

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU



**A FUTURE IN
PUBLIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH**

“NĀ TŌ ROUROU, NĀ TAKU ROUROU KA ORA AI TE IWI”

“With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive”

At the heart of public and environmental health is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of health for all by improving where people live, work and play. Therefore public and environmental health focuses on empowering people and communities to take control of their health and wellbeing in a sustainable and equitable way.

Often seen as change agents, public and environmental health professionals have skills in health which focus on

- Communications and media for the prevention of illness and maintenance of wellbeing and ensuring we sustain a healthy environment
- Big data analysis and health needs assessment
- Health policy and systems
- Management and leadership
- Entrepreneurship.

These skills can be used across a range of sectors including health and education, local government, private organisations and urban and community development. For example, if you were working for a district health board or not-for-profit organisation you might be involved in making a healthy living video series or an app on community stories. If working for local government, you might advise on healthy cities projects.

Specialised areas in public and environmental health, such as emergency disaster management or global public health, require postgraduate qualifications. These open up more opportunities to overseas travel and work. Public health is widely recognised and growing industry locally and internationally.

Do your strong values and beliefs drive you to want to make a difference for the future of health and for people? Are you committed to health and wellbeing? Are you driven, multi-talented and have a passion for people to be holistically well? Are you interested in developing communication, data and leadership skills? If so, you could have a future in public and environmental health.



OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Wide ranging advocacy – There is growing momentum towards finding ways to bring about change through all domains of society. The public and environmental health sector advocate for people's rights to good health, disaster risk reduction, social equity, health equality and social justice at an individual, household, local community or national level.

Preventive approaches to wellbeing – There is an increasing emphasis on prevention of ill health and of protecting our fragile environment. Public health aims to look at how to positively impact on preventive health outcomes for all levels of society. It is increasingly important that there is appropriate funding for public and environmental health to support the prevention of disease.

Impact of digital age – There are four strong skillsets required for public health in the digital age: communications and media, community health and promotion, data analysis and management. Employment opportunities will vary depending on your interests and the range of skills you have developed.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Entry roles aside, most public and environmental health roles require a four year qualification.

Health promoter/public health practitioner – sets up and coordinates health promotion programmes. Advocates for and works alongside schools, communities and organisations to help identify health issues and solutions. May also develop and manage health promotion programmes, researching, writing submissions, evaluating reports or designing digital resources such as social media campaigns.

Epidemiologist – studies diseases within populations, analysing what causes disease outbreaks in order to treat existing diseases and prevent future outbreaks. Involves identifying risk factors for disease prevention and targeting prevention measures. Requires strong analysis skills, knowledge of statistical concepts, critical thinking, and attention to detail. (Source: Public Health Online)

A postgraduate level epidemiology is required for this specialisation.

Disaster risk reduction officer – responsible for programme implementation of disaster prevention and risk management activities. Works with local communities and groups identified as vulnerable. Liaises with relevant government partners and stakeholders to ensure comprehensive disaster risk reduction approach. (Source: UN NGOs)

A postgraduate level qualification in emergency management is required.

