



Science Communication

Enhance your degree with a minor in Science Communication

“Connect people with science to touch lives and effect meaningful change in society.”

Being a scientist today means not just navigating the world of research, but also integrating with the community, sharing knowledge and informing policy. Don't settle for a standard science degree – gain workplace-ready skills by taking the new Science Communication minor alongside any science, applied science, arts and science, and humanities major. You'll develop creative flair and practical tools to inspire wonder, nurture greater understanding of the natural world and empower meaningful action to address society's greatest challenges.

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Why study Science Communication?

Science communication is rapidly expanding as an academic field, with endless opportunities for meaningful careers connecting society with advances in the understanding and application of science and technology, as well as nurturing creativity and enjoyment of science.

The new minor in Science Communication introduces students to the theory and practice of effective science communication, including the tools to be a creative and powerful communicator in the modern world. It is designed to complement an existing major in either the humanities or the natural sciences and is composed of five papers – four compulsory and one elective.

Background required

There are no prerequisites for enrolling in the minor. We welcome students interested in any aspect of science communication, whether that's creative writing, public speaking, film-making, organising public events, engaging young people in science, informing government policy or anything else! Take the minor alongside any major subject, and gain workplace-ready skills that will place you a step ahead in any career.

What will I learn?

The four compulsory papers provide a background to communication theory, an understanding of the societal context within which science and science communication operate, as well as a whole host of practical skills such as film-making, hosting public events and creative non-fiction writing.

These papers are:

- MFCO 103 Introduction to Communication Studies
- SCOM 109 Communicating Science: An Introduction
- MFCO 222 Science, Technology and Society
- SCOM 301 Science and the Public

An additional elective paper allows you to pursue more specialised interests, from the philosophy of science, to journalistic writing, to public health promotions.

What about further study?

Our department offers exciting opportunities for further study at Otago, with an extensive postgraduate degree programme. We teach creative thinkers how to use stories to communicate the science they are most passionate about. In addition to an academic thesis, our students produce creative works that go into the public domain – be it a film, podcast, book, website, exhibition or any other creative endeavour involving the communication of scientific information. Our graduates are well-connected with industry professionals and leave equipped with an advanced job-ready skill set as well as a deep theoretical understanding of our field.

Career opportunities

Graduates of our programme are employed in a huge range of empowering careers, including regional and city councils, non-profit organisations, Crown Research Institutes, science and natural history magazines, video game development, commercial television, government ministries and museums.

For questions about Science Communication at Otago, check out our website:

otago.ac.nz/science-communication

or email the undergraduate co-ordinator:

fabien.medvecky@otago.ac.nz

We'd love to talk to you!

PROFILE

Harriet Taylor

BSc in Human Nutrition, Science Communication minor

Don't stress too much about what you want to study at university, says Harriet Taylor.

"A lot of people go in with an idea of what they are going to do and it changes in the first few weeks. Just be open to the possibility that you might end up doing something completely different."

Harriet was recommended to try nursing. "I studied for a year and enjoyed it, but I wasn't sure if it was quite right for me. I liked sport and science so I switched to Otago to study Human Nutrition."

She had friends at the University and enjoyed the student vibe on campus. "What you see in the adverts for Otago is true. Everyone is in a compact area and there are always people around to socialise with. It really met up to my expectations and there's a good gym with great classes."

"It's a really cool environment. You're free to do what you want but there is always help there if you need it. The lecturers are happy to answer any questions and the student tutors were great."

"You've got everything you need and the buildings are warm in winter, which is important coming from Auckland."

Harriet added Science Communication as a minor late in her degree, and it changed her thinking.

"It's a mixture of science and finding creative ways to connect with the public, and it opened me up to a broader view of life. It helped me to realise that I wanted to be more involved with the public than just science."

She reconsidered prospective careers, and now plans to study for a Master of Audiology. "I enjoy science and working with people and felt audiology stood out as giving me that mix."



For questions about
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