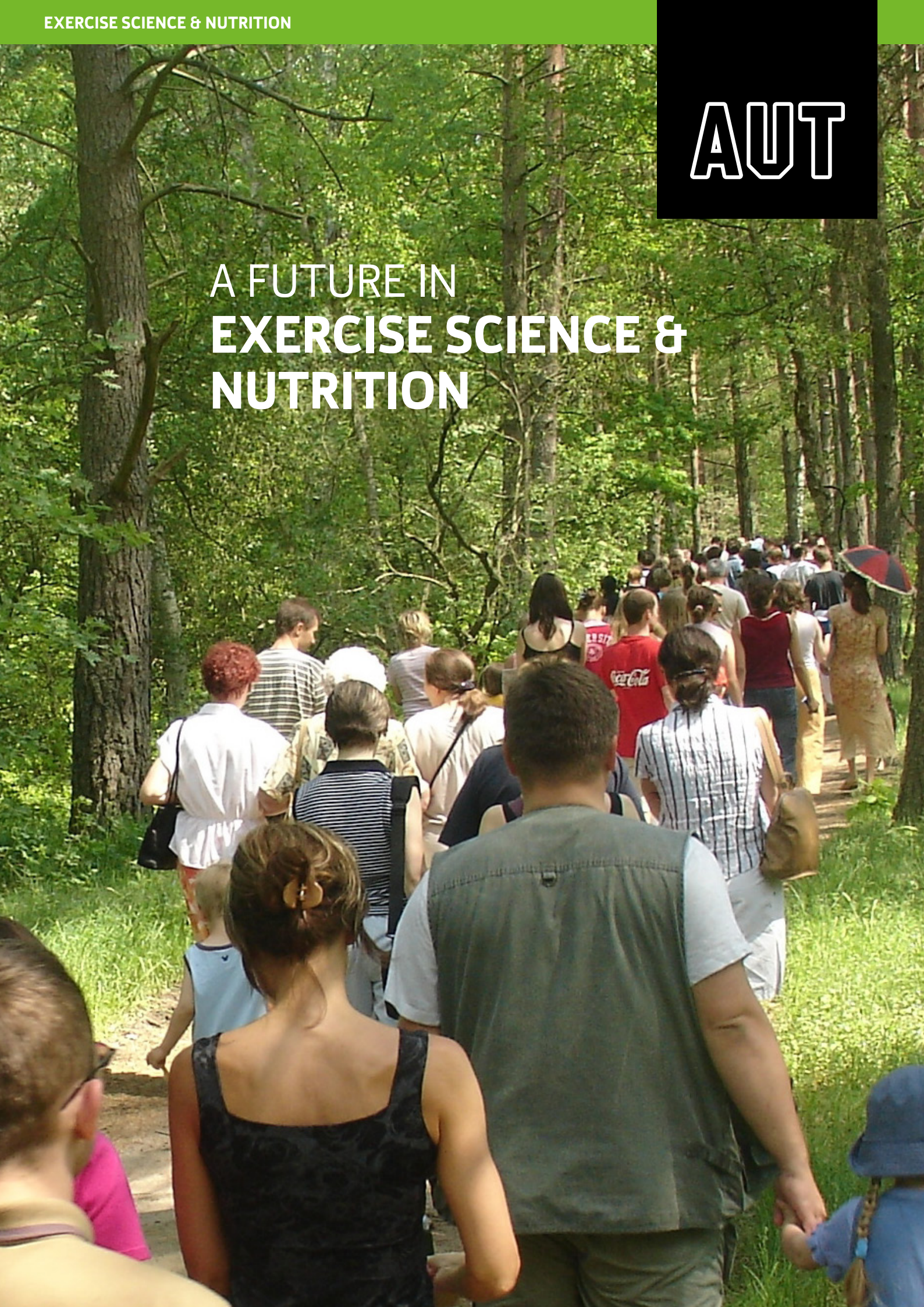


AUT

A FUTURE IN EXERCISE SCIENCE & NUTRITION





WHAT IS EXERCISE SCIENCE AND NUTRITION ABOUT?

Healthy eating and regular physical exercise can impact significantly on individual wellbeing.

Regular physical exercise reduces mental conditions such as anxiety, depression and mood swings, while good nutrition and a healthy body weight improves overall health and well-being and helps stimulate a healthy outlook. Good nutrition and exercise also helps to prevent serious health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers.

However modifying or changing peoples' habits around physical exercise and eating requires a change in approach and mindset.

Organisations tasked with the health of the population are continually exploring new strategies to encourage people to become more active on a permanent basis. To do this they need qualified staff who understand community needs and can work with diverse ethnicities and ages.

