

CAREER VIEW

TOURISM

Tourism is an exciting area of growth, commerce, research and innovation. Degrees in tourism tend to be vocationally oriented, and there is a growing demand for research, leadership in strategic direction, management and marketing as the sector grows and becomes more complex. Domestic and global opportunities for employment in the hospitality and service sector are predicted to grow significantly, as are business services that also impact on tourism. In New Zealand, tourism is a massive industry and remains the biggest non-primary export earner.

WHY STUDY TOURISM?

A degree in tourism provides background knowledge of the industry and transferable skills that can be applied within a range of organisations in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Careers in tourism contribute significantly to the economy, increase understanding of human behaviour and build relationships with other countries. It provides the opportunity to meet and work with a fascinating mix of people, and to travel within New Zealand and overseas. Experience on the ground is often necessary to begin with, but with a qualification, skills and industry knowledge acquired during degree studies, graduates can quickly gain more challenging roles and additional responsibilities that offer growth and learning opportunities. There are also opportunities for entrepreneurship and setting up your own business.

The study of tourism complements other disciplines such as management, marketing, international relations, geography, environmental studies, languages and any arts or humanities subjects, depending on personal interests and experiences.

WHAT SKILLS DO TOURISM GRADUATES DEVELOP?

Tourism students develop a range of unique skills, strongly focussed on the customer experience. They tend to hone these skills through a combination of their academic studies, practical industry-based projects, related work experience and volunteering.

Customer service skills are fundamental in tourism and excelling in service is always front of mind, no matter how senior the role is. Many experienced



executives in tourism and hospitality maintain a strong connection with their customers by remaining in touch with frontline operations. Customer service experience gained through part-time, summer or volunteer work, in hospitality or retail is especially valuable.

Critical thinking and analytical skills are necessary for effective decision-making and problem solving, and leads to an understanding of the environmental, economic, and social impacts that result from tourism. A degree in Tourism Management has an applied focus. Students learn to evaluate and apply concepts associated with the operational and strategic nature of financial, human and physical resources. Through degree training, graduates develop

Career View explores how degrees and courses relate to employment opportunities and to life/work planning. It includes graduate destination information and current employment issues. Your comments and suggestions are always welcomed.

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intellectual skills that will add value to the sector. Skills include the ability to analyse, think critically, evaluate and synthesise information.

Research skills. The ability to access and evaluate information is vital in a commercially oriented, knowledge economy. During their degree, students learn to apply a range of strategies and tools. They examine different aspects of the research cycle and approaches to tourism research. While research into the study and management of tourism enhances industry-related knowledge and skills, the skills are transferable to many areas of work. Tourism projects cover a range of investigations such as the structure and function of tourism channel distributions, studies of visitor behaviour, marketing and special event tourism.

Communication skills are paramount in a complex global economy. Through their studies graduates learn to present their work logically and clearly in oral and written forms, and to use language and presentation tools appropriately. Through relationships with partner organisations, sponsors and relevant authorities, students develop liaison and negotiation skills. Degree courses also develop listening and discussion skills. Being able to speak another language could be an advantage in the tourism industry.

Relationship management skills in a service-intensive sector are the key to long-term success. The relationships can be complex and varied when a number of stakeholders are involved. Stakeholders include tourism customers, goods and services providers, regional authorities, sponsors, government

and non-government agencies, tourism associations, iwi organisations, cultural, conservation and lobby groups. Tourism graduates acquire understanding of relationship dynamics in commercial and non-commercial settings. They may apply these skills and knowledge during fieldwork and group discussions.

Organisation and planning. Through related course work students gain an understanding of the principles of management including the processes of policy and planning, and applying this through fieldwork. Self-management is also a skill graduates develop through course work as they plan, design, implement and communicate their projects. Tourism students have the ability to be self-reflective, identify ways to continuously improve their own or wider business practices, and measure results.

