



Education

How we learn

“Studying Education gave me a political and theoretical understanding of how and why people learn.”

Byron Sanders
Special Education Advisor,
Ministry of Education

Education is the cornerstone of society. It is the fundamental tool with which countries, communities, and individuals can improve their well-being. But how do societies ensure that their citizens become knowledgeable? How do we develop from infancy through old age? How do we learn throughout our lives?

Education helps to answer these questions and more, by providing a critical analysis of educational theories, policies, and practices that promote the understanding of education and its processes.

The University of Otago College of Education offers a range of papers contributing to the study of Education, as a subject major or minor in a Bachelor of Arts degree, or as a minor subject included in other degrees.

We welcome you to the exciting study of Education!

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Why study Education?

We are involved with education throughout our lives.

Education papers investigate how learning happens, and they identify and address patterns of success and failure in education.

Topics of interest are:

- Educational psychology (how children, young people, and adults learn)
- How education systems evolve and how they function
- The role of education in the lives of families, whānau and communities
- The historical influences that have shaped institutions of childhood and education systems nationally and internationally
- The cultural, social, and political influences on the school curriculum
- The study of gender, disability, Māori education, ICT, and research methods also feature in the undergraduate work of the University of Otago College of Education

The study of Education is diverse and interdisciplinary. It equips graduates with a range of sought-after skills including critical thinking, problem solving, strong interpersonal skills, and both written and verbal communication skills.

Background required

There are no specific subjects you need to have studied at school in order to study Education.

Education at Otago

The Bachelor of Arts majoring in Education is a three-year degree programme.

In your first year, you will learn about the political, social and cultural dimensions of contemporary educational practice. You also will study lifespan development in its social context. This includes the studies of families, of cultures within New Zealand, and of disability.

Beyond your first year, you'll develop understanding of how people learn, ways of facilitating learning, and how education in New Zealand has developed over time.

We offer papers that allow students to focus their studies in the following areas:

- Psychology of education
- Sociology of education
- Pedagogy of education
- Equity in education
- Disability Studies and education

Southland campus

The Southland campus, based in Invercargill, offers some Bachelor of Arts Education papers.

Degree options

Students can study Education as a major or minor of a Bachelor of Arts. They may elect to do a double major or a double degree, such as a BA in Education and BSc in Psychology.

Students find that Education papers are a useful complement to their other degrees including Arts, Physical Education, or Social Work and Community Development. Education papers can enhance any degree, as all professionals are involved in learning.

Student exchange

The University of Otago has exchange agreements with over 100 institutions worldwide. You have the opportunity to study at an international partnership institution while paying only New Zealand fees and completing your qualification within the same timeframe as if you'd never been away.

Career opportunities

Students with a major in Education are able to apply for a diverse range of jobs. Education can be an especially useful background for careers in research, policy analysis, social work, the counselling professions and many areas of public service.

Educational processes are important in almost all settings and Education graduates can have a valuable role in most organisations.

PROFILE Byron Sanders

Special Education Advisor, Ministry of Education

Byron Sanders wanted to gain a broad understanding of education, which meant studying a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Psychology alongside a Bachelor of Teaching in Primary Education.

"It's useful to have that practical understanding of how you teach children from the teaching degree but also the in-depth knowledge of why we teach children the way that we do from Education Studies."

While working as a teacher Byron completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Education. Although he enjoyed his time teaching, he always saw himself working in a more holistic role focused on vulnerable children.

"I never saw myself as a life-long teacher and the Bachelor of Arts set me up with other opportunities.

"Studying Education gave me a political and theoretical understanding of how and why people learn. The ability to tailor assignments to your own interests was also really valuable."

Byron now works for the Ministry of Education as a Special Education Advisor, within the behaviour team for the Otago region.

"We provide in-school support for teachers and other people who work alongside children that have behaviour needs. We work collaboratively to make a plan for that child who isn't necessarily succeeding in the 'natural pathway'.

"My Education degree gave me a holistic view of what education is and a global view of what it could be. When you are looking at children who don't fit the mould, it's good to have a diverse knowledge around what could be put in place.

"Having the teaching experience as well grounds me and gives me a good grasp of what is achievable in the classroom."

Byron's passion for vulnerable children shows in his continued study – currently he is completing a Master of Arts part-time, focused on how to build resilience in children.



For questions about
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otago.ac.nz/education