There is also a growing interest in the use of exercise as a preventative treatment.

In the area of nutrition another challenge is to find ways to creatively combat the pervasive marketing of poor quality food, particularly to children.

Do you believe in the importance of promoting healthy eating and regular physical exercise and viewing exercise as a way to prevent ill health? Are you able to inspire change and confidence in others?

Does the physiology of the body inspire you to want to help individuals and communities live healthier lives? Are you keen to bridge the gap between the medical world to help people improve their health?

Then studying exercise science and nutrition could lead to a fulfilling career.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Occupational health and wellbeing – Increasingly, organisations are committing to safeguarding and improving the health and wellbeing of their employees. This is partly a response to legislation and partly due to employers realising they need to look after their workers in order to attract and maintain the workforce they need.

Behaviour change – Supportive environments and social support are seen as key influences in bringing positive behaviour change. Approaches include online programmes that encourage staff to collectively take positive action about their health, such as reducing sugar intake or walking 10,000 steps a day. At the same time, people are turning away from team sports because of a lack of time to participate in team activities outside of the workplace – a trend sporting organisations need to combat (Source: Harbour Sport).

Technological advances – Fitbits, smartphone applications and other wireless-enabled fitness tracking devices are now a popular way for people to motivate themselves to exercise, but they are not a quick fix to getting healthy. While technology can help facilitate change in behaviour, the micro-management of people's movements through technology needs to also be closely aligned with healthy eating to bring about lasting change.

Exercise as a preventative treatment – Chronic conditions can be prevented/improved with structured, specific use of exercise – this is an important aspect of exercise science. Exercise, when performed correctly, is known to have a potent effect, and the science is constantly evolving. Getting the optimal effect out of a minimal amount of time is another growing trend, eg HIIT (high intensity interval training).

Changing demographics – The demographics of regions are changing rapidly. Auckland's largest population growth is currently from Asian, Samoan and Indian populations. Community and sport organisations need staff who can identify key influencers within those population groups and engage in a meaningful way.

Funding dependency – Community organisations are dependent on funding from government which means roles come and go depending on the funding available, rather than community need. The more positive health outcomes to occur through healthy eating and physical activity strategies, the more government agencies are likely to support these roles.

Whole food eating paradigm – What has traditionally been considered nutritionally 'healthy' is changing. For example, the current movement towards eating whole foods – food that is minimally processed and packaged. Professionals are needed who can understand and communicate the nutrition and scientific analysis of such trends.

Health in the community – Community-based nutrition and physical activity-related health promotion initiatives are becoming more common. Examples include Project Energize, Let's Beat Diabetes, Kickstart breakfast campaigns and Healthy Families New Zealand. Smoking cessation programmes are also on the increase.

Community based exercise – Professionals are delivering exercise options in a much wider variety of settings. These are often community based exercise services, delivered in non formal settings such as local halls or parks and may involve iwi and church groups.

WORK SETTINGS

Most employment opportunities are in non-governmental organisations and trusts or community sport organisations, rather than high performance sport. Graduates may work with all ages or specialise in specific areas, such as schools or workplaces. They can work in multidisciplinary teams alongside other health specialists and are usually based in an office or out in the field delivering workshops, seminars and/or programmes on nutrition and exercise science.

Employers include:

Regional sport trusts, eg Sport Auckland, Harbour Sport, Sport Waitakere and Sport Waikato. Graduates often start as co-ordinators for programmes such as active communities, active families, sport or green prescription.

Non-governmental organisations, including the Heart Foundation, Pacific Heart Health, Nutrition Foundation and Asian Health Services. Health promoters work alone or within teams supporting front line workers, as well as working with the marketing and communications team.

Schools employ sport co-ordinators to work alongside PE and health teachers, or contract health promoters to run programmes and workshops alongside counsellors and teachers on topics, eg eating disorders. Schools are also involved in non-governmental projects, eg Project Energize.

Public health, including Ministry of Health, DHBs, primary health organisations and agencies, sometimes employ people for health promotion roles focusing on exercise science and nutrition.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Health promotion co-ordinator – Develops and co-ordinates health promotion programmes, including physical activity and nutrition. Advocates and lobbies for health promotion causes, works alongside schools and community groups to identify health issues and solutions.

Community health worker – Involves helping and supporting community development and is often the first point of contact with the health sector. May include workshops to improve cooking skills with whānau, along with general health promotion in the area of physical activity and nutrition.

Exercise and wellness specialist/consultant – Develops initiatives and exercise programmes to increase physical activity levels. Develops and implements health and wellness campaigns, eg smoking cessation, diabetes screening. Researches and writes marketing material for health programmes and initiatives.

