



THE UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
NEW ZEALAND

Link NEWS

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2020

Schools Partnership Office Newsletter
www.auckland.ac.nz/careersadvisers



Faculty Focus: Science

Why study Science?

As we tackle global threats, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change, we're also faced with uncertainty around the actions we should take as individuals. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by these issues, and by the disparate voices telling us what to do.

Ours is a world where we have vast choice in the ways we can meaningfully contribute. Why then should students choose to study Science?

Understand the world – and change it

We're living in a time of global challenges that require united approaches. Your students can be part of that change. By studying Science, they can delve right into the heart of issues like air pollution, climate change, and food supply. They can have an impact by contributing to scientific knowledge and by communicating the facts and evidence-based solutions to policy makers, governments and the general public.

Be creative

Science is all about observation and experimentation, but it's also akin to subjects that are traditionally viewed as "creative". Scientists use their imagination and unique perspectives to interrogate the status quo and to create new hypotheses. They collaborate with other scientists and discuss their ideas. They design and run experiments to prove or disprove hypotheses, and communicate their findings to fellow scientists and the general public. Creativity plays a huge part in the scientific process.

Develop universal skills

There are lots of different areas of Science, each with unique aspects – but they all rely on universal skills that your students will develop. They'll learn to work with large amounts of information, analyse data, and draw conclusions from evidence. They'll also develop and present solutions to complex problems. The associated skills are not only critical for scientists, but also in the modern workplace and the world in general.

Satisfy your curiosity

Science never stops. Scientists are constantly discovering new things about the world and revising what we once considered fact. Our Science students are also curious about their environment and the way things work. They learn from researchers at the cutting edge of investigation within their fields. For instance, University of Auckland scientists are making the internet safer, protecting native species and environments, and searching for vaccines against diseases such as Covid-19. Your students could contribute to our collective knowledge base.

Open the door

Many career pathways and opportunities are open to our Science graduates. They work in the great outdoors. They explore complex systems. They develop new drugs. They work in clinical environments. They teach in schools. Essentially they help others. Our graduates have many and varied skills that are sought after by employers in various science and non-science industries. They're very well suited for roles that rely on communication, analytical thinking, and problem-solving. Studying Science opens doors – and keeps them open.

Want to know more?

Find out more about where Science could take your students:

www.auckland.ac.nz/science
scifac@auckland.ac.nz



Which science subject should your students choose?

Our webinar series introduces our five areas of study in Science:

- Biological, Health and Life Sciences
- Chemical and Physical Sciences
- Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Human, Social and Behavioural Sciences
- Mathematical and Computational Sciences

Listen to what our Student Academic Advisers have to say about the Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) and conjoint degrees. They also explain how to make course choices that best reflect your students' interests.

We cover the fun aspects of student life too! Hear about our student-led clubs and programmes such as Tuākana and Science Scholars.

Download the webinars and learn more about the subjects you can study in Science.

www.auckland.ac.nz/en/science/study-with-us/study-options/subject-webinars.html

What's Inside

- The new Applied Physics specialisation for the BAdvSci(Hons)
- The Science Scholars programme
- Kiwijam gaming hackathon in Unleash Space
- Our new Schools Outreach and Recruitment Manager for Arts

Meet the Team



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From the Schools Partnership Office



Kia ora koutou katoa

As we reflect on the year past, we look back on times of change and uncertainty for everyone, not only in New Zealand but around the world. We as New Zealanders have been resilient in our bubble of five million people, with the hope that the future will be one of normality and prosperity.

I would like to commend schools and their wider communities for their ability to adapt to the constant changes that needed to be made and, like us, placing students at the centre of all things. Providing their education in 2020 continues to be a mission. As a university we recognise this and have provided innovative solutions to overcome the barriers.

I would like to commend my SPO team too for their resilience and commitment to schools. It hasn't been an easy task but their passion and resolve have been fantastic. Thank you, team.

Finally, on behalf of SPO we wish all students and Career Advisers the very best for term 4, especially with external exams. And we look forward to seeing our new crop of first-year students in the not-too-distant future!

Ngā mihi. Be safe.

Dennis Matene
Director of SPO

Faculty Focus: Science – continued

Making the most of campus life

The student engagement team in the Faculty of Science host a range of activities to make new Science students feel welcome.

