



Border work and border crossing
Co-learning
Communities of practices

Emerging practices and spaces of postgraduate geography knowledge production in NZ

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Person
Process
Product

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Some questions about contemporary postgraduate geography in NZ

- What is the magnitude & breadth of the postgraduate geography enterprise in NZ?
- What are the key influential forces on postgraduate geography experiences & practices?
- Are sub-disciplinary divides strong? OR is there evidence of a swing towards integrated courses & research endeavours?
- Is geography knowledge production becoming inter- or trans-disciplinary? OR is there an effort to retain strong disciplinary boundaries?

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Session overview

- Magnitude of NZ postgraduate geography knowledge production enterprise
- Institutional, nation state & global contexts
 - 1990s versus 2000s
- Broad themes emerging
 - Students versus supervisors
- Summary/ concluding remarks
- Questions

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Masters & PhD thesis completions in NZ

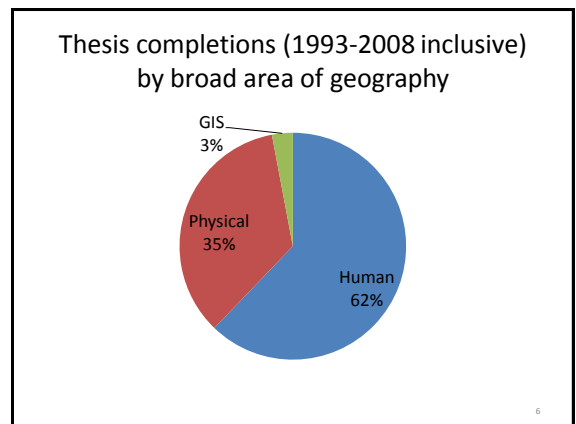
University	Masters Completions 1990-1999	Ph.D. completions 1990-1999	Masters completions 2000-2008	Ph.D. completions 2000-2008
Auckland	3332	711	3957	1376
AUT	2	0	745	67
Waikato	1696	108	1185	440
Massey	1786	586	2110	802
VUW	1128	268	1696	524
Canterbury	2021	492	2317	730
Lincoln	669	186	404	278
Otago	2629	668	2556	1076
Totals	13263	3019	14970	5293

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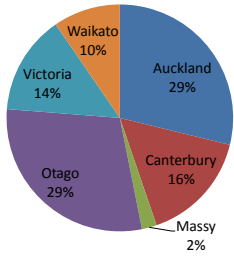
The geography enterprise in NZ

- 1204 masters & PhD theses completed 1993-2008 inclusive
- 1086 masters & 118 PhDs
- Accounts for approximately 7% of total postgraduate enterprise in NZ
- Supervised by around 220 supervisors – 30 of whom supervised 20 or more theses
- Around 25 % of supervisors supervised around 75% of theses

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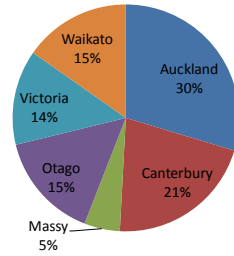


Percentage masters completions by university (1993-2008 inclusive)



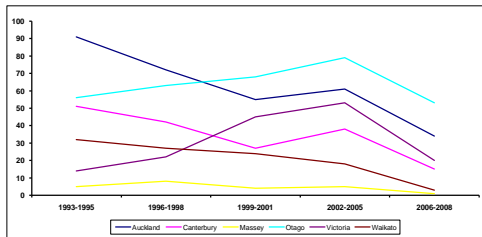
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Percentage PhD completions by university (1993 – 2008 inclusive)



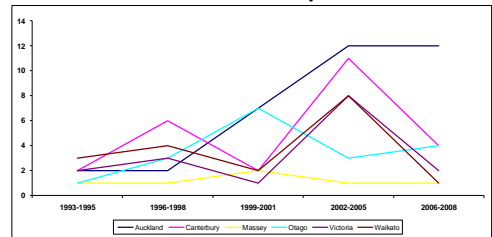
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Masters thesis completions by university



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PhD thesis completions by university



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Postgraduate geography enrolments semester one 2009

