

# What can I do with a degree in Sociology?

# Sociology.



## 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/subjects/soci](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/subjects/soci)

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](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers)

## What is Sociology?

If you want to study how the modern world came to be the way it is, what is happening and why, and what alternatives are possible, Sociology is for you. Sociology is a craft, a vocation and to study and engage with the subject can be a transformative experience. Once you have acquired a sociological imagination you will never be able to see the world in quite the same way again.

Sociologists investigate the structure of societies, organisations, groups and everyday lives. Their subject matter ranges from the intimacy of the family to criminal gangs, and from rugby games to rock festivals.



## AT A GLANCE

**\$150k**

\$150k is the top wage a senior policy analyst might expect\*

**150,630**

150,630 people were employed by non-profit institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2018\*\*

## What skills have UC graduates gained?

Through their Sociology degree, graduates develop a valuable set of skills that are transferable to a range of careers. These skills include:

- Thinking critically, creatively, and challenging ideas
- Understanding the influences of human behaviour
- Logical and quantitative thinking
- Practical application of sociological theory
- Problem solving skills
- Interpretive and analytical thinking
- Oral and written communication
- Research and computing.

Opportunities to apply your learning outside the classroom are available, for example undertaking an internship can deepen your skillset, awareness of others, working knowledge and employability.

## Where have UC graduates been employed?

UC graduates have been employed in:

- Government eg, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development, Inland Revenue, Ashburton District Council, Christchurch City Council, Parliamentary Service, Office for the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
- Social work and counselling services eg, Child & Family Specialty Service, Lifeline Christchurch, Odyssey House Youth Programme
- Corrections eg, NZ Police, Community Probation Service
- Banking and financial services eg, ANZ, Deloitte
- Research companies eg, Clarity Research
- Education eg, University of Canterbury, Ara Institute of Technology, UC Community Education
- Iwi eg, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- Private companies in retail, healthcare, legal, energy, software, media, human resources, debt collection, training, insurance, manufacturing, and other sectors.

\* [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)

\*\* [www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/the-contribution-of-non-profit-institutions-in-new-zealand](http://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/the-contribution-of-non-profit-institutions-in-new-zealand)

## What jobs and activities do graduates do?

Graduates with this degree are employed in a range of jobs — see some examples below.

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

### Social researcher

- Designs and develops research projects
- Uses a range of quantitative and qualitative methods to gain insight
- Analyses data and findings to write reports

### Policy analyst / advisor

- Identifies and investigates issues and opportunities eg, in society, law or governance
- Interprets and consults on existing policies
- Prepares reports and recommends changes

### Research analyst / advisor

- Organises and conducts research
- Develops and tests theories, interprets results
- Writes reports, makes recommendations and publishes research

### Social worker

- Supports and guides individuals and whānau
- Builds relationships and links people to resources, services, groups and events
- Writes reports and coordinates budgets

### Analyst

- Collects, analyses and interprets data
- Identifies and forecasts trends and needs
- Presents information to assist decision-making

### Market researcher

- Develops research strategies
- Analyses and evaluates results and information
- Provides advice and recommendations

### Advocate

- Advises and represents individuals, groups or a cause
- Examines and drafts contracts
- Provides relevant information to clients

### Human resources advisor

- Advertises vacancies and recruits staff
- Advises on workplace policies and procedures
- May oversee staff development, health and safety, pay and reward etc.

### Counsellor

- Supports a client to talk about their feelings and experiences
- Listens to and reflects upon the client's issues
- Raises self-awareness and understanding
- Discusses options and assists the client to make choices

### Probation officer

- Manages, supervises and monitors the behaviour of offenders
- Provides assessments of an offender's likelihood of recidivism and suitability for parole
- Enables and monitors access to services and programmes

### 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](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/uce)

## What professional organisations can I engage with?

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.



- Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand [www.saanz.net](http://www.saanz.net)
- The Australian Sociological Association [www.tasa.org.au](http://www.tasa.org.au)
- The International Sociological Association [www.isa-sociology.org](http://www.isa-sociology.org)

Having a professional presence on social media networks such as [www.linkedin.com](http://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. Following relevant professional bodies, organisations, companies and thought leaders is a great way to gain a deeper awareness of the industries that interest you. Social media presents an opportunity to build and enhance networks as well as to display your involvement in projects and any academic successes.

## Why do further study and what are my options?

Postgraduate study can facilitate career benefits such as specialist skills, entry into a specific occupation, faster progression rate, and advanced research capability. It is important to determine which, if any, further study will help you in your future career.

Sociology graduates can progress their studies from honours right through to PhD level. These degrees provide advanced research, project and writing skills. Postgraduate study can also lead to an academic career in teaching and research.

UC offers a range of conversion qualifications eg, in Teaching and Learning, Social Work, Journalism, Applied Data Science, Policy and Governance, Business Management, Counselling, and Māori and Indigenous Leadership. For listings and prerequisites visit [www.canterbury.ac.nz/courses](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/courses)

## Useful links

- Te Rōpū Rapuara UC Careers [www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers)
- Careers New Zealand [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)
- State sector jobs [www.jobs.govt.nz](http://www.jobs.govt.nz)

## Annabel



Bachelor of Arts in Human Services and Sociology and a Bachelor of Criminal Justice; Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Sociology  
Coronial Case Manager, Coronial Services, Ministry of Justice

### Why did you choose these subjects?

I started with a BA in Sociology and Human Services because I have always been interested in learning about people, cultures and the world around me. Criminal Justice was also appealing because it was varied and interesting. I did my BA alongside the BCJ in order to make myself more employable and because the degrees complemented each other.

### Are there any student experiences that stand out for you?

I was awarded the Prime Minister's Scholarship for Asia which helped to fund an internship in Thailand that I was selected for.

As part of the internship I spent four weeks teaching at a school and it was amazing. The children at school and my host parents spoke very little English, so it was definitely challenging but I learnt so much about myself, Thai culture and made lasting friendships through the experience.

### Did you have any challenges at uni? What helped you overcome them?

Studying a double degree with a double major, while working at two part-time jobs was a challenge but the fact that I was doing subjects

that I enjoyed made it all worthwhile. The key thing I have found throughout my degree is that as long as you find what you really love and stay focused, you will succeed.

### What did you learn from your internship?

While studying towards an honours in Sociology, I did an internship with the Ministry of Justice in Wellington. It was good to work in an area that related to my degrees and it also gave me great insight into the role of an advisor at the Ministry. It was interesting to see how the Ministry works across the justice sector with other agencies to achieve its common goals.

### Read more online

Read more stories about our students' university experiences online. UC alumni make a difference in varied ways around the globe. To find out where graduates are now visit [www.canterbury.ac.nz/getstarted/whyuc/student-profiles](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/getstarted/whyuc/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.

Te Kura Mātāpuna Tangata | School of Language, Social and Political Sciences

We teach courses that deal with subjects as diverse as crime and justice, cities, religion, health and medicine, social movements, death, migration and much more.

We want you to graduate with a degree that has practical value so we make sure you learn how to apply Sociology's core methods to areas in the real world. We give our students the opportunity to do meaningful research, to create and analyse evidence, and to draw their own conclusions.

T: +64 3 369 3377

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

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/arts/sociology](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/arts/sociology)

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

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers](http://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](mailto:liaison@canterbury.ac.nz)

Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland

T: 0800 UCAUCK

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

Te Whanganui-a-Tara | Wellington

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

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

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/liaison](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/liaison)