At Orientation or “O-Week”, students can meet others taking the same major. There’s a huge variety of fun, informative events. By “huge variety”, we mean campus tours, guest speakers,

information sessions, games, science careers and employment workshops, barbecues, and even a science arcade with free games, activities and books. There’s something for everyone, and each event is a new opportunity to make friends! But sometimes you just want to know something. Our academic advisers have “café hours” when students can get to know them and ask questions. Also, Science UniGuides will be around during the first few days of semester to

help students find their classes. They’ll also be happy to chat about our Science Survival guide.

Remind your students that O-Week’s the time for signing up to all the science clubs. And now’s the time to think ahead! Why not suggest that students go online with their friends this week to check out interesting clubs – and also to picture themselves making the most of life as a Science student:

www.auckland.ac.nz/science-student-life



Faculty Focus: Science – continued

Applied Physics: New specialisation for the Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours)

Applied Physics is the latest specialisation on offer within our Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) programme.* There's strong demand, both locally and internationally, for Applied Physics graduates.

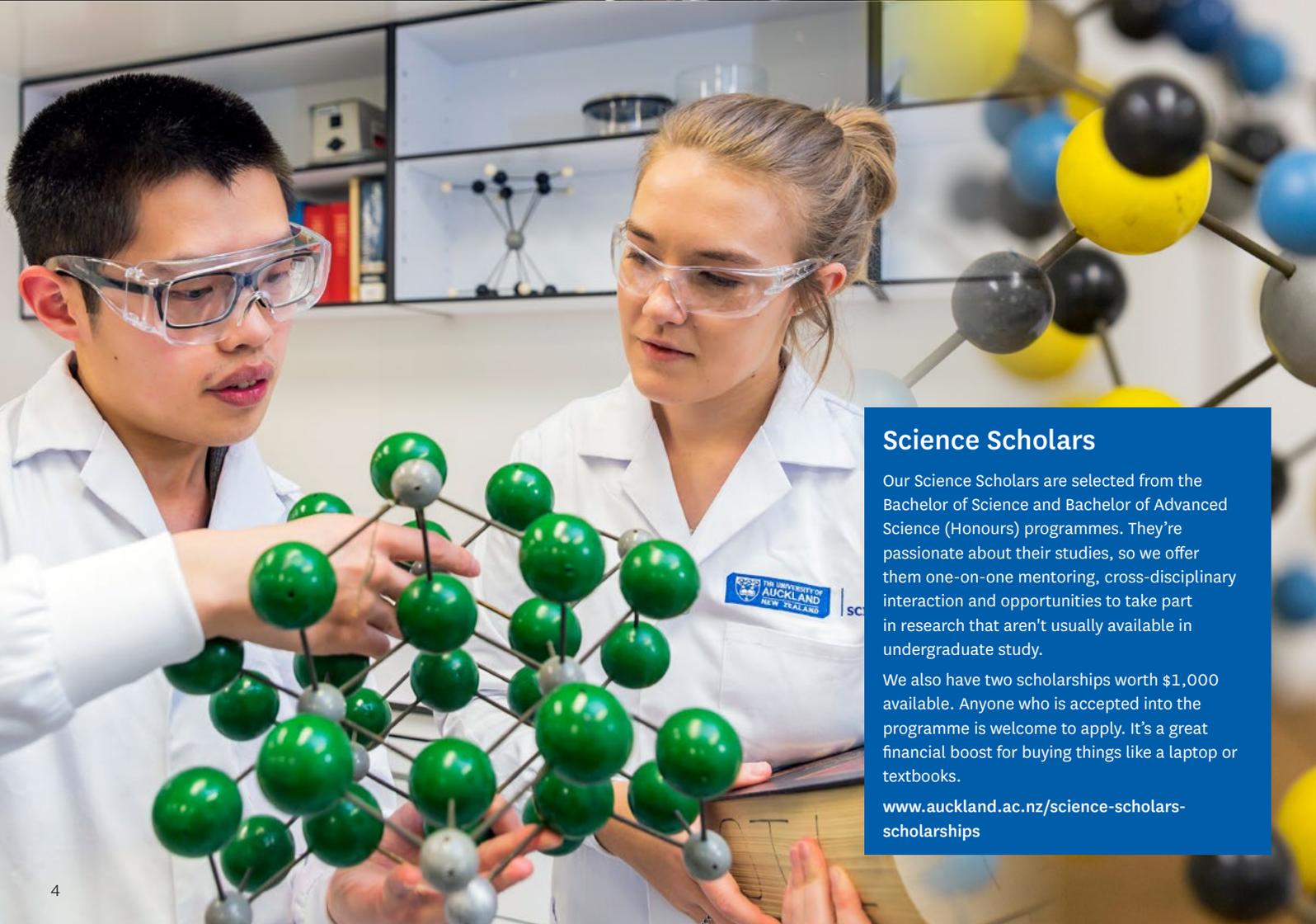
The four-year honours degree aims to equip students with a strong base of core physics knowledge as well as a broad range of interdisciplinary skills sought in both industry and the scientific research sector.