	Masters		PhD
	Coursework	Thesis	
Auckland	47	15	24
Otago	12	10	16
Canterbury	15	10	25
Victoria	15	13	13
Waikato	10	7	9
Massey	1	1	5

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Geography @ Auckland

- Faculty of Science
- SGES – from 2001 (merged with SEMS)
- SGGES – since 2006 (merged with Department of Geology)
 - Geography
 - Geology
 - Environmental Science
 - Environmental Management
 - Development Studies
- School of Environment – in 2009

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Geography @ Otago

- Division of Humanities
- Department of Geography
 - Human and Physical Geography
 - Planning
 - Environmental Management

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Geography @ Victoria

- Faculty of Science
- School of Geography, Environment and Earth Science
 - Geography
 - Physical Geography
 - Development Studies
 - Environmental Studies

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Geography @ Canterbury

- College of Science
- Department of Geography
 - Human and Physical Geography
 - GeoSpatial Science
 - Resource and Environmental Management

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Geography @ Waikato

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences • Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Human Geography – Tourism Studies – Environmental Planning – Tourism Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Science and Engineering • Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Physical Geography – Earth Science |
|---|---|

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Geography @ Massey

- College of Humanities and Social Sciences
- School of People, Environment and Planning
 - Human Geography
 - Physical Geography
 - Development Studies
 - Environmental Studies
 - Museum Studies
 - Politics
 - Resource and Environmental Planning
 - Social Anthropology
 - Social Sector Evaluation Research
 - Sociology
 - Women's Studies

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Geography @ Lincoln

- Faculty of Environment, Society and Design
- Harvey Perkins – Professor of Human Geography
 - Social Sciences

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Institutional positioning of geography

	Arts	Science
Auckland		√
Otago	√	
Canterbury		√
Victoria		√
Waikato	√	√
Massey	√	
Lincoln	√	

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Postgraduate education in NZ - 1990s

- Two year masters
- Strong disciplinary majors
- Travel abroad for PhD
- PhDs predominantly gained for academic career path
- Limited PhD supervisory experience
- Limited development of research topic specialisms
- Limited literature trajectories
- Limited methodologies/ methods
- Oral defence for PhD & some masters
- Few supervisors in NZ examining PhDs
- Neo-liberal reforms
- Resource Management Act

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Postgraduate education in NZ -2000s

- Research training for global knowledge economy – focus on know *what* & know *how* – transferable skills
- Globalising higher education & geography
- Significant to Performance Based Research Fund
 - Government funding on successful & timely completions
 - Focus on publications during process
 - Co-authorship (co-ownership of knowledge)
- Strategic drives to attract postgraduate research students
 - Funding (e.g. PReSS)
 - Scholarships
 - More domestic scholarships
 - TEC Bright Futures Scholarships
 - Completion awards
 - Domestic status for international doctoral students

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Postgraduate education in NZ – 2000s

- Increasing student numbers
 - Both domestic & international
- More direct pathways to PhDs
- Collapse of masters/rise of PGDip & honours
- Tuition fees
- Channelled funding, resources & support for postgraduate programmes
- Graduate schools & deans of graduate studies
- Centralised doctoral & masters skills support programmes – collaborations among librarians, careers, LAs, etc...
- Increased accountability – through reporting

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Postgraduate education in NZ – 2000s

- Thesis by publication not common
- Heavy supervision loads & supervision imbalances
- Oral defence for all PhDs
- Supervisors not examiners
- Blurring of disciplinary boundaries/more inter & trans-disciplinary masters & PhD research
- Amalgamations of departments & name changes of degrees to align with research funding trends
- Government initiatives such as BRCS – Access grid/ scholarships
- Strong global connectedness & contributions – INLT etc...

