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Catalyst

Programme Overview

8

July

Discover Possibilities

- 9:00am Arrival & Registration
 - 9:30am Mihi Whakatau & Opening Remarks
 - 10:00am Keynote
 - 10:30am Morning Tea
 - 11:00am Breakout 1: Research in Action
 - 12:00pm Lunch
 - 12:45pm Panel: Research with Impact
 - 1:30pm Mini Lectures: Big Ideas
 - 2:15pm Breakout 2: Career Kōrero
 - 2:45pm Wrap-Up & Day 2 Preview
 - 3:00pm Catalyst Connect (optional)
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July

Take Action

- 8:45am Arrival & Registration
- 9:15am Keynote
- 9:35am Breakout 3: From Catalyst to University
- 10:00am Morning Tea
- 10:30am Breakout 4: Hands-On Labs
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 12:45pm Panel: Student Voice
- 1:30pm Closing Ceremony & Feedback
- 2:00pm Farewell: Certificates & Wrap-up

Scroll down for session details below. Some sessions will have limited spaces available and will be on first-come-first-served basis upon registration.

8 July



Keynote

10:00am

Esmeralda Lo Tam, a PhD student in Ophthalmology, is a Pacific health researcher and advocate using science, culture, and community to change lives.

Breakout 1: Research in Action

11:00am

Choose one [option to attend](#)

Option A

Dr Gregory Camp from the School of Music uses Disney songs to show how music analysis can unpack powerful messages about gender, race, class, and culture.

Option B

Anuj Bhargava from the School of Medical Sciences invites taurira Māori and Pasifika into kōrero that weaves storytelling, ancestral knowledge, and research to explore how they can make a difference.

Option C

Dr Kasper van Wijk from the Department of Physics uses simple, hands on experiments to explore how tsunamis work and what they reveal about waves and gravity.

Option D

Watch DNA being read strand by strand as Dr Olin Silander and Hui Hui Phua demonstrate real time genome sequencing using cutting edge nanopore technology. This interactive session reveals how rapid sequencing is transforming the diagnosis of rare diseases in newborns - with a chance to try it yourself.

Panel: Research with Impact

12:45pm

This panel explores how research turns into real world change, with academics sharing their impact journeys and the support behind their work. Hosted by Simon Crook - Partnership and Innovation Manager, UniServices. Panellists: Dr Danny Osborne, Dr Jade Le Grice, Dr Larry Chamley, and Dr Suzanne Woodward.

Mini Lectures: Big Ideas

1:30pm

Choose two options to attend. Each number runs concurrently (e.g. A Part 1 is at the same time as B Part 1 and C part 1 etc.).

- Option A - Round 1** - Juncture: Dialogues on Inclusive Capitalism: Dr. Lynn Buckley explores climate change, corporate power, and the future of capitalism and asks students to decide where responsibility truly lies.
- Option A - Round 2** - Modern Slavery in New Zealand? Dr Drew Franklin and Associate Professor Christina Stringer explore how systemic factors - visa settings, labour demand, and power imbalances - drive migrant worker exploitation, calling for structural change in line with SDG 8.7.
- Option B - Round 1** - The Math Behind Winning: Senior Lecturer in Mathematics Florian Lehner introduces the maths behind classic 2-player games, exploring how strategy, logic, and proof determine who can win.
- Option B - Round 2** - A.I. in Climate Science: Dr. Emily Gordon from the Department of Physics explores how artificial intelligence is transforming climate science - from modelling climate systems to analysing extreme events.
- Option C - Round 1** - Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre: Dr. Susan Richter explores research into rare tumours and shows how scientists overcome the challenges of developing treatments for rare diseases.
- Option C - Round 2** - The 'Best Interest of Children' Principle is in Whose Best Interests?: Dr. Moeata Keil invites you to critically interrogate common assumptions about what is in children's best interests when their parents no longer live together.

Breakout 2: Career Kōrero

2:15pm

Choose one option to attend

- Option A** Diagnosed with dyslexia and told law wasn't for him, the Auckland Law School's Dr Peter Underwood challenges assumptions about who belongs at university - and in law.
- Option B** Drawing on her experience as an elite athlete, Dr Helen Murray from the Centre for Brain Research explores how concussions and head injuries impact brain health over time.
- Option C** Dr Rebecca Sharp, Director & Senior Lecturer in the University's Behaviour Analysis Programme, highlights the many ways a career in psychology can make a difference across health, justice, research, and even zoos.

Catalyst Connect (optional)

3:00pm

Held in our world-class Sports facility 'HIWA', enjoy light refreshments and kōrero with your peers, student ambassadors, and University of Auckland staff.



9 July



Keynote

9:15am

Professor Daniel Hikuroa, an environmental researcher at the University of Auckland and UNESCO New Zealand Commissioner for Culture, explores how blending Indigenous knowledge and science can guide us to think beyond our lifetimes and act with responsibility for people and the environment.

Breakout 3: From Catalyst to University

9:35am

This breakout focuses on your immediate next steps after school, exploring undergraduate study, scholarships, student support services, and opportunities available before you begin university study.

Option A

Hosted by the Schools & Community Engagement Team, this session guides students through what happens after Year 12, including applications, key dates, and scholarships.

Option B

Summer Programmes will share how students can ease into university study through programmes designed to build confidence, capability, and readiness. Students will learn about options that allow them to get a head start while being supported in a university environment.

Option C

Hear the real story from current students at the Women in Engineering speed-networking session. This session covers study tips, choosing a specialisation, campus life, industry connections, and how to thrive in the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours).

Breakout 4: Hands-On Workshops

11:30am

Choose one option to attend

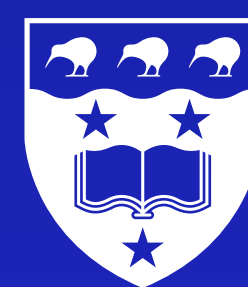
- Option A** Auckland Bioengineering Institute: The ABI invites students to explore how engineering and medicine come together to improve human health. Students can explore a range of research areas through hands-on, interactive displays in an expo-style experience.
- Option B** Design Fab-Lab: Ayla Hoeta introduces students to the design studio and what it's like to study design at university. The session includes a guided tour of the Design Fab Lab, where ideas are turned into physical prototypes.
- Option C** Engineering Lab: Dr. Dulsha Kularatna-Abeywardana uses hands-on electronics to ignite curiosity and confidence in engineering. Students will explore the fundamentals of electronics and circuits while creating a Matariki-themed LED project.
- Option D** Science Building: What happens when matter is pushed to its limits? Dr. Elke Pahl reveals the strange and fascinating physics of extreme temperatures and pressures through simple experiments with liquid nitrogen and low-pressure environments.
- Option E** Dance Studio: Through creative movement and group activities, Dr. Sarah Knox shows how personal stories and backgrounds can be expressed through dance. This session is open to everyone; no dance experience is needed - just curiosity and a willingness to move.
- Option F** Anthropology Labs: Learn how Dr. Ethan Cochrane analyses taonga, artefacts and cultural deposits to learn about ancient lives in Aotearoa New Zealand and the world. Then, Professor Judith Littleton will give you the opportunity to examine the cast of a fossil hominin to see how biological anthropologists use evolutionary theory in their studies of past and contemporary life.

Panel: Student Voice

12:45pm

Hear directly from current students as they share their lived experiences of transitioning into university study, navigating academic pathways, and engaging in research.

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