Clinical exercise physiologist/exercise specialist – Provides individualised and specialised exercise and lifestyle education for clients, including people with conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, or chronic pain or injury. Provides specialised exercise testing, exercise programming and client education in conjunction with other medical and allied health professionals.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Technical

- Good general science background including human anatomy and physiology
- In-depth knowledge of food, its components and the effect of food and nutrients on health and disease across the lifespan
- Ability to apply health promotion models and practice
- Able to integrate knowledge of health promotion and clinical exercise physiology and apply this to practice

General

- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Ability to analyse research and information
- Strong project co-ordination, management and planning
- Collaborative working style
- A strategic thinker
- Committed to achieving improved health outcomes for individuals as well as groups

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Able to inspire confidence and change in others
- Able to build and maintain relationships
- Ability to work independently and show initiative
- Focused on positive outcomes



SALARY GUIDE EXAMPLES

	Salary
Health promoter with relevant degree	\$47,850 –\$48,332
Senior health promoter	\$71,350 –\$99,000
Exercise & wellness consultant	\$45,000 –\$55,000
Exercise specialist	\$45 – \$70 per hour approx, depending on experience

Source: Careers NZ/District Health Boards/PSA, Allied, Public Health and Technical: Multi-Employer Collective Agreement expiring October 2017, Occupational Outlook MBIE 2017

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (April 2017) and should only be used as a guideline.

THE AUT APPROACH

Two 30-hour placements at 2nd year and 350 hours at 3rd year provide industry focused and work-integrated learning for AUT students doing exercise science and nutrition in the Bachelor of Sport and Recreation.

Placements include schools, regional sports trusts, the AUT Human Potential Centre, Heart Foundation and Vitality Works. Placements can lead to contracts or full-time roles.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Postgraduate qualifications, including certificates, diplomas, masters and PhD study, are available.

Research areas include evolutionary biology, understanding of human metabolism and nutrition, healthy living in young people, urban design and neighbourhoods and risky play.

ALEXANDRIA AH CHONG

Pacific Island Community Manager
Harbour Sport

Bachelor of Sport and Recreation in Physical Activity and
Nutrition
(renamed Exercise Science and Nutrition in 2017)

"I have been working for Harbour Sport for five years with my main focus being the SportSPasifik project which is further developing my skills in project management.

A vital part of my role is leading the Harbour Sport Pacific team to ensure we are meeting the needs of the community through continuous development of the SportSPasifik project.

This project supports and addresses specific barriers the community faces in effectively engaging in sport and recreation and living physically active lives.

I have gained a wealth of experience in my role, which over the years, has involved delivering healthy lifestyles programmes as well as contract, stakeholder and financial management.

We have five different healthy lifestyle programmes under the project's umbrella. For example Equip'd is a programme that offers mentoring, fitness, nutrition and sports sessions to 12 to 18-year-old girls.

Another programme, NiuMovement, is for Pacific families with young children. It provides opportunities for families to engage in nutrition education and physical activity for positive health outcomes.

Through my job, I have the opportunity to make a difference in my community and I love that. There is never a dull moment.

I am always challenged, and despite these challenges, it feels very worthwhile when we see success stories and positive changes."

EMPLOYER COMMENT

"Alex has the ideal combination – she has the skill set and expertise of her major as well as her cultural knowledge. She is well equipped to identify opportunities within the Pacific community and to help develop sport and recreation programmes that meet the needs of the community. Making and maintaining such links is really important.

Alex has developed relationships with the key influencers and through taking a collaborative approach she has opened up positive opportunities for programmes to be developed to meet the needs of the community.

The work she has built up over the last 12-15 months has resulted in us being able to take on another full time staff member to work with her and her community."

Kevin O'Leary
Community Manager, Harbour Sport



USEFUL WEBSITES

Health Promotion Agency

www.hpa.org.nz

Public Health Workforce Development

www.publichealthworkforce.org.nz/careers-public-health-community-health-worker_158.aspx

Health Careers

www.healthcareers.org.nz

Sport Waikato and Project Energize

www.sportwaikato.org.nz/programmes/team-energize.aspx

Harbour Sport

www.harboursport.co.nz

Sport Auckland

www.sportauckland.org.nz

FURTHER INFORMATION


For the most up-to-date information on exercise science and nutrition or the Bachelor of Sport and Recreation, please visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/ex-sci-nutrition

FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire


futurestudents@aut.ac.nz

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Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)

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EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For other Future Career Sheets visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets

For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through <https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>


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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, August 2019.

