

What can I do with a degree in Health Sciences?

Health Sciences.



What is Health Sciences?

Healthcare is increasingly focused on population wellness, disease prevention, and community health services. A comprehensive overview of health and health care fosters improved health and wellbeing of individuals, whānau and communities.

Health Sciences is a multidisciplinary field, and covers important topics from mental health and wellbeing, sexual health promotion, epidemiology, Māori and indigenous people's health, environmental health, to evidence-based policy and decision-making.

Professionals in this field might focus on a particular need, such as educating individuals and communities about health conditions, developing and evaluating healthcare policies and programs, health information management, or research to enhance healthcare through preventive measures and improved systems.

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

- Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand
www.hpfnz.org.nz
- Public Health Association of New Zealand Inc
www.pha.org.nz
- Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa
New Zealand Psychological Society
www.psychology.org.nz

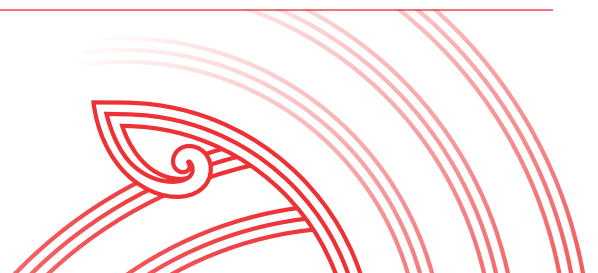
Career and study information

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/health-sciences
- 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?

Graduates in Health Sciences become skilled in health promotion, analysing the distribution of disease, and identifying interventions that will improve health outcomes among populations, communities, and whānau.

Other valuable skills graduates can develop include:

- Multidisciplinary understanding and perspectives of health
- Knowledge of healthcare and related services
- Understanding of the ethical, social, cultural and political determinants of health
- Interpretive and analytical thinking
- Indigenous and cross-cultural awareness
- Ability to work in inter-professional teams
- Oral and written communication.
- Self-management, resilience and adaptability
- Planning, organisation, and problem-solving.

Applied Learning

Internships with potential employers, community-based research, and applied projects opportunities such as designing health promotion programs, writing policy submissions and analysing health data are available.

These experiences deepen graduates' skillset, awareness of others, 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 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?

Graduates are employed in a wide variety of sectors. Depending on a graduate's major, they may go on to work in:

- Environmental health e.g. health laboratories, research centres, local government, businesses, Te Whatu Ora
- Health education e.g. drug and alcohol agencies, non-governmental organisations like Family Planning, the Mental Health Foundation and the Cancer Society, ACC, professional guilds/associations, and teaching health in schools
- Māori and indigenous health e.g. Iwi community-based health and development organisations, Te Aka Whai Ora, and local government
- Psychology e.g. Te Whatu Ora, the Ministry of Health, professional associations, the Department of Corrections, social service and social welfare agencies, hospitals, and charities like the Salvation Army
- Public health and social policy e.g. Te Whatu Ora, primary health organisations, Māori health organisations, Ministry of Health, ACC, research centres, local government, and non-governmental organisations like Youthlink.

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?'

Health promoter

- Identify health concerns and needs for a range of groups
- Develop strategies to motivate and help people manage their health
- Assist government and organisations to improve unhealthy conditions

Community development officer

- Help community to recognise aspirations and concerns
- Raise awareness of local issues
- Develop programmes to address issues

Health services coordinator / service manager

- Manage administration tasks and the day-to-day running of services
- Handle queries and liaise with stakeholders

Programme coordinator / facilitator

- Conduct research and plan programmes
- Assist in the implementation of programmes
- Evaluate programmes and developments

Graduate policy analyst / advisor

- Identify and investigate issues and opportunities e.g. in public health
- Interpret existing policies and advises leaders
- Prepare reports and recommendations for policy development

Case worker

- Provide support and guidance to individuals and whānau
- Build relationships and link people to resources, services and groups
- Write reports and coordinate budgets

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Diversional and recreational therapist
- Youth worker
- Programme coordinator
- Healthcare assistant
- Primary health care liaison
- Tutor
- Writer
- Customer service officer
- Researcher / research assistant
- Education and research manager
- Whānau Health Worker
- Psychologist
- Counsellor
- Social worker
- Nurse
- Personal trainer
- Chiropractor
- Lecturer.

