

What can I do with a degree in Russian?

Russian.



What is Russian?

Russian is an important world language, spoken by some 150 million people, and is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Russian culture is especially rich and fascinating.

With the opening of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union the world has become smaller. The most important parts of Russia industrially and strategically – East Siberia and the south-east Russian Far East, the regions closest to Aotearoa New Zealand – have opened up for independent trade, business and cultural contacts with Russia's eastern and southern neighbours. For the first time direct business contacts have become possible between Aotearoa New Zealand and Russia.

Many of the best western experts in Russian affairs started as Russian language and literature students; it is they who largely define western policies towards Russia in America, the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

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 Association of Language Teachers www.nzalt.org.nz
- New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters Inc www.nzsti.org
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Aotearoa New Zealand www.tesolanz.org.nz
- Export New Zealand www.exportnz.org.nz

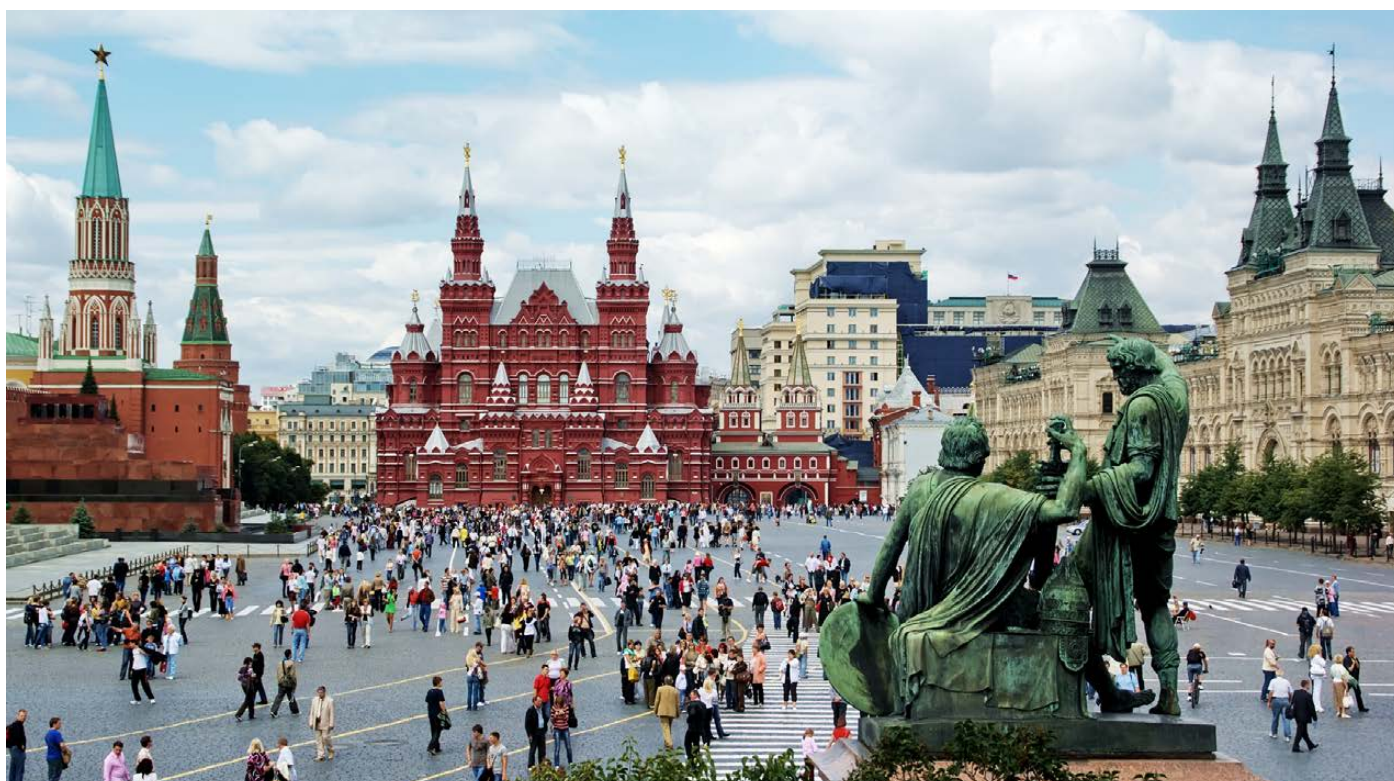
Career and study information

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/russian
- 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 Russian, graduates develop a valuable set of skills and competencies. These can include:

