

Staff supervision interests

Members of the Philosophy programme provide expert and conscientious supervision in a wide range of areas. These include:

- Philosophy of science (especially philosophy of biology)
- Philosophy of religion
- Metaphysics (especially realism versus anti-realism, and the philosophy of time)
- Metaethics in general and the is/ought question in particular
- Philosophy of language
- Philosophical logic (especially paraconsistent logic)
- Political philosophy (especially environmental political philosophy)
- Ethics and public policy
- Social epistemology (especially conspiracy theories)
- The history of philosophy, especially early modern philosophy (Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke and Kant), and the history of analytic philosophy (Wittgenstein, Frege, Bertrand Russell, G E Moore and Lakatos)
- The philosophy of Marxism

For more on staff supervision interests see the staff profiles at: otago.ac.nz/philosophy/dept/staff

Postgraduate placements and outcomes

For placement details for our former PhD graduates, please see: otago.ac.nz/philosophy/postgrad/placement

Many of our MA graduates have gone on to pursue their PhDs at great places like Harvard, UCLA and ANU. Some of our Philosophy graduates work in politics throughout New Zealand government ministries.

Some recent PhD topics

- A defence of biodiversity as the goal of conservation biology
- McDowell's realism
- Normativity of meaning
- Wittgenstein and Davidson on rule-following and meaning
- The languages of relevance logic
- Imperatives and logical consequence
- Communitarianism about meaning
- Social contract theory

Some recent MA topics

- The ethics of predictive algorithm use in the justice system
- Evolutionary debunking arguments in metaethics
- Aspirational naturalism
- Realism and antirealism about meaning
- Normativity of belief
- Are all languages equal?
- Sociocultural natural capital and intergenerational justice

Some recent honours dissertation topics

- How to care about future people
- Automatic vehicle collisions: developing a framework of responsibility
- Putnam and Wright on the nature of truth
- Making sense of Spinoza's "Free Man": Teleology and perfection in the Ethics
- Rule-following and meaning
- Semantic non-factualism
- Virtue ethics

Useful links:

For international students: otago.ac.nz/international

Postgraduate study resources and links at Otago: otago.ac.nz/postgraduate

Scholarships information: otago.ac.nz/postgraduate/getascholarship

Enrolment processes: otago.ac.nz/study/enrolment

City and region, and other Otago campuses: otago.ac.nz/about/area

For further information contact:

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HUM-CS025-0620



POSTGRADUATE



Philosophy at Otago

One of the best research departments in the country.



Study postgraduate Philosophy at Otago



Philosophy at Otago

Philosophy has been taught at Otago since the University's foundation in 1871, and ever since the programme has played host to many internationally renowned figures. In recent years, the Philosophy programme has frequently been evaluated as the best in New Zealand – and one of the very best research departments of any kind in the country – by the PBRF.

Our research strengths include ethics, metaethics, philosophy of science, logic and philosophical logic, early modern philosophy, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, environmental philosophy, social epistemology, political philosophy and the philosophy of language.

The Philosophy programme has a friendly and collegial atmosphere, with a lively postgraduate community. Staff and postgraduate students regularly socialise together. We also have a steady stream of visitors from overseas to our weekly seminar programme, so students are able to meet, and hear papers by, a wide range of visiting philosophers.

The Philosophy programme offers a range of postgraduate qualifications, from the Diploma for Graduates through to the PhD.

Postgraduate qualifications

Diploma for Graduates (DipGrad)

This is intended for people who have a degree in another subject, but want to get a qualification in Philosophy. It puts a student in the same position as a BA graduate with respect to eligibility for higher degrees.

Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BA(Hons))

Students who have completed a BA or Diploma for Graduates in Philosophy may apply for admission into this programme. The student must write a dissertation of approximately 12–15,000 words under the supervision of two members of staff, and study three advanced Philosophy papers. It is a one-year, full-time course.

Postgraduate Diploma in Arts (DipArts)

This diploma has the same conditions as for BA(Hons) except that candidates may enrol part-time.

Master of Arts (MA)

Students who have completed a BA(Hons) or DipArts in Philosophy are eligible to apply for admission into the master's programme. The student must write a thesis of approximately 30–40,000 words under the supervision of two members of staff. It usually takes one-year, full-time (or the equivalent part-time) to complete.

Master of Arts (Coursework) (MA(Coursework))

The new MA (Coursework) programme is designed to provide a multi-disciplinary grounding for Humanities students in a range of subjects as preparation for further study or future employment. Students who have completed a BA with a B+ average in their 300-level papers can apply to enrol in this new option. Students will continue study in the major subject of their BA. The programme takes either 12 months or three semesters of full-time study to complete. The programme can also be studied part-time.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Students who have completed a BA (Hons), Postgraduate Diploma, or MA in Philosophy are eligible to apply for admission into the PhD programme. The student must undertake a major research project, and write a thesis of approximately 60–100,000 words under the supervision of two members of staff. It usually takes three years full-time (or the equivalent part-time) to complete.

Benefits of postgraduate study at Otago

We currently offer postgraduate students the following support and resources:

- Supervision by two academic staff members who are available for regular consultation.
- Masters' and doctoral scholarships, which are open to all: otago.ac.nz/scholarships
- Access to a computer with internet connection and relevant software.
- A desk in a shared room in or near to the Philosophy programme.
- Funding for research support such as conference travel or specialist research materials.
- The opportunity to work as a tutor on our 100-level papers, gaining valuable teaching experience and remuneration.
- Excellent library facilities: library.otago.ac.nz
- A friendly and supportive postgraduate group who run their own postgraduate seminars giving students the opportunity to present their own work to their peers.
- Postgraduates attend the weekly philosophy seminar (otago.ac.nz/philosophy/events/seminar). We regularly host visiting speakers from overseas.
- Weekly gathering in the local pub with staff and postgraduates.
- The chance to live and study in Dunedin, a university city with strong social, cultural and sporting traditions. It is situated in the South Island of New Zealand, with easy access to outdoor pursuits and stunning scenery.