The programme targets five areas of Applied Physics: Computational Science, Medical Physics and Imaging Technology (MPIT), Nano and Materials Physics, Photonics, and Space Systems. There is significant demand for graduates in these areas, and the Physics Department already has strong applied research programmes.

Find out more about Applied Physics and where this degree can take your students.

www.auckland.ac.nz/appliedphysics

** Subject to standard regulatory approval*



Science Scholars

Our Science Scholars are selected from the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) programmes. They're passionate about their studies, so we offer them one-on-one mentoring, cross-disciplinary interaction and opportunities to take part in research that aren't usually available in undergraduate study.

We also have two scholarships worth \$1,000 available. Anyone who is accepted into the programme is welcome to apply. It's a great financial boost for buying things like a laptop or textbooks.

www.auckland.ac.nz/science-scholars-scholarships

Faculty Focus: Science – continued

Student Profile:

Matt Illing

Science Scholar

Programme: Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) – Environmental Change

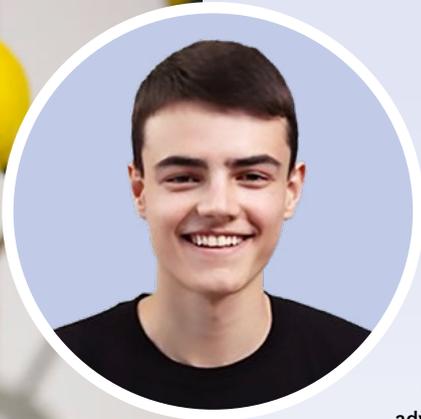
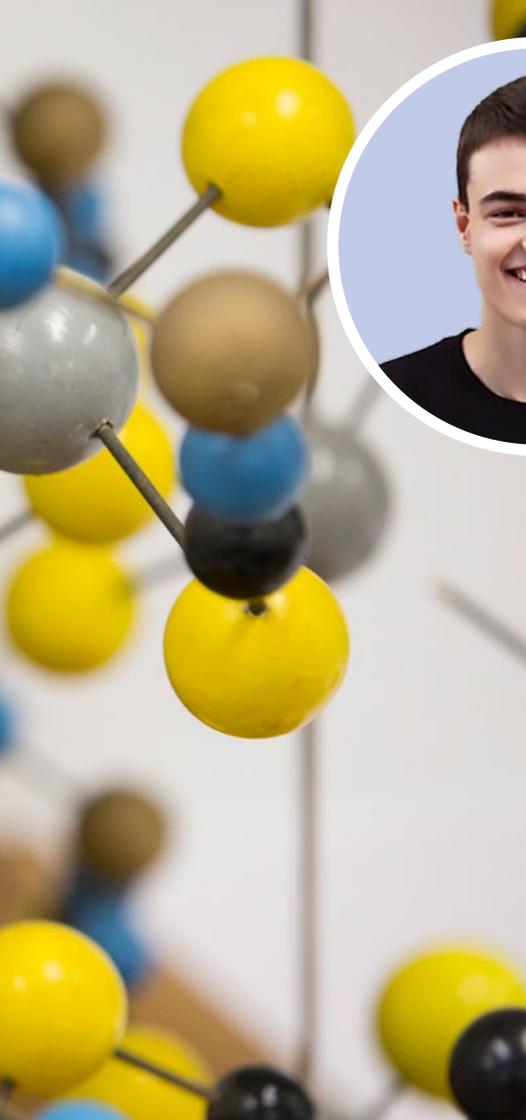
“I’ve always been passionate about the environment and particularly in the science of our changing climate. When I was deciding what to study, I found that it was impossible for me to choose only one or two majors. Studying Environmental Change means that I can take my pick of courses from Geography, Earth Sciences, Environmental Science, Marine Science and more! The freedom to pick and choose from multiple majors really drew me to this programme.

