

AUT

A FUTURE IN
**OUTDOOR
EDUCATION**





WHAT IS OUTDOOR EDUCATION?

Outdoor education uses the great outdoors as a tool to teach us about ourselves, our interaction with others and the environment. The outdoors is a unique place to learn, and offers people dynamic new experiences to develop risk management and decision-making skills. The outdoor educator helps people to apply understandings from these experiences to their everyday lives.

Outdoor education specialists work in many fields and settings. They teach in schools, work in outdoor pursuit centres, operate adventure tourism ventures and can progress into management with the right experience. Furthermore, many graduates take their skills overseas to other global adventure capitals such as Antarctica, Nepal, North and South America, the Alps of France, Austria, Switzerland and more.

All outdoor educators' activity is shaped by passion for the outdoors. Whether they are guiding river kayaking groups, instructing climbers in rope skills, discussing the importance of nutrition in adventure racing or educating teenagers in secondary schools, their overriding objective is to encourage people to become more involved in society, and to promote the power of adventure and its potential to enrich our lives.

Are you inspired by the natural environment? Do you love physical challenges and endurance? Can you see yourself instructing others and demonstrating the skills necessary for success in the outdoors? If so, a career in outdoor education could be for you.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Strong growth in tourism sector – Forecasts indicate that visitor arrivals, days and expenditure will increase between 4% and 6% per annum from 2015–2021. With the increasing popularity of adventure tourism, there should be a rise in opportunities for outdoor educators.

Source: Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment

Adventure Activities Regulations – The Health and Safety in Employment (Adventure Activities) Regulations 2011 require commercial adventure tourism and outdoor operators in New Zealand who provide adventure activities to undergo a safety audit and become registered. This has led to an increase in demand for trained instructors that are up-to-date with the regulations, as well as auditors able to carry out compliance checks.

Outdoor pursuits centres offer good employment prospects – Outdoor pursuits centres operate all year round, and therefore avoid the seasonal contracts that are typical of the industry. However, these centres have a lower turnover of workers because there are few other full-time opportunities.

Source: Careers NZ

More secondary students from 2020 – Statistics NZ data indicates an increase in secondary age students from 2020. With more and more schools implementing outdoor education programmes, the demand for secondary teachers with outdoor education qualifications will grow.

WORK SETTINGS

Work is mainly outdoors, but will be classroom or office-based at times. It can be seasonal and many jobs are temporary contracts. However due to the global nature of the outdoor industry many people work across the world enjoying continuous summers (rafting, sea kayaking, white water kayaking and canyon guides) or winters (ski and snowboard instructors). Instructors are often based in rural areas, that can be quite remote. The work is physically demanding, so fitness and stamina are essential.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Recreation centre manager

Runs centres that provide facilities for and instruction in a range of outdoor activities, such as climbing, mountaineering, water sports, orienteering, horse riding and cycling. This might involve teaching people survival techniques, driving groups of tourists to out-of-way destinations and managing tour guides.

Outdoor instructor/guide

Directs a wide variety of outdoor activities and adventure tourism, from kayaking to mountaineering to canyoning and more. Can be out in the great outdoors for a number of days at a time. Works with groups that can range in size, ethnicity and age, depending on the clientele.

Ranger

Oversees people using council-owned parks and DOC estates. Manages and safeguards the environment, which can involve checking on traps, cutting tracks, protecting rare plant and animal species. Preserves the natural heritage and unique biodiversity of Aotearoa New Zealand.



Outdoor education teacher

Oversees a variety of activities, from classroom instruction to adventure field trips, to skills assessment and evaluation. There is a good balance between outdoor activities such as field trips, and classroom teaching, testing and paperwork.

Secondary school teachers in outdoor education require a bachelor's degree in sport and recreation (outdoor major) or equivalent, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Teaching.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Skilled at teaching outdoor skills to students and adults from a range of backgrounds and cultures
- Knowledge of different teaching methods and learning styles
- Research skills to keep up to date with best practice in teaching
- Outstanding leadership and management skills, with a willingness to lead by example
- Group facilitation skills
- Decision-making skills and the ability to stay calm in difficult, even dangerous situations
- A high level of skill in their outdoor activity or activities, such as rock climbing, sea kayaking, sailing and bushcraft
- Knowledge of occupational health and safety (OHS) procedures relating to activities they undertake
- Outdoor survival and first aid skills
- Knowledge of weather conditions and geography in the area where you work
- Able to gather, interpret and present data related to the outdoor industry
- Strong understanding of commercial skills required to run an outdoor recreation business and outdoor events
- Understanding of the potential of outdoor education to enhance lifestyle, health and learning

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Positive, open-minded and able to motivate people
- An interest in other aspects of the outdoors, such as the geography, geology and natural, social and industrial history of the region in which you want to work
- Confident in being responsible for the safety of others
- A commitment to the conservation and protection of the natural environment
- Mature, responsible and able to stay calm in emergencies

SALARY GUIDE

A lot of outdoor education work is seasonal, and consequently it is difficult to arrive at an accurate 'salary' across a full year. Another consideration is that guides often have expenses such as food, accommodation and power provided as part of their salary package.

