



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

WAIKATO AKO RAU

EDITION #1



Welcome to the first edition of Waikato Ako Rau. This publication aims to increase your understanding of what the University of Waikato offers future students. Each edition will focus on a particular area of study. This edition's focus is on Psychology. We hope you find this interesting and informative and welcome any feedback.

WHY STUDY PSYCHOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO - OUR KEY POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

- Psychology is the most versatile degree at Waikato. It can be mixed and matched with other interests to create a bespoke degree to precisely target specific interests, with minors possible in many subject areas. Students can also study from a range of subjects within Psychology or combine Psychology with another area of study (such as Human Resource Management, Law, or Sport Development & Coaching) to complete a double major.
- Our lecture sizes are typically more intimate than other Psychology degrees leading to a more personal learning experience. We care about the welfare of our students, and we take a Kaupapa Māori approach to laboratories for Māori students.
- We have a nationally and internationally recognised research profile, which means students are learning from researchers at the forefront of psychology research.
- Waikato contributes a greater proportion of Māori and Pacific clinical psychologists than any other university in the country.

THE PLACE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN THE MODERN WORLD

Psychology is about understanding the behaviour and cognitive processes of people and animals in their physical, social and organisational environment. From analysing the reasons for anger to considering the best way to train dogs, the study of Psychology allows insight into countless intriguing facets of cognitive function.

Psychology is relevant to many aspects of the modern world. For example, students will have encountered commentary on people's behaviour and attitudes in the media or in conversations with friends and family. Findings from Psychological research are regularly in the media whether we realise it or not. However, it is easy to be misled and confused. The media often conveys a specific perspective, and sometimes the information can be unresearched opinions. To navigate through this, it is essential that students are critical thinkers who can weed out misinformation from the facts. An excellent example of this is the information and misinformation regarding people's behaviour and attitudes with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a social science, Psychology focuses on individuals within the context of families, organisations and other groups, communities, cultures and societies. Their behaviour and attitudes with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic is fertile ground for Psychologists.

Focusing on contemporary social issues, the ways in which humans interact with these issues and how such actions can be monitored and modified means that there will always be a place for Psychology in the modern world. Click on the links below to learn more about some of the papers we offer in this area:

- **PSYCH101** - Social Psychology, Health and Well-being
- **PSYCH202** - Mauri Ora: Social Psychology of Human Flourishing
- **PSYCH302** - Community, Culture and Diversity

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

We are proud to be offering a brand-new minor in Forensic Psychology in 2022 - students can add this to almost all of the undergraduate qualifications we offer.

Forensic Psychology is a subfield of Psychology that involves using psychological methods and experimentation and applying them to legal situations – think Criminal Minds (but not so much fieldwork). Studying Forensic Psychology at Waikato allows students to align empirical and theoretical traditions from western psychology to Māori-led approaches to understanding and reducing recidivism and the overrepresentation of Māori in the criminal justice system. Students will learn effective principles of behavioural change used to explain criminal behaviour in individuals in their ecological context and how to propose and support approaches to reducing criminality and improving wellbeing.

Forensic Psychology offers numerous pathways to employment and is particularly relevant to roles at the Department of Corrections, including probation officers, prison officers, programme facilitators, case managers and sentence planners, along with staff in non-governmental organisations who support and manage people disengaging from the criminal justice system.

If you have any students that are interested in a future in Forensic Psychology, they can get a head start by completing either of the following papers while still at school through our **Unistart programme**:

- **FPSYC101** - Introduction to Forensic and Criminological Psychology
- **CRSCI101** – Introduction to Security and Crime Science

EXAMPLES OF OUR RECENT RESEARCH

NEW RESEARCH LINKS CONVERSION PRACTICES AND NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH FOR TRANS AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE.

New findings published from a national survey led by University of Waikato researchers found that trans and non-binary people living in Aotearoa, New Zealand, who have experienced gender identity conversion practices are more likely to have worse mental health. [Click here](#) to read more about this.

COVID-19 AND THE IMPACT ON OUR WELLBEING - 48 COUNTRIES COMPARED

A University of Waikato academic has played a vital role in an international study researching human experience, behaviour and attitudes towards the Covid-19 pandemic. [Click here](#) to read more about this.

INTRODUCTION TO SOME OF OUR ACADEMIC STAFF



VINCENT REID

Professor Vincent Reid is Head of the University of Waikato's **School of Psychology - Te Kura Whatu Oho Mauri**. In addition to leading a large team of highly regarded teachers and researchers, his research focuses on how humans develop perception and cognition before birth and in the first few years of life. In recognition of his work, in 2021, Professor Reid was made a Fellow of the Association of Psychological Sciences, one of the world's leading international bodies for Psychology. Professor Reid's research showed that foetuses prefer to look towards face-like images, a finding which made Discover Magazine's list of 'Top 100 discoveries of 2017'. He pioneered the use of 2D and 4D ultrasound to experimentally study human development in utero – techniques that have spread to other fields, including epilepsy research and epigenetic robotics.

