

A FUTURE IN
**TOURISM WITH
ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDIES**





WHERE DOES ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES FIT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?

Increasing concern across the globe about our environment has led to criticism of the environmental impact of tourism and a burgeoning interest in alternative types of tourism. Ecotourism, responsible tourism, nature-based tourism, adventure tourism and sustainable tourism have become more prevalent since the mid-1980s, and require people who can provide a great tourism experience that is nature based, environmentally friendly and sustainable for the environment.

In this sector, you could be:

- developing/managing tourism products and destinations
- operating tourism locations and enterprises
- managing natural, public and conservation lands
- carrying out research about conservation and biodiversity
- promoting and marketing 'green' tourism

Do you love people, travel and tourism, nature and the outdoors? Do you want to do something constructive towards reducing the environmental impact of tourism and raising public awareness of environmental issues? Environmental studies could open up a raft of great career options for you in tourism and related industries.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Global trends

At a global level, there is strong growth in tourism operations related to environmental studies. Nature-based tourism is the fastest growing tourism sector, increasing by 10–12% each year.

Sources: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Tourism Organization.

As airlines and others in the travel and tourism industries sign up to reduction of carbon emissions and other sustainability goals, there are growing career possibilities in the monitoring of progress and compliance.

Marketing and education about the benefits of sustainable travel and tourism is crucial to the industry's success. This will increase career opportunities as businesses build more sustainable brands and contribute more to conservation projects.

New Zealand trends

Inbound tourists are increasingly arriving from the East (especially China) rather than western countries.

There is rapid growth in customers using online and mobile systems to locate and book tourism activities. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, are becoming increasingly essential in generating interest and promotion of activities.

Ecotour guiding and outdoor pursuits business in New Zealand are increasing. Examples include nature watching (e.g. whale, dolphin, penguin watching); nature tours (e.g. guided walks, recreational fishing, snorkelling); and recreational tours (e.g. kayaking, tramping, cycling). These organisations are private, corporate, governmental or not-for-profit. They employ people in permanent, casual and voluntary roles, depending on their needs and funds.

Another significant move is the increasing number of partnerships between private and public organisations (PPPs). For example, Air New Zealand's sponsorship of the DOC (Department of Conservation) Great Walks.

WORK SETTINGS

The tourism sector is a significant contributor to the NZ economy, directly employing 5.7% of the workforce (110,800 full time equivalent employees).

Source: MBIE – Tourism Sector Report 2014

Work environments can range from offices and retail shops to native bush, rivers and mountain ranges, depending on the nature of the role and the business. Therefore, you may need to be willing to travel and spend much of your time outdoors.

Some roles work, such as tour guiding, are seasonal. Therefore tour guides tend to be self-employed and work on short-term contracts.

Work can be found at organisations such as:

- Department of Conservation
- Auckland Council and other local/regional bodies
- Regional tourism offices and visitor centres
- Not-for-profit enterprises such as MERC, YMCA, Outward Bound and many others
- Iwi/Maori tourism endeavours
- Private tourism operators

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

National park ranger

Responsible for protecting and supervising designated outdoor areas. Ensures campers, hikers and other visitors follow the rules and do not disrupt the natural environment or fellow guests. Gives guided tours and presentations. Also may work in visitor centres, providing guests with information, maps and advice. Participates in search-and-rescue missions and conservation projects.

Tour guide (nature/recreational)

Develops and plans strategies to ensure tours/trips meet client expectations and health and safety requirements. Identifies, reports and proactively manages hazards encountered in the field. Leads the tours/trips providing information about the history and geography of the region.

Permissions advisor (DOC)

Processes applications for requests to undertake specified activities on public conservation land. Assesses the applications, communicates with colleagues for technical advice, and writes reports and concession contracts (where appropriate). Meets potential applicants for pre-application meetings.

Owner/operator (ecotourism adventure guiding business)

Manages all aspects of the successful operation of the business, including:

- Marketing / promotion, working with sales agents, inbound tourism operators, regional tourism organisations, digital and print marketing agencies

- Accounting – keeps track of cash flow and future planning
- Health and safety – maintaining knowledge of current legislation and practices
- Human resources
- Also often works as a tour guide within the company, and may have special expertise/knowledge.