- Reading, writing, listening and speaking Russian
- Translation and facilitating connections between individuals and/or groups
- Well-developed communication skills
- A better understanding of the global interactions which shape contemporary society
- Interpretive and analytical thinking
- Thinking critically and creatively, and challenging ideas
- Problem solving
- Research and computing
- Familiarity with both modern and traditional culture and society.

Practise skills at work or in Russia

Applied learning opportunities are available through internships with potential employers, and immersive experiences in Russian language and culture through an exchange programme with the School of Translation and Interpretation at Moscow State University.

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 is 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 degree in Russian can lead to a variety of career options, for example:

- Focusing on language or linguistics-related fields such as immigration, diplomacy, sales, trade, language teaching, interpreting/translating, travel and tourism
- Entering any of the vast array of sectors that value the transferable skills of graduates, such as policy and governance, transport, distribution, import/export, sales, research, social services, communications, library and information services, and cultural heritage, international relations
- Graduates also find roles in educational institutions at all levels
- A popular combination is the study of a European language such as Russian alongside a degree such as Law.

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?'

Interpreter

- Translate spoken language from one language to another, often simultaneously
- Keep abreast of up-to-date meaning of words
- Research specialist topics, travel with groups and present to different audiences

Translator

- Convey source text into the target language
- Research terminology, technical words and language trends
- Often work as part of a team of translators

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

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

Tertiary lecturer

- Prepare and give lectures and tutorials
- Set and mark assignments and exams
- Conduct research, write and publish articles

Publisher, editor, content specialist

- Plan, commission or write content to publish
- Evaluate, edit and organise material for multiple formats — online and in print
- Liaise with other staff to oversee production

Business advisor

- Prepare business plans, annual reports and other leadership documents
- Ensure that business processes are fit for purpose and continuously improving
- Advise, support and connect stakeholders
- Build capability of groups in an organisation

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- International and domestic business – 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 – analyst, case manager
- Education and research – research assistant, language teacher.

Further study options

Graduates can prepare for a career through further study e.g. in Teaching and Learning, Information Systems, Policy and Governance, or in other areas such as Business.

Russian 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

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



Ewen

New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, London

Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Russian
Bachelor of Arts in Chinese and Russian

When did you first discover Russian?

I spent 10 months on an AFS student exchange programme in Hungary. I picked up Russian while living there as my host mother was an English and Russian teacher. I learnt a lot from her and from the teachers at the school I attended. I can also speak and write semi-fluent Hungarian.

How was your experience studying Russian at UC?

UC offered an ideal modern languages department. All the teachers that I had throughout my degrees have been very helpful and resourceful. My classes were quite small and that made for more enjoyable learning as opposed to hugely populated classrooms.

Did you go on an exchange as a UC student?

I studied at the Lomonosov Moscow State University for a semester as part of a new exchange programme opened up by my lecturer Evgeny Pavlov with the university in Moscow and the University of Canterbury.

How has studying Russian helped with your career goals?

I hope to one day have a career that will involve speaking foreign languages or working at an embassy representing New Zealand. Now I use Russian at work and often have to phone people in Russia or Azerbaijan for verification purposes.

What are some of the benefits of learning Russian?

Russian is an important language to learn, especially as Russia is now very resurgent economically and politically. I've recently been to Georgia and Kyrgyzstan where I only used Russian and had a great time as opposed to being a typical westerner only knowing English.

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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