"I absolutely love the discipline of Psychology. It is an incredibly broad and diverse academic subject. As such, it comes in all sorts of flavours and is often difficult to pin down in a definition. For me, Psychology is the science of how we understand and improve how humans and animals perceive and think. It is the study of how we act, react and interact. This field lets us make great strides in creating new knowledge that positively helps our society. The School of Psychology at Waikato contains all the flavours of Psychology – from neuroscience to social science. We are a very special community that is warm and welcoming. We continually strive to be world-leading experts in our respective fields. This is reflected in the way that we teach. We bring our excitement, knowledge and passion to our lecture theatres and labs. This means that our students learn about the most up-to-date advances in psychology together with how Psychology can be applied in the modern world."



DEVON POLASCHEK

Professor Devon Polaschek is a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology based at the Hamilton Campus. Her interests are in causes and prevention strategies for criminal behaviour and improving staff effectiveness in the criminal justice system. She is also the Director of the Te Puna Haumarua New Zealand Institute of Security and Crime Science (NZISCS). Her key areas of expertise are in the psychology of violence relating to criminal behaviour. Her research students are conducting projects on family harm, stalking, hate crime, and people at high risk of violence and what helps them to live better lives and be less involved in violence and crime.



TACIANO MILFONT

Professor Taciano Milfont is based at the Tauranga Campus and is known for applying insights from social and behavioural sciences to address environmental problems and other social issues. He is a leading Environmental Psychology scholar. Dr Milfont's main research explores the psychological, social and contextual factors that motivate and inhibit individual and collective environmental decision-making. He is passionate about forming the next generation of socially engaged and culturally responsive researchers and practitioners and is helping consolidate research and teaching at the new Tauranga campus.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

Our work-integrated learning (**WIL**) papers create a link between academic learning and the practical applications of this learning in the workplace. WIL is a compulsory component of all University of Waikato's undergraduate degrees. Students will acquire, understand and apply essential professional skills that will prepare them for the future workforce while allowing them to demonstrate their graduate knowledge to employers.

Check out two of our Psychology students' experiences!



KATHERINE

Tell us about your WIL placement:

I am currently on placement in a mental health respite facility, where I support clients with ill mental health. During my day, I support clients by doing activities like arts and crafts, exercise, and baking with them. I help them with their medication regime and empower them to choose recovery. I work collaboratively with the client's clinical team, who will diagnose them and prescribe medication. Every day is different, which is what I love!

What's been the highlight so far?

A highlight of my placement so far is being able to put the theory into practice. As I am a third-year psychology student, it's excellent to be able to apply my knowledge. The overall stand out experience is feeling like I am making a positive impact on people's lives which is very rewarding! I have the University of Waikato to thank for giving me the knowledge and confidence to empower not only myself but others.

What is your most significant key learning?

My key learning so far is that people shouldn't be labelled into one box of mental illness, as every mental illness has a spectrum, and every person has different signs and symptoms. I have learnt to always be open and to not rush into diagnosing someone. We use a slow collaborative process between the clinical team and client to find the best way to help our patients.

KAYLA

Tell us about your WIL placement:

My placement took place in a Māori Mental Health Service where I worked directly with Tangata Whaiora supporting them to understand their journeys and build skills to better rehabilitate themselves back into their communities.

What's been the highlight so far?

A highlight for me would be seeing the change in people's attitudes towards themselves. I've worked with Tangata Whaiora, who were written off by the community, but once you were able to build a rapport with them, they become willing to carry on with their mental health journey. Listening to someone's story can change their life.

What is your most significant key learning?

I've learned that everyone has something to give, even if they don't know it.

RECENT ALUMNI

Check out the experiences of two of our Psychology alumni!



AURAND TOU (ATTENDED TEREORA COLLEGE)

BSocSc with Hons in Psychology and Sociology

Aurand Tou says he was drawn to study at the University of Waikato because the Psychology degree is culturally grounded. Since coming to Waikato, Aurand has learned a lot about himself. "It's been a time of reflection and self-discovery - an ideal environment to choose what kind of person I want to be." He wants to become a qualified clinical Psychologist and help Pacific people in the area of mental health. His advice to studying at Waikato is, "It's important not to lose your identity. University life will challenge who you are or how you see yourself, but we should always view our culture as an asset and a suit of armour."



REREAHU COLLIER (ATTENDED PAPA KURA HIGH SCHOOL)

BSocSc in Psychology and Māori and Pacific Development

Rereahu Collier wanted to study behaviour and take an in-depth look at how and why people react in certain situations. This desire led him to study a Bachelor of Social Science with majors in Māori and Pacific Development and Psychology. "My favourite subject was Psychology. Prior to enrolling at university, I spent a lot of my time observing people," he says. Since graduating, Rereahu has worked as a Kaikokiri Ratonga Māori at Auckland Libraries, where he manages Māori collections and events. "My job gives me a chance to showcase what I learned at University and apply it to everything I do, including interacting with Māori peers or talking to the CEO of Auckland Council." During his time at the University of Waikato, Rereahu

enjoyed the university culture and campus life with classes close enough to walk to. "I'm very happy with my experience at Waikato – it has been life-changing."

Thank you for reading this edition of Waikato Ako Rau.

For further information on Psychology, please check out our [website](#) or get in touch with your contact in the Future Students team.



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FOR THE PEOPLE
KO TE TANGATA

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