

What can I do with a degree in Law?

Law.



Career planning: what do I need to know?

Knowledge of yourself is important for career decision making. Start by looking at your personal goals, abilities, values and interests to explore study and career options that are relevant to you. Some of these may change over time, so it is important to self-reflect and evaluate your career on an ongoing basis.

What do employers look for?

Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, customer-focus, bicultural competence, cultural awareness and teamwork. With technology and globalisation changing the nature of society, skills such as resilience, problem solving and adaptability are valuable at work as well as in life.

How can I develop these skills?

- Some skills are developed through your degree

- Extra-curricular activities can help, for example getting involved in clubs, mentoring, cultural groups, part-time work or volunteering
- Be open to professional and personal development opportunities. Whether it is undertaking an internship, overseas exchange, skills seminar, or joining an industry group – these activities will enhance your employability.

What else should I know?

The career options in this brochure are examples only and the list is not exhaustive. Some careers may require further study beyond a first degree or additional work experience. Some pathways and degrees have a recommended school background.

Find more subject details at
www.canterbury.ac.nz/law

If this brochure does not answer your questions, talking to an expert such as a career consultant can help you to identify the next steps in your career decision making journey.

www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers

What is Law?

Legal professionals have to think critically, analyse complex facts and issues and persuade through logical argument. They work with statutes, cases and other legal materials. Lawyers understand the law within its wider social, political and historical context.

Legal professionals are employed in a range of legal-specific jobs including as a solicitor, prosecutor or law clerk. The transferable skill set of legal professionals allow them to work across different professions, for example, as consultants, advisors, policy analysts or even publishers.

Legal professionals may choose to work in a specialised field of law. Specific to Aotearoa New Zealand are legal issues pertaining to Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi. Work in this domain requires specialist understanding of tikanga Māori.

Many Law students study towards a double degree as it combines easily with Arts, Commerce, Criminal Justice, Science and even Music or Sport Coaching.



AT A GLANCE

51.3% of practising lawyers in 2019 were women*

1200 lawyers volunteer in Community Law Centres around Aotearoa New Zealand

3.8% growth in the employment of lawyers is expected by 2023**

What skills have UC graduates gained?

Through their degree, Law graduates develop a valuable set of skills and attributes that are transferable to a range of careers. This set includes:

- Analysing, evaluating, critiquing, and synthesising a variety of information types
- Applying a sense of justice and basic principles of fairness and professional ethics
- Problem solving, exercising judgment and making reasoned decisions
- Understanding Aotearoa New Zealand law principles and placing them in a global context
- Oral and written communication skills
- Presentation skills
- Self-management and collaboration skills
- Acquiring new knowledge as the law develops
- Hard work and ability to meet deadlines.

Applied learning

Opportunities to apply your knowledge and skills are available in this degree, through internships, student competitions, and volunteering. These experiences deepen your skillset, awareness of others, working knowledge, and employability. They can also inform your learning and skill development in the classroom.

Where have UC graduates been employed?

Legal profession

Many people study Law as a means of entering the legal profession as a barrister and/or solicitor.

Another consideration is where to work – it is worth thinking about questions such as:

- Would you like to be a solicitor for a legal firm?
- Do you want to work as an ‘in-house’ lawyer for an iwi or in the legal department of a private or public sector organisation?
- Or is a self-employed Barrister-sole more you?
- Would you like to work in Māori Law teams negotiating settlements in the Waitangi Tribunal?
- So you want to work for a large national or small provincial practice?

Law-related careers

Graduates can follow other law-related careers. For example, as a policy officer in government such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade, or Internal Affairs. Other public sector employers are the Police, Probation, Corrections, Office of Treaty Settlements, Customs and Immigration services.

In the private sector Law graduates have skills which are highly valued in finance and business. Alumni can also be found working in media or publishing, health and safety, advocacy, education, research and advisory roles.

* NZLS Snapshot of the Profession 2019

** 2019 MBIE Occupational Outlook

What jobs and activities do graduates do?

Law graduates have a range of jobs available to them — see some examples below.

Note: Some of the jobs listed may require postgraduate study. See the 'Further study' section.

Legal practice – barrister / solicitor

- Provides legal advice or legal opinions to clients and sometimes other lawyers
- Prepares documents for court cases
- Makes submissions on behalf of clients
- Represents clients in negotiations, disputes and in court cases
- Drafts legal documents such as commercial contracts, wills, leases etc
- Provides conveyancing services including helping clients buy and sell property
- Specialises in different areas of legal practice such as family, commercial, criminal or civil litigation, immigration and refugee, resource and environmental management, trusts etc

Government policy analyst / advisor, public sector lawyer

- Identifies and investigates issues and opportunities eg, in society, law or governance
- Interprets and consults on existing policies
- Reports on, and proposes changes to, the law

Legal advisor / in-house lawyer

- Administers the legal aspects of a company
- Prepares and interprets legal documents including contracts
- Ensures regulatory compliance eg, on safety

Māori resource advisor

- Assesses claims under the Treaty of Waitangi
- Applies natural resource law to Māori resources

Court officer

- Ensures successful operation of a court
- Serves court attendees and processes files
- Takes court and schedules proceedings

Community lawyer

- Provides legal advice for those who may not otherwise have access to it, often at low cost
- Connects clients with resources
- Writes reports and recommendations