“As a member of Science Scholars, I had to write a popular science article on a topic of my choosing. I chose paleoclimatology (past climate change), a subject I’m really interested in. I had to try and take a complicated topic and explain it in a way that someone with no understanding of the complexities of climate change would be able to understand. This was challenging but I really

enjoyed practicing science communication in a topic I’m passionate about.

“The University of Auckland is the only university that offers the Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) and all its perks. It is also the best university in New Zealand for Geography and the Environmental Sciences. I saw the breadth of the School of Environment courses here at Auckland and the facilities available, and it would have been a mistake to go anywhere else.

“At the moment I would like to continue my education through to postgraduate level. The Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) programme can lead straight onto PhD study, which is really appealing to me. I am really interested in studying climate change and its effects, past, present and future. I hope that one day I will be able to undertake research that will help humanity fight climate change.”



Student Profile: Tom Grayson

Science Scholar and Inside Word blogger

The Inside Word is a University of Auckland blogsite where undergraduate students share their experiences. They cover all sorts of topics – describing both the highs and lows of their University life and offering invaluable advice. The Inside Word is a great way for high-school students to engage directly with bloggers for a fun, vivid and highly authentic glimpse of what their own future may hold!

The following extracts are adapted from Tom’s Inside Word blog “Attention, all budding scientists”, published 3 September 2020.

“Science Scholars is a vibrant community of people willing to engage, learn and share in their love of science.

“In your first year, you’ll be assigned a mentor – someone who is an academic at the university. Through your mentor you have access to the field that you most likely want to end up in. I

have received invaluable career advice, general university advice and incredibly useful tips and tricks pertaining to my majors from my mentor – something I definitely wouldn’t have got if I wasn’t a part of the programme.

“Once a week you get to meet up with all of the other Science Scholars in a seminar and listen to scientists talk about their interests – whether that be their particular field of research or broader topics such as science communication – all over a cup of coffee and biscuits. Perfect!

“Going into your second and third year, you continue on with the seminars but start to focus more on the skills that are needed for scientific research and communication. This all culminates with a research project in your final year of the programme.

“Just apply! Don’t be worried that perhaps your academic results aren’t ‘good enough’, because Science Scholars isn’t just about academics: it’s about a passion for scientific discovery.”

For more information, opinions, insights and experiences from our Inside Word bloggers, encourage your students to click into the blogsite.

www.auckland.ac.nz/theinsideword

THE

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WORD

International

Graduate Profile: Nishita Balamuralikrishna

Data Analyst/Business Intelligence Developer, EROAD

Programme: Master of Professional Studies – Data Science

"I was looking to change my field in my final year of undergraduate study. I enjoyed programming, databases and statistics and wanted a field that would combine all three, so Data Science was a natural choice. During my search for Data Science programmes, I discovered that the University of Auckland is one of the best in the world for Statistics, so that also helped make my decision.

"Taking courses without final exams meant being dependent instead on assignments for credits, which was different from my experience as a student in India, but the professors were very helpful. They answered the numerous questions I had, which took away a lot of stress.

"Since graduation I have been working at EROAD as a data analyst/business intelligence developer. One of my favourite parts of the job is dealing

with massive amounts of data every day. The MProfStuds in Data Science taught me how to deal with big data and develop meaningful insights. Being able to put what I have learned to use in everyday work has been great.

"I didn't have a lot of experience with job interviews, so I attended events run by the University's Libraries and Learning Services on resume writing and interviews. They were very helpful.

"I can see myself moving forward from my role as a data analyst/business intelligence developer. My ambition is to become a data scientist – and in the long term I want to earn a PhD specialising in machine learning and database systems.

"I'm driven by a love for data, programming and solving problems. I hope to help people with the insights and analysis I create. Working for a company like EROAD – who are heavily invested in driver and road safety – means my insights could help save someone's life one day."



Career Development and Employability Services (CDES)

The value of science graduates in this new paradigm of work

CDES support not only current students, but also graduates for up to three years following their time at University. They can help with all aspects of career development. The vision is to help graduates develop the capabilities to successfully self-manage and navigate their world of work, life and learning. Sam Standley is a Career Development Consultant for CDES. Her responsibility includes the Faculty of Science, and she's in regular contact with employers of graduates.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged Science students to question where in the workplace their qualifications will lead. However, what employers are telling us now is to flip this question: it's not about where your Science qualification will take you but where you will take it.

