knowledge and skills for coping in a new place

### Investment banker

- Provide strategic advice and specialist knowledge to meet a client's financial goals
- Assist clients to increase profits, manage debts, raise capital and secure deals
- Work with other professionals e.g. lawyers

### Diplomat, foreign policy officer

- Promote New Zealand's interests overseas
- Report on affairs and develop foreign and trade policies
- Liaise with local authorities and negotiate agreements with other countries

### Research analyst

- Organise and conduct research
- Test theories and interpret the results
- Write reports and make recommendations

### Customer support consultant

- Provide the first point of contact for customers
- Engage and listen to customers
- Answer enquiries and discuss solutions

### Librarian

- Categorise and catalogue library materials
- Select materials for library use
- Help customers find and use materials

### Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Technical writer
- International and domestic business roles – sales, marketing, trade, supply chain, finance and HR
- Journalism – foreign correspondent, reporter, news editor, multimedia specialist
- Tourism - travel agent, tour guide, flight attendant, travel insurance
- Government agencies and departments – diplomat, foreign policy officer, analyst, case manager
- Education and research – tertiary lecturer, research assistant, language teacher.

## Further study options

Graduates can prepare for a career through further study e.g. in Teaching and Learning, Applied Data Science, or in other areas such as Business.

French graduates can progress into many higher programmes, from honours through to PhD level. UC also offers master's degrees in Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Many allow you to carry out research or project work.

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](http://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](http://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](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/about-uc/why-uc/our-students/student-stories)



### Charlotte

Principle Advisor – Integrated Strategy,  
Gisborne District Council

Bachelor of Arts with Honours in European Studies  
Bachelor of Arts in French and Political Science

### What motivated you to study the subjects you did?

I liked the variety of courses in a BA. It was nice to pursue a diverse range of interests under a single degree. I really liked French at school so I decided to continue with it at university. I decided on European Studies for my Honours due to the fact that I am interested in such a diverse range of topics. The course was interdisciplinary which allowed you the freedom to study things you love.

### How does French tie in with European Studies?

I researched French-New Zealand political relations for my dissertation which was really exciting as it was not a widely researched area. It allowed me to use what I had learnt from my BA in French and Political Science. It was really cool being able to look at research material written in both French and English which allowed me to look at my dissertation from two totally different viewpoints in some cases.

### What are your career goals?

I would love to work as a New Zealand diplomat in France or as an analyst for a government department. There are a ton of opportunities in the policy and governance space and my career path can take so many different roads which is one of the things I love most. Continuing with French at university has provided me with so many opportunities already and it definitely increases the type and number of jobs I can apply for in the future.

### Any notable achievements outside of your degree while at UC?

I tutored students in the beginner French courses at UC and I helped set up the Political Science club UCPols, of which I was the Embezzler (Treasurer) in the following year. UCPols was a lot of work at times but it was worth the time and effort I put in to see it still flourishing today. It is one of my university achievements that I am most proud of.

## 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](mailto:careers@canterbury.ac.nz)

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers](http://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](http://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](mailto:futurestudents@canterbury.ac.nz)

### First year students – contact:

Kaitoko | First Year Student Advisors

T: +64 3 369 0409

E: [firstyearadvice@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:firstyearadvice@canterbury.ac.nz)

### Continuing students – contact:

Toi Tangata | Arts

T: +64 3 369 3377

E: [artsdegreeadvice@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:artsdegreeadvice@canterbury.ac.nz)

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/arts](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/arts)