Prosecutor – Police / Crown

- Conducts legal proceedings for some criminal, traffic and youth prosecutions
- Advocates for police at coroner's inquests

- Supports police districts at hearings
- Conducts proceedings in crown prosecutions
- Advises and represents the government on cases that affect all New Zealanders

Public defence lawyer

- Helps people access justice in criminal matters
- Defends clients in criminal court

Judge's clerk

- Researches and prepares opinions for the judge
- Oversees the processing of all judgments
- Administers meetings and helps write speeches

Entrepreneur & self-employment

Entrepreneurship and innovation are an increasing part of the working landscape. Through generating a business idea, or getting involved in a start-up/business venture, you have the potential to create a work opportunity that aligns with your knowledge, skills, values and risk profile. To get started on how to establish, run and grow a new business, go to Te Pokapū Rakahinonga, Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Canterbury www.canterbury.ac.nz/uce www.canterbury.ac.nz/uce

What professional organisations can I engage with?

Admission to the bar

In Aotearoa New Zealand, to practice as a Barrister or Solicitor, or call yourself a 'lawyer', you must:

- Gain a Bachelor of Laws degree at university
- Complete a practical legal training course
- Pass a character check
- Gain admission to the bar.



Professional and industry organisations

Connecting with professional bodies and organisations can help you to establish professional networks and learn more about different career options in your area of interest. Gaining valuable insight into a profession can assist in making informed career decisions.

- Te Kāhui Teru o Aotearoa The New Zealand Law Society www.lawsociety.org.nz
- Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa Māori Law Society www.maorilawsociety.co.nz
- New Zealand Bar Association www.nzbar.org.nz
- Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi Public Service Association www.psa.org.nz
- In-house Lawyers Association www.ilanz.org.nz
- Arbitrators' and Mediators' Institute of NZ Inc www.aminz.org.nz

Having a professional presence on social media networks such as www.linkedin.com and Facebook can help you to keep up to date with important industry developments and trends, networking opportunities, events and job vacancies.

Why do further study and what are my options?

Postgraduate study can facilitate career benefits such as specialist knowledge, entry into an occupation, higher starting salary, and advanced research capability.

Further law-related postgraduate degrees include the Master of Laws, Master of Laws (International Law and Politics), and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Postgraduate study can lead to an academic career.

For qualification listings in Law and other disciplines visit www.canterbury.ac.nz/courses

Useful links

- Te Rōpū Rapuara UC Careers www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers
- Careers New Zealand www.careers.govt.nz
- Community Law Canterbury www.canlaw.org.nz

Millie Bidwill



Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resource Management
Completed an internship with Department of Corrections
Graduate, Russell McVeagh

What was it like completing a project at Corrections?

Every day was different and I had to work to tight deadlines. An average day could involve drafting memos advising a judge how to sentence, or analysing trial submissions on evidence issues, or providing a bench brief for a complex civil fixture.

Project management is an area that one does not often get the opportunity to develop in the early stages of their career. In particular, in the Human Resource Management industry, projects are generally headed by external bodies that are experts in that particular field of change management. To be given the opportunity to head my own project, essentially independently, with little monitoring, is something not many Graduates have to their name. As touched upon, it was a completely unique and foreign experience for me, that pushed me out of my comfort zone of academic assignments. It provided an insight into what project management entails.

What skills did you gain from your project work at Corrections?

It has helped me develop a set of skills that not all graduates would have had the chance to

develop in the conventional University course. In particular, interviewing skills. Having to interview a set of people that were much older than me and likely have worked longer than I have been alive, was daunting. I was conscious to ensure every question was a valuable one and that I remained professional throughout. Now, at the end of my project, I believe I have the confidence in myself to carry out interviews again in a new job

What is your plan now you've graduated?

I will be working as a Graduate at Russell McVeagh in the Banking and Finance Team with a particular focus on project financing. As well as this area, I will be doing some work in the Corporate Team in the area of mergers and acquisitions

Read more online

Read Rachael's full story about her experience online. UC alumni make a difference in varied ways around the globe – to find out where Law graduates are now visit www.canterbury.ac.nz/get-started/why-uc/student-profiles/

The information in this brochure was correct at the time of print but is subject to change.

More information

UC students seeking study advice.

Ture | Law

The School has a strong reputation in the traditional areas of law as well as being at the forefront in emerging areas such as Antarctic legal studies, media law, and law and sport. Practical courses in interning and trial advocacy are also offered. We are proud of the School's collegial atmosphere, which includes active students' societies and a busy calendar of events. To find out more, come and see us.

T: +64 3 369 3888

E: law-enquiries@canterbury.ac.nz

www.laws.canterbury.ac.nz

Anyone seeking careers advice.

Te Rōpū Rapuara | UC Careers

UC offers intending and current students and recent graduates a wide range of services, including individual career guidance, seminars, career resources and student and graduate employment opportunities.

T: +64 3 369 0303

E: careers@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers

Prospective students seeking study advice.

Te Rōpū Takawaenga | Student Liaison

The liaison team provide advice to future students who are starting their degree for the first time.

They can assist with information on degrees, scholarships, accommodation, and other aspects of university life. We have offices in Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington.

Ōtautahi | Christchurch

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: liaison@canterbury.ac.nz

Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland

T: 0800 UCAUCK

E: auckland@canterbury.ac.nz

Te Whanganui-a-Tara | Wellington

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: wellington@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/liaison