RANGE OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Communication and people skills

- Able to easily relate to people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds.
- Highly competent at communicating technical knowledge simply and dealing with differing opinions in a professional manner
- Able to establish a professional rapport and manage conflict through developing strong relationships skills
- An active listener with proven customer service, teamwork and leadership skills

Functional and specific skills

- Competent and confident with outdoor recreation activities, including safety and risk management, guiding and teaching
- Confident in providing expertise in specific activities e.g. kayaking, rafting, climbing, bushcraft
- Capable in financial management, strategic management and marketing
- Strong planning, organisational, decision making and time management skills
- Able to analyse and distil information for decision makers and applicants

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the fundamentals of ecology and natural resource management.
- Good working knowledge of legal requirements regarding biosecurity, health, risk and safety, and of relevant legislation such as the Resource Management Act, the Conservation Act and the New Zealand Health and Safety Act.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Friendly, outgoing and able to put people at ease
- Helpful and perceptive to visitors' needs
- Polite, patient and professional
- Genuinely motivated to share and conserve nature and the outdoors
- Active, adventurous, self-sufficient, physically capable

SALARY GUIDE

	Salary (per year)
Tour guide	\$25,000 – \$60,000
Tourism owner	zero to \$1 million +, depending on business, lifestyle etc
DOC permissions advisor	\$47,900 – \$64,900
DOC ranger – with degree	\$45,000 – \$55,000
DOC senior ranger	\$50,000 – \$65,000

Sources: Department of Conservation, Careers NZ.

Salary ranges are indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication and should only be used as a guideline.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

Many adventure tourism and nature based tourism operations require NZ Outdoors Mark registration, and first aid certification. Others require specific licences or qualifications, ie licence for marine vessels, a SCUBA diving licence, or recreational instructor certificates (e.g. kayaking, diving, climbing).

Relevant professional associations include ProGuides New Zealand, NZ Outdoor Instructors Association, Sea Kayak Operators Association of New Zealand and Museums Aotearoa.

THE AUT ADVANTAGE

AUT offers the only tourism degree with an environmental studies major in NZ. The major offers a unique combination of people skills, tourism industry knowledge and environmental studies.

AUT graduates also benefit from a co-operative placement in a business enterprise gaining hands-on experience and the chance to test theories and identify gaps in their learning.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Further study in tourism is available at postgraduate level, including the Postgraduate Diploma in International Tourism Management, Master of International Tourism Management, Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy. Research areas include sustainable tourism, economic impact assessment, tourism strategy development, marine tourism. www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/hospitality--tourism/research/research-expertise

BOOKINGS



ERIN FAULKNER

Customer service consultant, Explore NZ, Auckland

Bachelor of International Tourism Management in Environmental Studies

“My future plan is to further develop my career path in the adventure tourism sector.

Right now I am on a short term contract in a role where I actively promote and sell Explore NZ's Auckland and Bay of Islands operations. I am based in the Auckland sales kiosk. It is a short term contract due to the seasonal nature of the business.

Explore NZ encourages me to go on familiarisation visits to their destinations and respects my opinions and asks for my input when making decisions. This helps me see the potential for career advancement in the future.

My duties include greeting potential customers and selling the numerous products the company offers. I also inform the sailing crews of passenger numbers and cancellations, organise catering for the lunch and dinner cruises and interact with reps from tour agencies and groups from cruise ships.”

EMPLOYER COMMENT

“Tourism is a fun industry and has lots of career opportunities, including senior roles to work towards. We look for values such as honest, dependability, passion, professionalism and willingness to learn. Key skills include communication, customer service and competency with computer and technical systems.

Erin is a quick learner, getting to know the staff and structure in no time and seamlessly fitting into our culture. Her approach is very mature – from the start she showed great initiative and participation in observing, listening and getting on with projects.

We employed her to work at our kiosk sales and ticketing office, placing her in projects where we needed someone who was reliable, responsible and had initiative. We like the way that if Erin does not understand a task or got stuck on a project she will ask for assistance.”

Dominik Strobel

Project manager, Explore NZ, Auckland.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand
www.tianz.org.nz

The International Ecotourism Society
www.ecotourism.org

Department of Conservation – careers site
www.doc.govt.nz/about-doc/careers

HSI / Service IQ (ITO)
www.hsi.co.nz
www.serviceiq.org.nz

Hospitality New Zealand
www.hospitalitynz.org.nz

Ecotourism Job Centre
www.ecoclub.com/jobs

For the most up-to-date information on environmental studies, visit our website:
www.aut.ac.nz/environmental-studies

You can also contact the AUT Student Centre team for help and advice:

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