

WHERE WILL MY ARTS DEGREE LEAD?



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF ARTS

Providing skills for careers in the 21st century.

One of the most common questions staff in the Faculty of Arts are asked is:

“What sort of job will a BA degree get for me?”

Employment and work patterns have changed profoundly in recent years. The world of business and industry is constantly and rapidly changing. So employers are looking for applicants with versatility and a wide-range of transferable skills, who can adapt to the changing needs of the workplace. While a record of strong academic achievement is also still very important, the discipline/degree for many employers is not.

First NZ Capital is characteristic of many employers, stating in its website that “Applicants from all faculties who have a keen interest in business and a history of academic excellence are encouraged to apply.”¹ Others, such as the New Zealand Treasury, emphasise that “well-developed analytical skills and excellence in oral and written communication are particularly important” and so welcome applications from “graduates with high levels of achievement in other disciplines [than economics, accountancy and finance].”²

Such comments are further borne out by the number of graduate employers participating in the University Careers Centre’s annual Jobs4Grads programme who welcome interest and applications from final year students across all faculties/disciplines **including Arts**, such as:

ANZ
Boston Consulting
(a management consultancy firm)
Fonterra
L.E.K. Consulting
Lion Nathan Breweries
McKinsey & Co
(a management consultancy firm)
NZ First Capital (an investment bank)
NZ Post
Telstra Clear
UBS (an investment bank)
Unilever
Vodafone
Various Government Agencies
The Armed Forces

EXAMPLES OF CAREER PATHS TAKEN BY ARTS GRADUATES

Art Handler	Vicky Wong	BA – French and Italian
Editor / Journalist	Louise Chunn	BA – History
Events Coordinator	Marama Le Heron	BA – Sociology and Women’s Studies
Film and Documentary-maker	Roseanne Liang	BA / BSc – English and Film, Television and Media Studies
Foreign Exchange Dealer	Pablo Riddell	BA / BCom – Political Studies
Information Officer, Department of Labour	Richwell Hizon	BA – Employment Relations and Organization Studies and Sociology
Information Officer, Diplomatic Service	Elisa Gasperini	BA / LLB – German
Journalist	Janet McAllister	BA – English and Philosophy
Sponsorship Manager	Clare Wilson	BA / BCom – Italian
Office Manager	Kelly Brownlie	BA – English and Employment Relations and Organization Studies
Manager, Business Banking	Trevor Chua	BA – Sociology and French BA(Hons) – Sociology
Consumer Marketing and Business Planning Manager	Kirsty Traill	BA / BCom – German and Japanese
Television Researcher and Associate Producer	Georgia Burn	BA – Anthropology and Political Studies
Television Director	Pip Te Hira	BA – Film, Television and Media Studies

Certainly Arts graduates themselves feel well-equipped and confident going in to the workplace with the skills provided by their degree. As Laura Williams, Union Organiser and a graduate in Sociology from The University of Auckland explains,

“On a typical day I come across many queries I have to research. I have to think quickly, demonstrate organisational ability and deal with many different types of people. These are all skills I learnt in my Arts degree.”

HOW DOES A DEGREE IN ARTS COMPARE?

The most recent Report on Graduate Destinations, conducted by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors’ Committee in 2004, again shows that the prospects of Arts graduates compare favourably to those graduates from other faculties/disciplines.

Firstly, the Report’s survey analysis indicates that approximately 50% of Arts respondents were in full-time employment, compared to 50% of Science respondents and 60+% of Commerce respondents. (While these findings might suggest a higher ‘success-rate’ or employability for Commerce graduates, the Report also highlighted that a higher proportion of Arts and Science graduates preferred to progress into postgraduate study rather than seek employment.)

Secondly, the Report established that Arts graduates were well-represented across all employer categories identified in the survey and that salaries for Arts graduates compared well with those of other faculties/disciplines. (Between \$32-36,000 on average for Arts graduates compared with \$30-37,500 for Science and \$35,000 for Commerce graduates respectively.)