Raft guides are paid on a per trip basis, with pay rates starting at \$65 per trip and increasing to \$120 per trip

Outdoor Instructors are paid between \$28,000–\$40,000 per year based on qualifications and experience.

Foundation Outdoor Instructor (1–2 years' experience) – \$150 per day

Intermediate Outdoor Instructor (2–4 years' experience) – \$180 per day

Senior Outdoor Instructor (4 + years' experience) – \$200 per day

Sources – Bigfoot Adventures and Katiuna Cascades

Secondary school teachers earn about \$48,300 in their first year and then progress to a maximum of approximately \$73,000 after seven years (2015 figures).

Source: Education NZ, 2015 figures.

In private or independent schools, teachers may be paid an extra \$2,000 to \$3,000 a year.

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (mid 2015) and should only be used as a guideline.

UNIQUE TO AUT

AUT is the only university in New Zealand offering degree-level outdoor education programmes, which means that graduates receive an internationally recognised qualification.

Students undertake a major co-operative education placement which takes approximately two days per week throughout your final year of study. Examples of previous placements include Camp Adair, Bigfoot Adventures, Dilworth School Rural Campus, St Cuthbert's College, Kahunui Campus and Marine Education Recreation Centre (MERC).

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Postgraduate options include the Graduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Outdoor Education, as well as master's in either sport and exercise or health science. MPhil and PhD programmes are also available. Research areas include teaching and learning in stressful environments, and technical rope work and testing.



ANDREA WECH

Assistant Head of Learning Area

Outdoor Education, Health and Physical Education
Alfriston College

Bachelor of Sport and Recreation in Outdoor Education

"I initially did two years as an outdoor instructor at a camp on Motutapu Island after completing a Diploma in Outdoor Recreation Leadership at AUT. I really liked it, but I only got to see kids for one week at a time. Then I went to an information evening about outdoor education, and loved the idea of being involved in the development of students, and seeing their growth over a three year period.

The kids I deal with are incredible, and our relationships are so strong because of the length of time we spend together, and the fact that we get to see each other outside of our comfort zones, and in challenging environments. We take them tramping in places in the Kaimais and the Central plateau, sea kayaking in the Hauraki Gulf, snorkelling at Goat Island, and this year we went sailing on the Sir Peter Blake programme, which was an amazing experience.

The work is really diverse and exciting – we do a lot of risk management, logistics and planning, and liaising with instructors, quite aside from our classroom teaching. I'd love to design a new outdoor education programme at a school one day, as more and more schools are seeing the benefits of it."

EMPLOYER COMMENT

"Outdoor educators need the ability to build and maintain relationships with a range of agencies in the outdoor education field. Strong behaviour management is really important on a field trip, as well as comprehensive knowledge of safety management plans. They also need sound knowledge of a range of contexts in relation to the outdoors eg tramping, camping, snow related, bush related or water related.

Andrea is confident in the outdoors, and is able to build positive relationships with her learners. She can critically assess programmes of learning and think of ways to make them more engaging for learners. She is able to effectively manage potentially dangerous situations while remaining calm and following relevant procedures, as well as having a range of knowledge, which she utilises to create and carry out an engaging programme of learning."

Aimee Snelgrove

HOD, Outdoor Education, Health and Physical Education
Alfriston College

USEFUL WEBSITES

New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association

www.nzoia.org.nz

Adventure Jobs New Zealand

www.adventurejobs.co.nz

NZ Mountain Guides Association

www.mountainguides.org.nz

Tourism Industry Association of NZ

www.tianz.org.nz

Skills Active | www.skillsactive.org.nz

TeachNZ | www.teachnz.govt.nz

Education NZ | www.education.govt.nz

Education Council (formerly NZ Teachers' Council)

www.educationcouncil.org.nz

Education Gazette | www.edgazette.govt.nz


FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about Outdoor Education studies and the Bachelor of Sport and Recreation, visit: www.aut.ac.nz/outdoor-education

FUTURE STUDENTS

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


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For other Future Career Sheets visit:

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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.

