

What can I do with a degree in Primary Teacher Education?

Primary Teacher Education.



What is Primary Teacher Education?

Teaching at a primary level provides an opportunity to discover the potential of each child, encourage their learning (perhaps beginning a lifelong appreciation of it) and provide important relationships and experiences that will make a real difference to their lives.

Primary teachers teach all school subjects to tamariki in Years 1 to 8 (ages 5 to 13). For those people who are energetic, committed, creative, have good literacy and numeracy skills and enjoy working with children, teaching is a positive and varied career to consider.

Primary Teacher Education is a professional educational pathway that meets the requirements of the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. For those interested in enrolling in Teacher Education programmes, search for available TeachNZ scholarships.

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 teachers to learn more about:

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

Examples of professional bodies

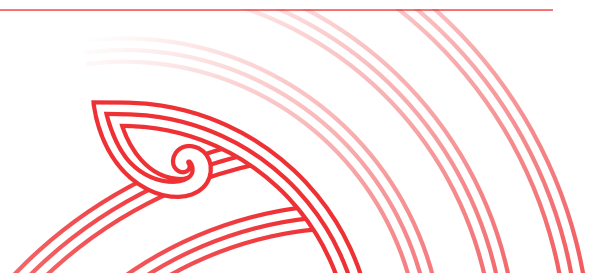
- Te Riu Roa NZEI www.nzei.org.nz
- Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand www.teachingcouncil.nz
- New Zealand Association of Science Educators <https://nzase.org.nz>
- Technology Education New Zealand (TENZ) www.tenz.org.nz
- New Zealand Literacy Association <https://nzla.org.nz>
- New Zealand Association of Mathematics Teachers www.nzamt.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/primary-teaching
- Job profiles on career websites like www.careers.govt.nz
- Job adverts/vacancy descriptions
- Industry professional bodies.





What skills can graduates gain?

Through studying a Primary Teacher Education qualification, graduates develop a valuable set of skills and competencies, which can include:

- Knowledge of child development
- Knowledge of teaching and learning processes
- Patience, positive attitude and flexibility
- Time-management, planning and organisation
- Teamwork and willingness to learn
- Oral and written communication
- Problem solving, initiating and challenging ideas
- Thinking critically and creatively
- Interpretive and analytical thinking.

Applied Learning

Applied learning opportunities are available through Professional learning experiences (school placements) with community school partners. These experiences deepen graduates' skillset, awareness of others, and working knowledge. Additionally, the contacts and experiences from teaching placements can often provide a good springboard into the working world.

What do employers look for?

Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, 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 and technological literacy.*

*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?

Primary Teacher Education graduates gain teaching and management positions in various schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, including:

- Primary
- Kura kaupapa
- Intermediate
- Area schools.

There are also international teaching opportunities, for example in the UK and Australia, or in international schools around the world.

As well as opportunities in the education sector, teaching skills of leadership, communication, coordination, responsibility and organisation are valued in many professions such as policy, advocacy, publishing, community work, governance and administration, politics, management, and business.

Graduates can work anywhere from an early intervention centre, a drama centre to the Ministry of Education.

What jobs and activities might graduates do?

Graduates of UC's Primary Teacher Education programmes will be eligible for provisional registration, enabling them to apply for primary teaching positions in Aotearoa New Zealand.

See some job 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?'

Primary school teacher

- Plan and prepare learning experiences
- Teach and track learning of English, maths, science, technology, health & PE, the arts, social studies, and languages with potential to lead in a curriculum area
- Help develop children's social skills and self-management behaviours

Kaiwhakaako Māori | Māori-medium teacher

- Provide Māori medium education by developing te reo and tikanga
- Collaborate with whānau and iwi
- Prepare learning experiences and build relationships

Private tutor

- Develop a student's subject understanding
- Maintain knowledge of the curriculum
- Prepare students for assignments or tests

In-home educator

- Support a child's development in the home
- Plan and supervise daily activities

Educator, kaiako

- In various settings i.e. museum, art gallery, zoo, life education charity
- Develop and facilitate engaging learning experiences
- Mentor, support and provide guidance
- Advocate for educational progress

Teacher of English for speakers of other languages, ESOL teacher

- Teach English skills, including speaking, listening, reading, writing
- Foster inclusive, culturally sensitive learning experiences
- Monitor learning progress and personalise instruction

Special education / early intervention teacher

- Teach children with diverse learning needs
- Evaluate special needs, working with whānau and teachers to develop suitable learning plans

Review / quality assurance officer

- Check legality of a school's policies/practices
- Report findings and makes recommendations
- Assess use of funding

Drama teacher / music specialist

- Teach skills to individuals or small groups
- Plan lessons according to students' abilities
- Prepare students for exams or performances

Leadership positions

- Team leader
- Director of curriculum and instruction
- Deputy / vice / assistant principal

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Learning specialist
- Play specialist
- Child advocate
- Child and youth worker
- Fieldworker, community / family support officer
- Teacher assistant or teacher aide
- Physical activity activator
- Public programmes facilitator
- School liaison officer
- Supply teacher
- Project administrator
- Tutor
- Au Pair.

Further study options

Master's and doctoral studies allow graduates to focus on an area of interest. Higher study is also a pathway to an academic career. UC also offers higher qualifications in areas such as Māori Bilingual and Immersion Teaching and TESOL.

For those who already have a bachelor's degree that is not in education or teaching, a UC postgraduate qualification in primary teaching is available.

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



Jess

Primary School Teacher, Ferndale School

Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning (Primary)

What motivated you to become a Primary School Teacher?

I love working with kids and I find teaching so rewarding. I always knew I wanted a job that was interesting, ever changing and that would challenge me to learn and grow. I worked as a summer camp counsellor growing up so this seemed like the natural progression!

What did you most enjoy about your studies?

I enjoyed learning theories behind teaching in Aotearoa and how they could be put into practice. I enjoyed participating in activities that we would ideally teach to a group of students. They got me excited to teach and really helped me to visualise using the activities in the classroom.

How would you describe a typical workday of a Primary School Teacher?

I work in a specialist education class, so it's very different to what you might imagine primary teaching to be. A lot of my day is focused around teaching communication, emotional regulation, life skills, and functional literacy and maths.

What are the challenges of being a Primary School Teacher?

In my class we face a variety of challenges, from big to small. Often behaviour management and keeping kids motivated to learn are the biggest day to day challenges.

Why should others consider Teaching as a career?

Teaching is fun! My day is made every day by the happy students in my class. I am always learning new things in order to help them learn, grow and become the best they can be.

Do you have any advice for those thinking about becoming a Primary School Teacher?

It is rewarding, challenging and fun, and the relationships that you build along the way make it all worth it.

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

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