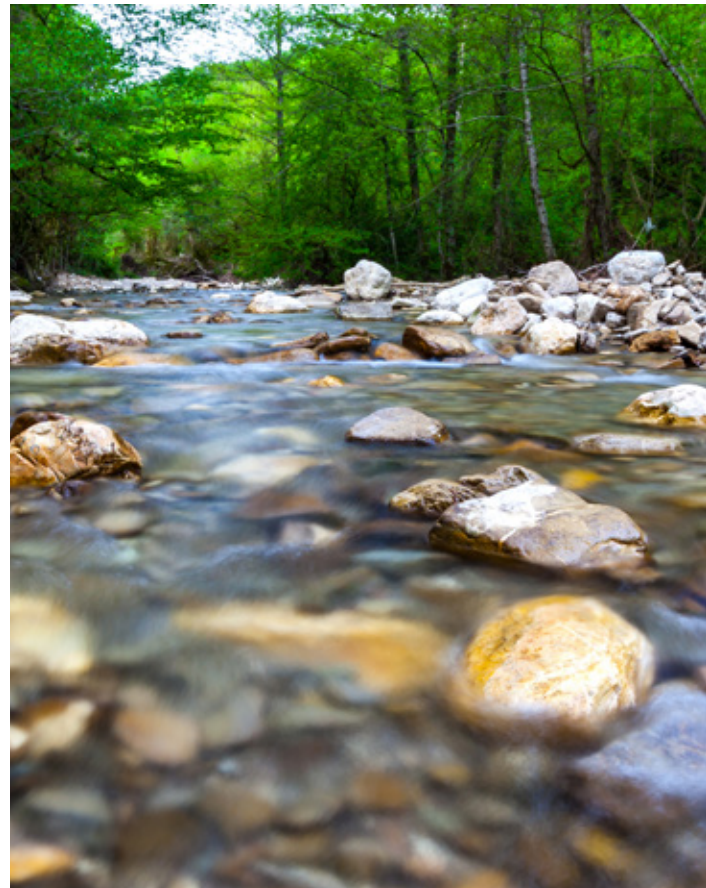
WORK SETTINGS

The holistic approach of public and environmental health graduates opens employment opportunities in community, primary health, local and regional governments, as well as non profit organisations, corporate trusts and the private sector. Here is a sample of the possibilities:

Non-profit organisations/ Social enterprises – Includes organisations such as the Heart Foundation, Māori and Pacific Health organisations, Oxfam, Save the Children, Mental Health Foundation and World Vision and corporate trusts. There are also opportunities to work with international development teams by assisting with environmental disaster support after natural disasters or by encouraging good health practices through programme coordination or community health relations.

Government ministries – Includes Ministry of Health, Social Development, Civil Defence and Emergency Management, and Foreign Affairs, city councils and local government. These ministries are involved in projects including reduction of the spread of disease after natural disasters, poverty reduction and healthy cities and sustainability initiatives.

District Health Boards (DHBs) – Includes planning and funding, strategy and development, communications, administration, management and research. Public and environmental health graduates work within DHB multidisciplinary teams alongside health professionals (eg nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists).



Communications and media specialist (Public Health)

– Provides communications and media technical and strategic support. Includes providing quick, timely advice across a range of issues to support proactive activity and help grow online presences of organisations. Skills in app and game design, and strategic use of communications and media for ehealth campaigns are becoming more sought after.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Our graduates are team leaders, project designers, and increasingly they will work in the digital space, helping to create apps, serious games (games with a social purpose), and ehealth projects. Skills include:

- Analysis and critical thinking
- Creative problem-solving
- Planning and project management
- Strategic communication
- People and relationship building

Knowledge includes:

- Project and change management models, tools and strategies
- Local and global best practice, standards and benchmarks in sustainability
- A good understanding of indigenous philosophies and models of health relevant to New Zealand's diverse society
- An understanding of the social, cultural, economic and political factors influencing health in New Zealand and beyond

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Versatile, resourceful, articulate, creative and capable of making a difference
- Respectful and ethical with integrity and respect for people
- A team player and collaborator; outcome focused, a leader and advocate
- Strongly committed to Te Tiriti O Waitangi and to promoting indigenous and Pasifika models of health

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

A number of employment opportunities in public and environmental health require advanced levels of academic qualifications, eg epidemiologist or disaster risk reduction officer.

Postgraduate qualifications include:

- Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Public Health or Emergency Risk Management
- MPhil or PhD – public health

SALARY GUIDE

Pay varies depending on qualifications, experience, employer and workplace. Further education and qualifications have a big role to play in career and pay scale opportunities.