The experience of many of the Faculty’s graduates reinforces the view that an Arts degree is no barrier to finding employment across a diverse range of occupations.

0800 61 62 63

www.arts.auckland.ac.nz

¹ <http://www.firstnzcapital.co.nz/home/Careers.asp>, April 2006

² <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/careers/graduate.asp#People>, April 2006



Holly Smith – Researcher, Executive Recruitment Firm
Bachelor of Arts in Classics and Ancient History
Master of Arts in Ancient History

Several, such as Holly Smith, a researcher for an executive recruitment firm and graduate in Ancient History from The University of Auckland, actually found their degree gave them a competitive edge.

"My employers were specifically looking for an Arts graduate due to the analytical thinking skills and verbal and written communication skills that an Arts degree gives you, which are invaluable in the business environment."

VOCATIONAL ARTS

Many subject areas and courses available within the Bachelor of Arts offer practical training and/or preparation for specific careers.

Arts disciplines have traditionally served as essential training for those who wish to teach, and this continues to be a significant career option.

Anthropology offers a great introduction and insight for those wishing to embark on careers in Archaeology or (along with Art History and History, among others) Cultural Heritage administration (especially with the additional postgraduate pathway of Museums and Cultural Heritage).

Students can specialise in such explicitly vocational subjects such as Linguistics and English Language Teaching, Economics, and Employment Relations and Organization Studies from Bachelors degree level on through into Master's degree level study.

While the study of Film, Television and Media Studies at The University of Auckland has a broad academic focus, the Department also offers a defined stream of practical production based courses (in film-making, television production and script-writing) for a limited number of students. These courses have proved a launching pad for several graduates' careers in film-making. Similarly, budding novelists and poets are given the opportunity to hone their talent in a number of creative writing courses offered by the Department

of English, presided over by such notable NZ literary figures as Witi Ihimaera, Albert Wendt and Wystan Curnow.

An Arts degree at The University of Auckland offers a perfect platform for a career in international trade relations – not only through the extensive range of foreign language options available, but also through such disciplines as Asian Studies, European Studies, Latin American Studies and Pacific Studies, which help develop a comprehensive understanding of these regions' collective culture, history and politics. Languages and cultural understanding can only benefit those doing business in important trading regions for New Zealand, while postgraduate study in the areas of International Relations and Human Rights and Development Studies respectively provide excellent preparation for those interested in pursuing careers in international law, the diplomatic service, and overseas development and aid work.

The Bachelor of Arts also offers an excellent grounding for a career in journalism – particularly for students combining defined specialist streams and courses within the Departments of Political Studies, Film, Television and Media Studies, English and Sociology. By examining the impact of class, gender, ethnicity, the law, media, technology and religion (among others) upon lived experience, Sociology and Political Studies equally help inform future careers in local and national government, policy development, professional lobbying, labour and non-profit organisations, and politics as well as journalism.

Students wishing to make their foreign language study the prime focus of their future career can progress into postgraduate diploma and Master's level programmes in Translation Studies and Language Teaching.

Finally, conjoint Bachelor's degree programmes provide a unique opportunity to complement the skills and broader understanding delivered by Arts with a more directly vocational study. This has proved a very popular option for many students,

especially for those wishing to combine a BA with a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) or Bachelor of Law (LLB) degree. As Kirsty Traill, who graduated from the University with a BA/BCom degree and who went on to become the Consumer Marketing and Business Planning Manager for Hewlett Packard Japan, notes

"graduates who combine a professionally oriented degree with a Bachelor of Arts are particularly valued by employers for their communication skills, versatility and breadth of knowledge."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please go to www.discoverarts.ac.nz

Alternatively, please contact:

The Arts Students' Centre

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (except public holidays) at the following location.

Room 416-418, Human Sciences Building, 10 Symonds Street, Auckland

Telephone: 373 7599 ext. 85060

Email: asc@auckland.ac.nz



Kirsty Traill – Consumer Marketing and Business Planning Manager
Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Commerce