"In this new, ambiguous world of work, however, where exactly do Science graduates fit? Similarly, what opportunities are there for them? Employers are telling us that they look at the broader application of the capabilities students have gained throughout their studies rather than the title of the

qualification. Science graduates are sought after for some of the most valuable work skills in today's world – complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and analytical reasoning.

"In this environment, employers are highly focused on people who work well in teams, form collaborative relationships and effectively communicate ideas and information. A positive, inquiring mind; the ability to manage change and continually learn; agility; and the enthusiasm to get 'stuck in': these are all key.

"Work experience – from retail and hospitality work to babysitting and sports coaching – all experience is valued by employers. What will show value is how a graduate applies that experience with the skills sought after for a particular role.

"Employers report that proactive students put themselves ahead of the game. For example, they're impressed with those who are committed enough to connect with them for informational interviews (chats to explore potential areas of work interest). This, together with a genuine curiosity and a clear message about why they are interested in a particular area of work or specific organisation really makes a student stand out from the crowd."

www.auckland.ac.nz/CDES

University Updates

“She had a great impact on so many of us”

Dr Hilary Chung passes away

We are deeply saddened to announce that Dr Hilary Chung, the inspiring and energetic director of the Global Studies programme at the University of Auckland, passed away in August. Dr Chung, who also founded the Global Studies programme, had been battling cancer for some years.

Her passing is being mourned by the University and wider community. Dean of Arts, Professor Robert Greenberg, a long-time friend, wrote of the great impact that she had on many people.

“Hilary was so passionate about everything she did and was instrumental in building up our very successful Global Studies programme. I know what a great impact she had on so many of us and on her students.”

Hilary also touched the lives of many school students, and we know that her presence in schools will be deeply missed. The Faculty of Arts will be organising a celebration of her life at the University.



Global Studies

Bachelor of Global Studies Prospectus now available

The Bachelor of Global Studies allows students to develop the knowledge and skills to understand global issues and tackle them creatively. This interdisciplinary programme expands students' minds as they're exposed to new ways of thinking about the world. As they gain competency in another language, they deepen their understanding of other cultures and perspectives.

Our *Global Studies Prospectus* is now available to download online and to order.

www.auckland.ac.nz/global-studies-prospectus



University Updates



Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Unleash Space hackathon electrifies gaming

This year saw the University host Kijijam for the first time. This annual gaming hackathon took place in our innovation and entrepreneurship hub, Unleash Space.

Over the course of 48 hours, teams formed and then developed games that addressed this year's theme: "On the Brink". By the end of the weekend, participants had produced prototypes for 33 games, including Kākāpō Frenzy (users must keep farming so that no kākāpō dies) and Schrödinger's House (stop cats from knocking crockery off kitchen benches). One group of high-school

students from Whangārei even designed a game using electrostimulation pads that shock your arm into contracting when you fire a gun, giving the sensation of recoil.

Kijijam co-host Zac Miller-Waugh said the innovation hub and makerspace was an ideal venue. "Kijijam is about celebrating experimentation, success, and failure. Unleash Space is the perfect venue for experimentation and collaboration like this – there were plenty of whiteboards, moving TVs, rearrangeable seating and desks, and lots of power and internet. Our participants loved it."

The game development industry in New Zealand earned \$203.4 million in 2019, double what it made in 2017. Zac says that this is hopefully just the beginning. "There are some fantastic things happening in the New Zealand game development

industry, with new indie games gaining traction and international success. The 'Kiwi' brand of games is diverse and creative, but I would love to be able to see more support and funding from the government and universities to encourage game start-ups in the same way the film industry has. With the right support, this could continue to grow into a massive, long-lasting industry."

Kijijam was organised by current Engineering, Science and Business students of the University of Auckland, along with CTO of Ara Journeys, Ben Kenobi.

<https://kijijam.org/>

Unleash Space is an environment for creating, playing, making, inventing, experimenting and doing. It's free for all staff and students at the University.

www.cie.auckland.ac.nz/unleash-space

Introducing our new Schools Outreach and Recruitment Manager

The Faculty of Arts is delighted to announce Jenny Jefferson as the new Schools Outreach and Recruitment Manager while Ainsley O'Connell is on maternity leave.