Marketing skills are used to develop a close understanding of customer needs and wants through practice and research methods. Graduates know how to use the information gathered to help businesses create, plan, communicate and deliver value to identified target markets. Graduates who have specialised in Marketing will have an understanding of strategic customer/client relations, research and planning in tourism.

Information and digital technologies. Many tourism students through their studies learn to use technology to improve operations, streamline and automate processes, prepare analytics or manipulate and analyse data to support decision-making.



WHERE DO TOURISM GRADUATES WORK?

Tourism impacts directly upon a range of sectors. Tourists need information, transport, attractions and activities, accommodation and food. Areas include:

- hospitality (catering and accommodation, luxury to budget)
- tourism operations (tour wholesalers, inbound operators, travel agencies, tourist information centres, cruise ship operators)
- iwi business and cultural tourism
- attractions and activities (adventure tourism, sightseeing, cultural festivals, museums, art galleries, arts and crafts)
- transport (air, land, sea)
- central and local government
- conservation/environmental tourism
- education (student exchanges and working adventures)
- economic, social policy and tourism research
- film production and promotion
- food and wine industry.

Private Sector

There are a growing number of tourism-related companies in New Zealand as well as overseas. Through research, networking and informational interviewing graduates can make valuable connections. Many start their own business. Private sector positions depending on prior industry experience may include:

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) represents a membership of more than 2000 tourist operators. The Association is committed to business best practice and Qualmark™, the industry's official quality mark. TIA has four main areas of activity: advocacy, events, industry development and working with other organisations. TIA roles that are likely to interest graduates are in the areas of communications, IT, advocacy, policy and events.

Major hotel groups, such as **James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor, CQ Hotels, Copthorne Millenium, InterContinental Hotels Group** and **Accor Hotels** have a range of roles for graduates, especially for students who have had experience in frontline and customer service roles in the hospitality industry. Hotels recruit for positions such as food and beverage



supervisor, duty manager, HR coordinator, sales and marketing, and business development. The hotel group may also have a structured graduate programme with the opportunity to rotate around a number of operational functions. There can also be the opportunity to work in hotels of the same group overseas.

Tourism Holdings Ltd owns and operates a range of New Zealand visitor attractions, activities and transportation businesses. The company has operations in New Zealand, Australia and North America and are the largest provider of holiday vehicles for rent and sale in Australia and New Zealand. Within New Zealand they operate Kiwi Experience and the Discover Waitomo Group which includes Waitomo Glowworm Caves, Ruakuri Cave, Aranui Cave and The Black Water Rafting Company. A high proportion of their staff are frontline. There are opportunities over the summer for customer service and support roles.

Museums such as **Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa** or **Auckland Museum** may have opportunities for tourism graduates in areas such as marketing, business development, outreach, customer services, hosting or visitor experience co-ordination. Previous frontline experience and language skills and knowledge of Te Reo and tikanga Māori are helpful.

Zealandia is a world-first conservation attraction. At the sanctuary domestic and international tourists can experience a bush walk with the opportunity to see rare native wildlife. Roles suitable for tourism graduates include tourism coordinators, marketers, guides, event and functions coordinators.

Local tour companies, such as **Wellington Rover Tours** or **Hammonds Wellington Tours** recruit tour guides which is a great way to get experience in the

industry. A Passenger Endorsement on your driver's licence can be helpful. It would also be an advantage if you had your class 2 and/or class 4 licence as fleets can include vehicles of all sizes.

Public Sector

Public sector roles for tourism graduates at national, regional and local levels can be in policy development, policy advice, research, marketing and communications, business development, passport and visa administration, and export trade. Some government organisations offer internships and/or graduate programmes.

Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) is the Crown entity responsible for the international marketing of Destination New Zealand. The organisation employs staff to develop, implement and promote strategies for marketing New Zealand's tourism industry.

i- SITE Visitor Information Network is made up of over 80 tourist information offices throughout New Zealand. They provide tourist information to domestic and international visitors. This includes itinerary planning and information, accommodation bookings nationwide, transport, activities, attractions, maps, weather and mountain safety information, and local information such as events, attractions and restaurants.

Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) are responsible for marketing their regions domestically and internationally. The thirty RTOs throughout New Zealand work with local businesses, including tourism operators, the hospitality industry, accommodation providers and retailers to promote their regions as a unique destination. They coordinate, facilitate, motivate and develop the marketing of the region. On an international level, they work closely with Tourism New Zealand and overseas markets. Along with city councils they are potential sources of job opportunities for graduates with an interest in marketing, communications, social media marketing or co-ordination and team leadership in sales and customer service.

Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency (WREDA) markets Wellington as a destination for visitors, migrants and investors; helps businesses grow and innovate; advocates for Wellington's economy; attracts and promotes major events and runs civic venues. WREDA teams work across Business, Growth & Innovation, Destination & Marketing, Events & Partnerships, Venues & Projects



and Foresight & Development.

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) is focused on developing sustainable economic growth in tourism for the Auckland region through integrated marketing and industry development. Opportunities exist for graduates in areas of the business, such as international and domestic marketing, event coordination, business attraction and investment, media services and visitor information centre staff.

Department of Conservation has a number of business teams that have a tourism focus, including Marketing and Recreation, Partnerships, and Historic and Enterprise Systems. In addition to policy and business development roles, opportunities exist in customer service and business management in the operations side of the organisation. This includes recreation work such as on tracks, camps and reserves, as well as in visitor centres and in developing commercial opportunities. Local community engagement roles exist in community conservation, education, events and media, and in managing strategic iwi relationships. The Department also offers summer internships.

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) provides advice to the Government on how to create the right environment for enhanced productivity and growth in the tourism sector in order to increase tourism's contribution to the New Zealand economy and regions around New Zealand.

They also collect, analyse and publish tourism data and forecasts, such as international visitor numbers and expenditure. Graduates working as policy analysts or advisers often have postgraduate qualifications and/or some experience in the sector. Courses in economics, statistics and social sciences can also be an advantage.

GRADUATE PROFILES

Other government organisations where Tourism graduates can work include the **Ministry for the Environment, Local and Regional Councils, Land Transport New Zealand, Department of Internal Affairs, New Zealand Customs, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Sport New Zealand and Creative New Zealand.**

Non-government organisations (NGOs) are not-for-profit groups organised on a local, national or international level that perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions. NGOs can provide excellent opportunities for tourism students to apply and practice management skills and leadership qualities through volunteering and paid employment. Volunteer roles can sometimes lead to paid positions, and Tourism Management graduates are well suited to roles in volunteer co-ordination, fundraising, policy advice and service management.

Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) has a strong interest in tourism in developing countries and a VSA placement means you can share your tourism experience and help local communities harness their potential through training in hospitality and business management. Generally, graduates will have first gained a few years' experience developing their skills in the New Zealand context.

JOB TITLES

The following is a sample of job titles taken from our graduate destination surveys. Some roles may require postgraduate qualifications and training.

Accommodation manager • account executive • activities coordinator • business analyst • business development adviser • commercial resource manager • communications adviser • customer services manager • customer services team member • crew member • event manager • human resources manager • lecturer • lodge manager • management consultant • market associate • marketing coordinator • marketing manager • market researcher • operations manager • outdoor recreation guide • policy adviser • policy analyst • promotions coordinator • recruitment consultant • researcher • social media coordinator • tour guide • tourism development executive • tourism manager • training and development adviser/manager • travel agent • travel consultant • shift co-ordinator • volunteer coordinator • visitor development officer • workforce development adviser.

Len Yu

Communications Coordinator
Wellington Regional Economic
Development Agency



Since I came to New Zealand I have absolutely fallen in love with this beautiful country. Not just the scenery, but also the people and culture. Completing my Bachelor of Tourism Management has certainly been the highlight of my life. It was not so easy for an international student like me, but the whole experience has been incredibly rewarding for my career so far. My motivation to come to New Zealand for study was based on one of Tourism New Zealand's campaign advertisements I saw at that time, and I heard tourism was not a popular course for international students, so studying tourism was just a sure thing for me. Yes, I like to be different.

