What can I do with a degree in History?

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, 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/history

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.

What is History?

History is more than the study of the past; it is a living creative act. History explores past events in order to inform us about who we are and what is happening today. History gives us our cultural roots. It helps us understand ourselves, our neighbours, our nation, other cultures and the world, enabling us to become truly global citizens. We learn a lot from history, and this knowledge helps us to avoid the mistakes of the past and make better decisions for the future, just as we learn from our own experiences.

Studying History supplies students with the skills to analyse complex evidence, present evidence-based arguments and put things in perspective. Such skills developed from studying History can be applied in many careers, as well as to all walks of life.
What skills have UC graduates gained?

History graduates have a distinctive mix of skills which are useful in almost any job involving discovery, analysis, interpretation, independent thought and communication. These include:

• Thinking critically and creatively
• Interpretive and analytical thinking
• Oral and written communication
• Research
• Digital and computing skills
• Problem solving skills
• Ability to make balanced, impartial judgements
• Consideration of multiple perspectives, materials and outcomes.

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

Where have UC graduates been employed?

History graduates enjoy a variety of destinations. Recent UC graduates have been employed in:

• Heritage organisations eg, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Archives New Zealand
• Publishers eg, Reed Business Information Australia, PocketGuide
• Media outlets eg, APN News & Media, TVNZ
• New Zealand government eg, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Justice, and Business, Innovation and Employment; the Treasury; Parliament; Department of Internal Affairs; the New Zealand Defence Force; Inland Revenue
• Treaty of Waitangi administrative bodies eg, the Waitangi Tribunal, Office of Treaty Settlements
• Education eg, tertiary sector and high schools
• Non-government organisations eg, Asia New Zealand Foundation
• Not-for-profits eg, NZCare Disability
• Regional councils and affiliates eg, Ashburton Council, CERA, Environment Canterbury
• Public and private organisations in other countries eg, Australia, the UK, the USA
• Private companies in tourism, archaeology, insurance, legal, IT, and other sectors.

For examples of recruiting employers go to www.canterbury.ac.nz/recruitingemployers

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AT A GLANCE

9,500
one museum for every 9,500 people in Aotearoa New Zealand, one of the world’s highest per capita*

14.4%
the public sector employs 14.4% of the total Aotearoa New Zealand workforce**

79%
the Waitangi Tribunal has released reports on 79% of Aotearoa New Zealand’s land mass+

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** State Services Commission HR Capability Report 2015–16
+ As of October 2015, 40th Anniversary of Waitangi Tribunal www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz
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.*

**Historian**
- Analyses sources to uncover the history of a period, place, person, group or aspect
- Publishes findings and shares knowledge
- Maintains historical records

**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

**Secondary school teacher**
- Plans and delivers instructional lessons
- Evaluates performance and provides feedback
- Sets and marks assignments and tests

**Librarian**
- Categorises and catalogues library materials
- Selects materials for library use
- Helps customers find and use materials

**Communications / media advisor, journalist**
- Develops information, media and communication strategies
- Researches, writes, edits and produces content

**Archivist**
- Stores and organises materials
- Advises organisations on what to keep and how
- Maintains and updates databases

**Marketing officer / manager**
- Collects and analyses market insight
- Prepares and implements marketing plans
- Works with others to promote goods or services

**Customer services officer / representative**
- Provides information or advice to people
- Starts the next steps in the process

**Entrepreneur and CEO**
- Gets involved in a start-up
- Offers services as a freelance/consultant

Get started at [UC Careerhub](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/Entrepreneurship/getting_started.shtml)

*UC Careerhub*
Students and alumni can find details of internships, job vacancies and employability tips at [www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers) and [www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/Entrepreneurship/getting_started.shtml](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/Entrepreneurship/getting_started.shtml)

What professional bodies can people link to?

As they progress, students and graduates often join professional bodies or organisations relevant to their area of interest. These organisations can provide regular communications and offer the chance to network with others in a community.

- **New Zealand Historical Association**
  [www.nzha.org.nz](http://www.nzha.org.nz)
- **Professional Historians Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa**
  [www.phanza.org.nz](http://www.phanza.org.nz)
- **Canterbury Historical Association**
  [www.chf.org.nz/content/canterbury-historical-association-inc](http://www.chf.org.nz/content/canterbury-historical-association-inc)
- **New Zealand Society of Genealogists**
  [www.genealogy.org.nz](http://www.genealogy.org.nz)
- **National Oral History Association of New Zealand**
  [www.oralhistory.org.nz](http://www.oralhistory.org.nz)

Social media networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter can provide avenues to keep up-to-date with industry knowledge, networking opportunities, events and job vacancies.

Why do further study and what are my options?

Postgraduate study can 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 will help you in your future career.

History graduates can progress their studies from honours through to PhD level. Postgraduate study can also lead to an academic career pathway in teaching and research.

Many Arts graduates do additional training in teaching, journalism, policy, international relations, librarianship or management.

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

Useful links

UC Careers, Internships & Employment
[www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers)

UC Department of History
[www.canterbury.ac.nz/arts/history](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/arts/history)

Careers New Zealand
[www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)

Canterbury History Foundation
[www.chf.org.nz](http://www.chf.org.nz)

State sector jobs
[www.jobs.govt.nz](http://www.jobs.govt.nz)

UC Arts Digital Lab
[http://dh.canterbury.ac.nz](http://dh.canterbury.ac.nz)
Grace Smart

Bachelor of Arts in History, French and Chinese
Bachelor of Arts with Honours in History

Why did you choose History?
I chose History because I wanted to study something that I was passionate about. I love the global focus of History, and I especially enjoy modern history which is so relevant to the world today.

What did you enjoy about it?
Studying History has given me the chance to study such a wide variety of subjects, from women’s rights in India to the causes of the Gulf War.
I enjoy the research and analytical thinking involved; there is always something more to learn in History. It was exciting to do independent research for my honours research paper.
My lecturers were absolutely amazing. Every History lecturer is such an expert in their field and is so willing to share their knowledge with students.

What else did you do at uni that enhanced your employability?
I was secretary of the Student Volunteer Army (SVA) when I was studying and it was one of the best things I did at uni. It was at a time when the Army was transitioning from earthquake relief to a permanent volunteering organisation.

How did your studies prepare you for work?
I’m finding my History degree really relevant because policy involves a lot of critical thinking and communication skills (especially a high level of written communication) which I learned from my degree.

Any advice for those considering this field?
I would recommend that History students take a variety of papers before they decide where their interests lie. Some of my favourite papers have been the ones that I took thinking that they wouldn’t really interest me.