Postgraduate roles

Environmental health officer

- Evaluate the effects of environmental hazards on a population's health
- Grant licences, write reports and ensure compliance with regulations
- Raise awareness about health matters

Child and family psychologist

- Work with the complexities of children, adolescents, families, school systems, mental health systems and welfare systems
- Provide assessment and interventions

Further study options

UC offers many postgraduate study options. With the right prerequisites graduates can specialise in Child and Family Psychology, Nursing, Health Information Management, Counselling, Palliative Care, Environment and Health, Health and Community, Health Behaviour Change, and Health Leadership and Management.

Graduate or postgraduate study options are also available to become a teacher.

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

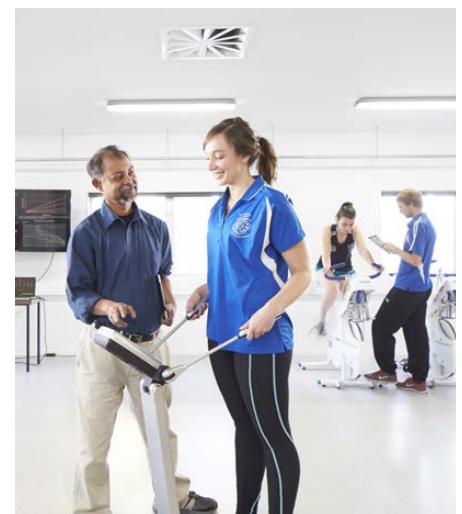
Learn more and gather career and study information

(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



Suli

Fitness Trainer, Les Mills
Chairperson, Moana Vā – Navigators of Pacific Pride
Practice Nurse, Eastcare Health
Team Lead, Clinical & Health Promotion, Tangata Atumotu Trust

Studying towards a Doctor of Health Sciences
Master of Health Sciences with an endorsement in Nursing
Bachelor of Health Sciences in Physical Activity Promotion and Public Health

What motivated you to study Health Sciences?

I am passionate about fitness, well-being, and health equity. I wanted to give back to my communities and this degree has set me up with the tools to give my very best in helping both individuals and communities.

What did you enjoy most about your Health Sciences studies?

I enjoyed the contrast and variety of papers that made up this degree (from the schools of Health Sciences, Sports Coaching, Biological Sciences, Geography). It focuses on health as “illness prevention”; rather than on “illness cure”. The degree enabled me to share my passion in empowering our Pasifika peoples to become fitter, healthier, and happier communities.

Why did you decide to study nursing?

I am committed to health and well-being, and I was keen to pursue the clinical challenges of nursing. Those two years of study equipped me with the tools to take both a holistic and biomedical view of health and well-being in the community.

What advice would you give other students?

Health and well-being are crucial to both an individual and the communities they belong to. This degree sets you up with the knowledge base to face crucial health issues relating to society today. You have to know what you want from the degree. Don't be afraid to ask questions, everyone is here to help. You have to take ownership of your own destiny.



Victoria

Policy Analyst, Manatū Ahu Matua | Ministry for Primary Industries

Bachelor of Health Sciences in Public Health

How did you end up studying Health Sciences?

I wanted to work in healthcare but not in a clinical way. I was studying a health paper at UC and I really enjoyed learning about the many issues in the field of health, and how we should be addressing them, so I switched to the BHSc.

What did you enjoy about your studies?

It encourages you to think critically about what is being said. I enjoyed that there is a lot of thought involved, and after each lecture you went away thinking “Wow, that was so interesting!”

How has your degree helped you in your role?

My degree has helped me facilitate essential skills in terms of time management needed for the high-paced role, as well as reading and processing information.

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
E: firstyearadvice@canterbury.ac.nz

Continuing students – contact:

Te Kura Mātai Hauora
School of Health Sciences
T: +64 3 369 3333
E: studyhealth@canterbury.ac.nz
www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/health