"As a BA graduate, a former teacher, and the first in my family to attend university, I'm passionate about supporting students to access higher education. I've worked alongside many students and schools in my previous role at Ako Mātāupu: Teach First NZ and am excited to continue doing so in this role.

"There are many ways in which the Faculty of Arts can support student learning and success in your school. These include professional development opportunities for teaching staff. We've also been busy developing online resources for students, most recently creating videos to celebrate Matariki.

"If you're a teacher or careers adviser looking for ways to connect your students or staff with the Faculty of Arts, or if you have student engagement ideas that you would like to explore, then please do get in touch."

Get in touch

www.auckland.ac.nz/arts-school-or-campus-visit
j.jefferson@auckland.ac.nz



Screen Production major suspended from 2022

The Screen Production major will be suspended from the beginning of 2022. Due to the first year pre-requisites, this means that students beginning a Bachelor of Arts in 2021 will not be able to enrol in the Screen Production major in 2022. Alternative majors that they could consider include Media, Film and Television or Communication.

Screen Production will still be available to study, though. Students could choose to complement their BA studies with existing screen production courses as part of a module. The Faculty of Arts also intends to teach screen production skills as part of the new Bachelor of Communication, which we hope to launch in 2022. More details will be provided once we confirm our programme offerings for 2022.

If you have any further questions, please email the Arts Students' Centre.

asc@auckland.ac.nz

Arts scholarships applications opening and closing soon

Applications for our new Faculty of Arts Auckland Schools Scholarship open on 4 December 2020. The scholarship is worth up to \$5,000 in the first year of a BA or BA conjoint degree. It provides recognition and support for students with potential who face barriers to entering tertiary education. Eligibility spans lower-decile Auckland schools, particularly those in South Auckland and West Auckland. Up to 15 such scholarships are available annually.

Several other Arts scholarships close on 1 November, so encourage your students to have a look and get applying.

www.auckland.ac.nz/arts-scholarships



Left to right: Mohi Allen, Kaitakawaenga; Jenny Jefferson, Schools Outreach and Recruitment Manager; and Carrie Rudzinski, Schools Outreach Coordinator

Our new schools outreach Instagram

We have created a new Instagram account for high school students. It's a fun way for them to connect and find out more about culture, languages, linguistics, humanities, social sciences, Māori studies and Pacific studies at the University. It also provides a space for information on faculty scholarships, student stories, and ways to connect with the schools outreach team.

Connect with us [@arts_engage_uoa](https://www.instagram.com/arts_engage_uoa)

Education and Social Work

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C.J. He: A Teaching student's lockdown experience

C.J. is studying for a Graduate Diploma in Teaching. Here he gives us a glimpse into life as an essential service worker at Healthline during lockdown.

When C.J. moved to New Zealand from China last year, he didn't expect to be stuck at home studying remotely. But that didn't discourage him from immersing himself in the community. He was determined to do his bit to fight the pandemic, and spent his lockdown working at the Ministry of Health's Healthline.

C.J. was assigned to the non-clinical team, helping people over the phone. It was his job to assess each caller's situation and decide the best next steps – whether that was getting tested for Covid-19, booking an appointment with a nurse online or, in more serious cases, contacting emergency services.

“During lockdown, it was crazy because the phone never stopped. As soon as you hung up,

it rang again within a few seconds. Most people are really nice. Occasionally, people were angry, but it's just because they're scared and not sure how to handle this situation. I just kept reminding myself to show empathy and do everything I could to help them.”

Most of the time, the callers were grateful and patient. C.J. says that's what made all his hard work worthwhile. “When people thank you for your work, it gives you a real sense of achievement. It's really nice to hear when someone says you've helped them, and I've definitely had some really positive feedback. Plus, my colleagues are great, and it was good to have that interaction during the lockdown.”

C.J. was recognised by Healthline as one of their top achievers. He says the skills he's learnt through his studies came in handy when dealing with people on the phone. “When you study Teaching, you learn a lot about psychological theories and how people think – this has helped me to understand other people's points of view and ask meaningful questions.”



