

What can I do with a degree in History?

History.



What is History?

History is more than the study of the past; it is a living creative act. History explores past events in order to inform us about who we are and what is happening today. History gives us our cultural roots. It helps us understand ourselves, our neighbours, our nation, other cultures and the world, enabling us to become truly global citizens. We learn a lot from history, and this knowledge helps us to avoid the mistakes of the past and make better decisions for the future, just as we learn from our own experiences.

Studying History supplies students with the skills to analyse complex evidence, present evidence-based arguments and put things in perspective. Such skills developed from studying History can be applied in many careers, as well as to all walks of life.

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

- New Zealand Historical Association
www.nzha.org.nz
- Professional Historians Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa
www.phanza.org.nz
- Canterbury Historical Association
www.chf.org.nz
- Te Rangapū Kaihikohiko o Aotearoa New Zealand Society of Genealogists
www.genealogy.org.nz
- Te Kete Kōrero-A-Waha O Te Motu National Oral History Association of New Zealand
www.oralhistory.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/history
- 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?

History graduates have a distinctive mix of skills which are useful in almost any job involving discovery, analysis, interpretation, independent thought and communication. These skills can include:

- Analytical and critical thinking
- Consideration of multiple perspectives, materials and outcomes
- Ability to make balanced, impartial judgements
- Oral and written communication
- Research
- Digital and computing skills
- Problem solving
- Planning and organisation
- Resilience and adaptability.

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?

History graduates enjoy a variety of destinations. Graduates have been employed in:

- Education e.g. tertiary sector and high schools
- Libraries e.g. Christchurch City Libraries, Alexander Turnbull Library
- Regional councils and affiliates e.g. Auckland Council, Environment Canterbury
- Heritage organisations e.g. Auckland War Memorial Museum, Archives New Zealand
- Media and publishing e.g. TVNZ, Meta Digital
- New Zealand government e.g. Ministries; the Treasury; Parliament; Department of Internal Affairs; the New Zealand Defence Force; Inland Revenue
- Treaty of Waitangi administrative bodies e.g. the Waitangi Tribunal Unit, Office for Māori Crown Relations – Te Arawhiti
- Non-government organisations e.g. Asia New Zealand Foundation
- Not-for-profits e.g. NZCare Disability
- Private companies in tourism, archaeology, insurance, legal, IT, and other sectors.

Graduates have found work in other countries such as Australia, UK and the USA.

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

Librarian

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

Communications / media advisor, journalist

- Develop information, media and communication strategies
- Research, write, edit and produce content

Archivist

- Store and organise materials
- Advise organisations on what to keep and how
- Maintain and update databases

Museum officer

- Plan museum programmes
- Ensure security of items and arrange logistics
- Inform museum visitors

Heritage manager / advisor

- Organise the maintenance, renovation and conservation of heritage buildings
- Market the building to attract visitors
- Gain income from commercial use e.g., events

Author / writer

- Research and write stories, articles, scripts, poems, instructions or plays to entertain/inform
- Work with a publisher or producer to promote and disseminate it

Publisher / editor

- Plan and commission content for publication
- Edit and organise online and print materials
- Liaise with other staff to oversee production

Research assistant

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

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

Historian

- Analyse sources to uncover the history of a period, place, person, group or aspect
- Publish findings and share knowledge
- Maintain historical records.

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Graduate analyst
- Historic buildings inspector/conservation officer
- Public administrator
- Technical writer
- Digital marketing assistant
- Social media coordinator
- Business support consultant
- Client manager
- Lecturer.

Further study options

History graduates can progress their studies from honours through to PhD level. Postgraduate study can also lead to an academic career pathway in teaching and research.

Many Arts graduates do additional training in teaching, journalism, policy, international relations, librarianship or management.

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



Dan

Kāi Tahu, Kāti Mamoe, Waitaha, Rapuwai
Historian, Office of Treaty Settlements,
New Zealand Ministry of Justice | Tāhū o te Ture,
Wellington

Bachelor of Arts with Honours in History
Bachelor of Arts in English and History

What did your work involve with the Ministry of Justice?

I got to assist iwi with their claim and the settlement process. I researched and wrote about the history of Māori and Pākehā in 19th and 20th Century Aotearoa. I looked at history every day with a great team of historians; and the Turnbull Library and Archives NZ were just across the road!

How did UC grow your love for history?

I was a summer scholar on the www.voicesagainstwar.nz public history website team. It was an absolutely fantastic experience. I am a big fan of Christchurch's radical history! It taught me how to research and write, take on board feedback and improve my work, and why history (especially local history!) is so important.

The UC History Department and the Canterbury History Foundation also supported me to present at an Auckland GLAM conference; it was a great experience, and I'd highly recommend presenting your research at a conference if you get the chance. They also organised for me to review a book for the NZ International Review – definitely say yes to that opportunity if it arises, it's led to several more reviewing opportunities and several free books!

What do you recommend to prepare for being a historian?

Say yes to every extra opportunity that's on offer. Essays and marks are important, but it's the real world experience that'll get you employed. Give presentations, write reviews, join local history groups, and try and get involved in one of those summer scholarship projects!

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
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