	Salary (per year)
Health promoter	
Graduate entry level	\$45,000 - \$65,000
Senior (5+ years)	\$65,000 - \$95,000
Epidemiologist	
Average wage	\$57,244 - \$78,792
Project co-ordinator	
Entry level	\$65,000
Project management junior	\$75,000
Project Manager	
Senior project manager (5+ years)	\$90,000 - \$110,000

Sources: Auckland DHB Allied, Public Health, Technical MECA 2018, Careers NZ, www.healthcaresalariesguide.com, www.payscale.com

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (early 2019) and should only be seen as a guideline.

UNIQUE TO AUT

Unique to the public and environmental health programme at AUT are micro-colleges – short term intensive courses designed for students to gain skills in areas beyond their set curriculum. Micro-colleges can be incorporated into public and environmental health papers or done separately. Topics covered include leadership, data analysis, complex problem solving (using game design world building) and documentary making, deepening the skill level required for industry sector roles.

Students are also encouraged to consider electives from other disciplines (eg law or statistics) if wanting to explore specific interests or expand their public and environmental health job opportunities.

Through AUT's Department of Public Health research contacts, there are opportunities for AUT graduates to get internships with international not-for-profit organisations (NGOs) in South East Asia, South Asia and Pacific nations.

A portrait of Therese Lam, a woman with dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a patterned top. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a poster with the word 'HEALTH' visible.

THERESE LAM

Health Promoter
Family Planning New Zealand

Bachelor of Health Science in Health Promotion*

"I work as a health promoter for Family Planning NZ in Dunedin. My role involves promoting, educating and empowering young people to build skills and knowledge about positive sexual health and reproduction, including how to critique media messages, gain access to services and have a positive view of sexual and reproductive health. To do this I need to network, connect and build positive relationships with schools, alternative education providers, health and community members/ organisations.

FPA also supports primary and secondary teachers in schools with FPA Sexuality Road Resources, helping teach sexuality education to Year 1 – 10 students. We facilitate training workshops, conduct consultations and plan meetings with teachers and model Sexuality Ed classes for teachers.

I thoroughly enjoy going into the schools and working with our young people. It's rewarding to know we provide a safe environment for them amongst their peers and teachers where they can discuss these topics and issues.

It can be very challenging as a NZ born Samoan to speak to Pasifika communities (particularly parents and grandparents) about sexual health and reproduction. This topic is often seen as taboo among Pasifika communities which means it's often not spoken about within the home.

As health promoters we need to find the courage to openly address these issues and aware of the different views and perspectives that all communities may have when it comes to this topic.

I've been here five months. Previously I worked at Gambling New Zealand in Auckland for one year, helping community, health and social services to address problem gambling. I got that role while on placement."

*Renamed Public & Environmental Health from 2019

EMPLOYER COMMENT

"A successful health promoter understands the diverse communities in which they work, while developing and maintaining a broad range of cross-sector and cross-cultural relationships. Strong facilitation and communication skills are essential, as is the ability to be a responsive and reflective practitioner.

Therese is outstanding in the role. She is passionate about health and wellbeing and driven to ensure equitable health outcomes for all. Family Planning is lucky to have someone with Therese's skills and expertise.

Work placements are invaluable when it comes to opening up employment opportunities for graduates, as it allows students to demonstrate to potential employers that they can couple academic theory with day-to-day practice. Graduates should be open to exploring possibilities to hone their facilitation and communication skills, as this will help them further connect with their communities."

Scott Waring-Flood

Area Manager (Dunedin),
Family Planning NZ

USEFUL WEBSITES

Healthy families

www.healthyfamilies.govt.nz

Ministry of Health

www.health.govt.nz

Hauora

www.hauora.co.nz

Public Health Workforce

www.publichealthworkforce.org.nz

Health Careers

www.healthcareers.org.nz/Careers

FURTHER INFORMATION


For the most up-to-date information on Public and Environmental Health and the Bachelor of Health Science, visit our website visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/peh

FUTURE STUDENTS

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


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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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SOUTH CAMPUS


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