Student Profile: Kellie Bennett

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga

Programme: Bachelor of Education (Teaching) – Huarahi Māori

Campus: Tai Tokerau Campus Te Papa Ako o Tai Tokerau

“I decided to become a teacher as I wanted to share my knowledge and skills with tamariki. My mother was our Māori teacher when I was at school and this inspired me as I grew older. I love living in

my home area and being close to my whānau, so I pursued my goals at the University of Auckland's Tai Tokerau Campus.

“I enjoy learning the language the most. It's also fascinating to study the history and mauri of the Māori culture itself. The best part of working in a classroom environment is the different abilities and skills you can share and gain from your peers to strengthen your knowledge in a comfortable, safe environment.

“Thanks to the small class sizes, I've enjoyed building relationships with people who were once strangers but now I count them as whānau. Once I finish my Bachelor of Education (Teaching), I want to teach in a rural school in my local area, while continuing to learn and study.”

Student Profile: Joseph Nganu

Programme: Bachelor of Education (Teaching) – Primary Teaching

Campus: South Auckland Campus Te Papa Ako o Tai Tonga

“I've always loved supporting children and youth. After working as a primary school learning assistant and after-school care worker for a few years, I aspired to reach the level of impact and hard work that teachers did, so I decided to follow my dream of becoming a teacher.

“The Bachelor of Education (Teaching) programme has helped me to understand children's minds, and I can now use my skills to create bonds and adapt to each child's individual learning style. My favourite thing about helping others is seeing their smiles.

“I'm so glad I decided to study teaching at Te Papa Ako o Tai Tonga (South Auckland Campus). The vibe of the campus is welcoming and accepting, the location is close to my workplace, and the support and care that the staff provide is amazing.

“I'm balancing my studies with my role as co-manager of sKids, a before- and after-school care provider. I'm looking forward to becoming a teacher and educating the children of New Zealand.”



Creative Arts and Industries

What Covid-19 has told us about the creative arts

It's fair to say that the creative arts are one of the areas hardest hit during periods of lockdown, with mass gatherings and public events postponed, and patrons battering down in their bubbles. Despite this, it's the creative arts we have turned to for comfort in these times of crisis to help us alleviate the silence and uncertainty of isolation.

Lockdown saw a surge of creativity presented across the media. Pointing to stories on TV news, radio, YouTube and TikTok, Associate Professor Ralph Buck, head of the Dance Studies Programme says, "I've never seen so much creativity in the public media. Skits of fathers dancing with their daughters, or creating works using materials found around the house."

Associate Professor Peter Shand, head of Elam School of Fine Arts, also points to unexpected expressions of creativity. These included examples of art-making that people shared with an unknown public. "There was a real shift

in what creative endeavour can achieve, and what we might expect for ourselves after lockdown. The arts have always been important to us, but Covid-19 brought that back into focus."

Covid-19 also prompted budding musicians to share their music online at a time when viewers had time to try something new. Miles Boermans is in his first year of a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance. During Level 4, he uploaded one performance per day to Vimeo, in what he called The Lockdown Sessions.

The popularity of free online concerts and performances, and a craving for the collective experience, has resonated across the world amidst the global pandemic. We're meeting our need for momentary joys via video games, novels, online shows and craft-making, all stemming from the creative sector. The arts have confirmed how critically they contribute to community cohesion and help to reduce feelings of social exclusion and isolation. Washing our hands will help keep us healthy, but the creative arts will help keep us human.



Read the full article at www.auckland.ac.nz/arts-during-covid



Simon Devitt Prize for Photography 2020

John Golena, a second-year Bachelor of Architectural Studies student and former pupil of Westlake Boys High School, has won the 2020 \$1,000 Simon Devitt Prize for Photography.

This year's fitting theme was "Isolation", inspiring an explosion of creativity amongst the University's Creative Arts and Industries students. Over eighty entries portrayed individual interpretations of isolation. They captured a unique part of history during the extraordinary worldwide lockdown.

Golena won with his image *It's Just Me, Myself and I: Solo Ride Until I Die*. He grew up in

Singapore, moving to New Zealand when he was 16. He says his current studies in architecture have pushed him to improve his design thinking and he aspires to share what he learns through teaching others. He dreams of becoming a creative director designing film sets.