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Border work & crossing

- Novice (apprentice)/ expert – dependent/ independent/ interdependent (collaborative)
- Learner/ teacher/ researcher
- Understander (user)/ producer (creator) – know *what* vs know *how*
- Conceptual threshold crossing – learning leaps – points of increased ownership of topic (Wisker & others)
- Transitions - provisional year/ mid phase/ end phase (thesis submission)/ oral defence
- Sub-disciplinary
- Disciplinary
- Qualitative/ quantitative
- Theoretical/ empirical

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Border work & crossing

- Department/ School/ Faculty/ Grad Centre/ University/ Inter-institution
- Academic/ beyond-academic (practical application)
- National/ international
- Thesis/ book/ article discourses
- Cultural
- Language
- Identity
- Person/ process/ product



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Community

- Sense of communities
- Sense of belonging
- Shared work & social spaces
- Field & lab work
- National collaborations
- Global connectedness
- Building of Communities of Practices
 - cohort, sub-discipline, interdisciplinary research teams, local, global,...

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Co-learning supervisory practices

- Promote development of person, research skills & thesis
- Adopt holistic approach
- Embed advice into contextual frameworks
- Promote explicit & open communication
- Students & supervisors reflect on experiences/ practices - mediate tensions – alter power differential – all stakeholders learn (co-learning – Le Heron et al., 2006)
- Transition in supervisory relation & practices through time
- Academics work together & encourage students to work together (COPs)
- Work across disciplines – promote & support such work
- Draw on students' (collective) expertise & experiences

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Co-learning supervisory practices

- Provide advice based on own experiences
- Keep themselves & students informed of the latest postgraduate research literature & practices
- Consider different learning styles & approaches to research
- Be proactive not reactive – developmental not remedial
- Advise students on asking for & receiving formative feedback
- Model their research & writing processes to their candidates
- Transfer learning from one context to another
- Prepare students for diverse & dynamic career trajectories
- Promote creative & critical thinking through questioning
- Mentor & supervise each other
- Have students 'supervising' their peers – supervise in teams

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Supervisors' insights

"Having a PhD is not always enough to successfully supervise one. There are generational, gender, cultural & other gaps/ borders that need to be traversed...there is no one-size fits all model of supervisory practices."

"Notions of space in relation to supervisory practices have altered with technological advances. Technology, especially Skype, has enabled me to supervise on a much more global scale."

"Supervision is the most rewarding part of my job. With less time than I would like to devote to supervision I draw heavily on the expertise of the masters students & PhD candidates themselves as well as those of the academic practice professionals..."

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Supervisors' insights

"As a supervisor I seek to learn from & with my research students – to take the journey together."

"I establish relationships with my postgraduate students well before the research starts. This continues throughout and beyond the research."

"Early on in the research process, I have found it important to establish what geography means to the student – how he/she views the discipline."

"I'm very interested in a student's journey – where they have come from, are now, and seek to be...Probably my most significant role is to listen to what each student needs and wants from their postgraduate research experience and then work with them to realise this."

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Students' stories

"My supervisor was a 'spanner in the works'. In very constructive ways he challenged my thinking and contributions to knowledge at critical points. At the time such forced self-reflection was confronting for a physical geographer."

"The shared work spaces and sense of community developed within the department were as valuable as my supervisor's support and expertise."

"[My supervisor] made transferable skills development explicit through a strong focus on effective research processes."

"He was well-connected. He was excellent at networking me and helping me to expose my work. I have found local, national and global connectedness to be vital to a successful 21st Century geographic career."

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Students' stories

"[My supervisor] taught me to write – that writing is a process of reworking my thinking into a logical argument."

"It was thanks to my supervisor that I finally found my niche as a geographer within my research – I established an identity within the international geographic community."

"The supervisor's door was always open."

"At every meeting my supervisor asked me 'what is your thesis argument today?'"

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Summary/ concluding remarks

- Postgraduate geography is in magnitude & breadth
- Postgraduate geography has been, is & can be well positioned to make significant contributions to both NZ & globally
 - research-based
 - interdisciplinarity
 - global connectedness & contributions – a-where-ness
 - Pedagogy - Know *what* & know *how*
 - relation to knowledge, situated knowledges, positionalities
- Borders to be crossed involve a complex mix related to person, research process & product. Border crossing is likely to be multidirectional & multilayered throughout the journey
- Most students belong to several COPS simultaneously
- There is no 'one size fits all' model for successful postgraduate research practices

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Thank you & questions

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