For me, studying tourism was interesting and I liked that the courses were flexible, practical and presented actual situations in the tourism industry. I had the chance to do some great part-time jobs in the industry and I convinced myself once again that this is exactly what I want to do in my life. I started with the Wellington i-SITE Visitor Information Centre where I volunteered my time as a Wellington City Ambassador during my first-year summer. I then got a part-time job as a Customer Service Consultant. This role at the i-SITE complemented my study and I progressed to the role of Supervisor at the end of my second year of study. Before I got my current role as a Communications Coordinator at Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency (WREDA), I was asked to assist WREDA's Tourism Trade team for a few months. This opportunity allowed me to work more closely with WREDA's Media/Communication team and allowed me to leave a positive impression on other teams and senior managers.

When I was at university, I focused on tourist destination development and marketing related courses. At the same time, I also focused on gaining work experience in the tourism industry. Experience is the most important thing in tourism industry. My advice for current tourism students is that you should start to gain some work experience while you are studying and not wait till you have completed your degree.

Ocean Belcher

Digital Content Specialist
Tourism New Zealand

I started out not being sure what I wanted to major in. I knew I was interested in travel and tourism so I did a tourism course along with some languages. It was after that first year I realised that tourism could be a bigger career than just guiding and operations. There were management and marketing aspects to it that I hadn't considered, so this was when I veered from arts and humanities to tourism studies.

I loved that the degree was an accumulation of both tourism, marketing and management courses. The compulsory tourism placement was my favourite course, working for a semester within a tourism business and then writing a revised business plan for them based on what I'd learned. It taught me to think critically about the industry, being competitive within the marketplace and also gave me some good work experience within the industry that I could put in my CV.

Alongside my studies I worked as a Tourism Management tutor, and I completed the Wellington International Leadership Programme which aligns very well with a tourism degree. You can do additional courses and attend seminars on topics like global leadership, sustainability and global warming. These extracurricular activities really helped to boost my career prospects and in my last semester I scored an internship programme with the United Nations World Tourism Organization in Madrid.

I then worked for a company in London organising international hospitality and hotel investment conferences in emerging markets, travelling from London to Dubai, Istanbul, Ethiopia and Berlin among other places. I also had a stint writing for a ski magazine and managing their websites. In my current role with Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) I work primarily on their website developing digital content and marketing activations to promote 'brand New Zealand' to international visitors. Highlights include delivering a partnership between Nikon and TNZ that focuses on viewing New Zealand through 360 degree and virtual reality videos; and building a digital landing experience for a project between TNZ and James Cameron – the director of Avatar and the Titanic. It's the perfect blend of tourism, technology and marketing.



Bryn Lloyd

Tourism Manager
Te Papa Tongarewa

University was never a sure thing for me as I struggled to find the right career path. Now looking back, I don't know why I worried so much as life has a funny way of making a journey out of experiences, which ultimately guides our decision-making. On completing my last year of college, I decided to give learning (as I knew it) a break and head overseas. After a few years abroad I decided maybe there was something in tourism. I saw it as a positive industry and if I could be part of making someone's holiday even better, then I thought that's where I wanted to be.

Enrolling in a Bachelor of Tourism Management and Bachelor of Commerce and Administration majoring in Human Resources and Marketing opened my mind to new ideas and gave me the taste for education again. After my first year, I realised that I needed a foot in the door in the tourism industry so I took the only job that was going which was a night cleaning role at the Wellington YHA. I knew the reward would come if I stuck with it and sure enough a role came up at the Wellington i-SITE visitor centre where I continued working while finishing my degrees.