This annual competition, sponsored by Auckland-based photographer Simon Devitt, is just one of many awards and scholarships available to new and current students at the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries. This year, we're excited to have added to our growing list. Current opportunities include:

- **Veza Family Entry-Level Scholarship in Music**
Up to \$5,000 to support the studies of a domestic or international student enrolling in their first year of a Bachelor of Music, or a Bachelor of Music conjoint degree. Applications are open from 20 September until 1 November 2020.
- **Rewi Thompson Undergraduate Scholarship in Architecture** \$8,000 to support the studies of a Māori student enrolling full-time in a Bachelor of Architectural studies. Applications for this scholarship open on 4 October 2020.



View all Creative Arts and Industries undergraduate scholarships here: www.auckland.ac.nz/cai-scholarships

From the Equity Office – Te Ara Tautika

Kia ora from the Equity Office – Te Ara Tautika

We hope your school year is going well. The Equity Office – Te Ara Tautika leads the University's commitment to being safe, inclusive and equitable. We are committed to helping Māori and our equity groups achieve their academic goals and grow as individuals. Our equity groups include:

- Pacific students
- Students with disabilities
- Students from refugee backgrounds
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, Takatāpui and other (LGBTQI Takatāpui+) students
- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds

www.equity.auckland.ac.nz

Extra help for students with invisible disabilities

Do you have students with specific learning and/or invisible disabilities? The Equity Office's Student Disability Services can help with the process of securing special conditions for written tests and exams.

Your students may have arranged academic accommodations at high school. Examples include extra time for breaks, writing time, a reader and/or writer or a computer. They may be eligible for similar conditions at University.

To arrange this, they will need to make an appointment with Student Disability Services to bring and discuss any evidence of their academic accommodations at high school.

As evidence, please advise them to ask their SENCO for documentation (such as writing and/or typed samples) and confirmation of the conditions they received.

Your students need to:

- Apply for special assessment conditions (SAC) as soon as possible – ideally before the semester starts
- Make sure their documentation meets University requirements
- Be aware that the conditions offered at university may differ from those at school

Share our special conditions page with your students to ensure that they don't miss out!

www.inclusivelearning.blogs.auckland.ac.nz

Make an appointment with Student Disability Services.
www.auckland.ac.nz/disability-appointment

Former refugee and PhD student draws on background

Bilal Nasier fled war-torn Afghanistan with his family when he was four years old, claiming asylum in New Zealand. Today, he is completing a doctorate in Clinical Psychology in the Faculty of Science. Now 25, he is one of almost 800 students with refugee backgrounds currently enrolled at the University of Auckland.

"University can be very daunting, especially to former refugees who grow up in New Zealand but may not have older siblings or family who have been through tertiary study."

Bilal holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree, majoring in Psychology. He practised as a youth worker with former refugees, as a behavioural therapist, before returning to complete his doctorate. But, for the first 15 years of his life in New Zealand, he didn't tell anyone he was an asylum seeker.

"I was ashamed – how do you bring up in a conversation with kids who grew up in New Zealand that people smugglers brought you here on false passports? But, as I got older I've been able to draw on that background. It's become a source of strength."

Bilal's family made the decision to flee Kabul after their home was bombed while his mother was giving birth. "The house we lived in was bombed the day my brother was born – a rocket-propelled grenade landed in the lounge. Luckily it didn't go off. Earlier that day my mother was sent home to give birth because the hospital had been bombed. That was the day my parents made the decision to leave."

As it is difficult for Afghans to get visas to travel overseas, his family were forced to pay human smugglers for fraudulent passports to get out. "My father is a doctor, and we were a relatively wealthy family, but we left with just a couple of suitcases. It was the hardest decision my family ever made. It has had many far-reaching consequences, but we're still here and we're still alive."

Bilal attended Mount Albert Grammar School and, after completing his

undergraduate degree, helped established Empower, a mentoring network for high school students from refugee backgrounds.

"Students from refugee backgrounds may feel university is not for people like themselves, so events such as open days and campus visits are useful – anyone can just go onto campus and look around."

Cost can be another barrier. Bilal recommends taking time to explore not only equity scholarships but scholarships that anyone can apply for. Bilal sits on the board of the University of Auckland's recently opened Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies, which he is excited about, as it will foster more scholarships and new research programmes. He also sits on the Ministry of Youth Development's Partnership Fund Board.

"You can get into university and you can be successful. And this isn't 'despite' being a refugee... It's something that can be advantageous rather than something that sets you back."

To find out more about the support we provide for students from refugee backgrounds, see www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/ssrb



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