Having a part-time job while studying full time is harder in the short-term, however, it pays dividends in the long run. The relationships that I formed through working at the i-SITE are still strong today and have made inroads through several tourism roles with Flat Earth Tours, Positively Wellington Tourism, Tourism New Zealand, and to my current position at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. I am also currently the Executive Chairman of Young Tourism Export Council.

I've been fortunate enough to continue to see the world through these roles. I've also really enjoyed developing new tourism products such as Te Papa's premium back of house experiences as well as the Gallipoli Early Bird entry which has enhanced the experience of thousands of visitors during their stay in our great country. If you want a great lifestyle study tourism, get your hands dirty, and see where it takes you.



Trisha Dwyer

Product Distribution Coordinator
Department of Conservation



I'd been wanting to find a Master's degree which would build on knowledge gained from several years living and working around the globe and provide a structure in which to integrate and further explore my interests. I had spent several years working as a tour leader throughout Asia and South America. I love travelling and learning about different cultures, discovering landscapes and nature through adventure activities such as hiking, diving, horse-riding, kayaking and rafting. I became more interested in sustainable tourism and the potential of its role in poverty alleviation in developing countries, and the importance of tourism planning and policy in emerging destinations. I became more aware of travel motivations and how each traveller carries their own stories, knowledge, previous experience and expectations when going to new destinations.

We were a small group in the Master's programme, so it was easy to connect with other students and lecturers. Having previously studied Building Science quite some time before, it was a challenge going back to university as a mature student. However, I enjoyed being able to choose topics that I was interested in for assignments and research projects. One of the most important skills I gained was research design and methodology although it was probably the one I struggled with most initially. I now appreciate its importance and keep a critical eye on whatever data is put in front of me. I have developed the ability to ask even more questions than before.

Having a Master's degree and several years' experience in the tourism industry has allowed me to step into advisory and developmental roles. Following my interest in supporting a model of sustainable tourism in developing countries, I undertook two tourism education and training roles with Volunteer Services Abroad. I started out in Tonga doing in-house training with small and medium tourism enterprises, then spent a year in Timor-Leste developing course curriculum at a vocational training centre. My current role is in the public sector at the Department of Conservation, focussing on international tourism marketing and distribution channels.

I have learned to follow my passion and think globally. Tourism is a multi-disciplinary field with openings in all directions.

Ina Reichenberger

MCI Management Center
Innsbruck



I started out with Sociology and first came to Wellington as an undergraduate exchange student from Austria. After my exchange trimester, I did the obligatory backpacking tour through New Zealand, Australia and Fiji, and this was where

I first became interested in tourism. Even then, I was impressed with the personalised and supportive learning environment and I decided to move on from my job in tourism market research to pursue a PhD in Tourism Management.

I count myself lucky to have had access to so much support and expertise from my PhD supervisors, lecturers, student services and fellow students. Those years were challenging and at times even frustrating, but I always felt I was part of a community and my research, writing and critical thinking skills have developed in a way that was surprising even to myself. Working with the passionate staff of the Tourism Group and being able to learn from their experience was absolutely invaluable – if it weren't for their mentoring, I would not have chosen the career path that I am on now.

When I enrolled, I didn't have a clear idea of exactly what I wanted to do with this degree. I had never considered teaching, but when offered to tutor undergraduate courses, I found that I immensely enjoyed the exchange with students and the possibility to help them overcome challenges and further develop their skills and competences. I was even able to complete a degree in Higher Education Learning and Teaching parallel to my PhD, which definitely provided me with an advantage in the highly competitive academic job market.

I am still convinced that choosing to do a PhD was the best decision I could have made. I gained so much more than I thought I would and have discovered that academia isn't just a job but dedication, passion and a commitment to lifelong learning. I now teach undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Tourism Business Studies where I use many of the tools and approaches that I learned. I also supervise Bachelor and Master theses by drawing upon the strategies that helped me to enhance my skills as a student, and conduct and publish my own research in a far more complex and critical manner.