



**LINCOLN  
UNIVERSITY**  
Te Whare Pūrākau  
Learning, Teaching  
& Library

# Landscape Architecture Careers



# What is Landscape Architecture?

**Landscape architecture uses a combination of art and science to design and shape outdoor spaces. This includes urban and rural, residential and commercial, public and private, as well as open, natural and heritage spaces.**

The places where people gather, pass through, live and work, have an effect on peoples' daily experiences. Understanding the different relationships that people have with the space around them influences the way in which these spaces are designed, which in turn can have a positive effect on the experience that people have.

Worldwide concern for environmental and sustainable design places Lincoln University graduates in a good position to market themselves to employers. Lincoln University's tight-knit community allows for close relationships with related departments, such as ecology, water science, technology, and environmental management. Interdisciplinary collaboration, a highly technical and practical focus, and a commitment to the development of critical thinking skills in students are just some of the features that contribute to Lincoln University's landscape architecture programme being recognised as one of the best in the world.



## Landscape architecture in New Zealand and the world

Lincoln University's landscape architecture degree is internationally well-regarded. With several global regions experiencing rapid economic growth, graduates are well-placed to find employment worldwide. From small development projects to the construction of entire towns and cities, such as in China, there is growing global demand for landscape architects to be involved in site planning and design.

New Zealand's increasing demand for housing, and construction projects underway as part of urban development and redevelopment, have maintained a market for landscape architects. Prospects for those seeking employment in the field remain good. The availability of a range of jobs, from small scale projects such as gardens to larger scale developments such as urban design projects, ensure that practitioners working in New Zealand can get involved in a wide spectrum of both projects and environments.



## Skills and knowledge developed by studying landscape architecture

Landscape architecture graduates reach the job market equipped with practical and technical skills and a strong theoretical understanding of people and the landscapes they use. The practical work component of the degree gives graduates real world industry experience with allied industry bodies. These connections are invaluable for students to gain understanding of a professional work environment, and for students to start networking with future professional colleagues.

Employers seek well-rounded, engaged graduates with a strong work ethic. As in any sector, employers value those with a professional attitude. This includes good communication (including the ability to communicate to groups, as well as effective interpersonal and written communication), honesty, respect, responsibility, self-motivation, initiative, time management, flexibility, and interpersonal skills. The importance of these basic skills cannot be underestimated, even in voluntary roles and internships, as future job opportunities often arise from a good reputation and a varied network of contacts.



## Skills and knowledge valued in landscape architecture roles

Ability to work comfortably in both corporate and construction site situations

An understanding of people and society

Client relationship management

Computer-aided design (CAD) and other software use (e.g., Adobe Suite)

Creative, solution-focused attitude

Effective written, graphic, and verbal communication skills

Environmental knowledge (e.g., plants, topography, soils, weather, and climate)

Knowledge of and sensitivity to Māori and indigenous design

Knowledge of construction methods and materials

Knowledge of design principles

Knowledge of planning and policy

Negotiation, teamwork, and people skills

Observational skills and an eye for detail

Problem-solving and initiative skills

Project planning and costing

Report writing

Supervisory and leadership skills

Technical drawing skills (from sketching to computer modelling)

## Where can landscape architecture graduates find work?

Landscape architects work across the private and public sector. Firms involved with engineering, architecture, landscape, education, transport, mining, design, land planning and development, as well as iwi, and cultural and community groups, employ landscape architects for technical solutions to changes made in outdoor places.

Graduate landscape architects usually work for an established organisation to gain industry experience and registration with an industry body. They can then go on to work in similar organisations worldwide to either broaden or specialise their experience, or start their own business.

Students who are drawn to questioning, researching and problem-solving may consider post-graduate study as a step toward an academic career in landscape architecture. In addition to this, the policy and planning sectors require the type of specialist knowledge that graduates of landscape architecture can go on to gain through post-graduate study and/or research. Graduates who become self-employed can build a business to their own specifications and find success and satisfaction this way.

Places of employment for landscape architecture graduates include:

- Landscape architecture firms (e.g., Rough & Milne Landscape Architects, Boffa Miskell)
- City or regional councils (e.g., Christchurch City Council)
- Multi-disciplinary consultancy firm (e.g., BECA Professional Services Consultancy, WSP)
- Landscape architecture consultancy firm (e.g., self-employment)
- Landscaping business (e.g., Goom Landscapes, Outerspace Landscapes)
- Plant nurseries (e.g., The Little Big Tree Company)
- Tertiary education sector (e.g., Lincoln University)
- E-commerce sites (e.g., The Plant Store)

## Career pathways

People who have studied landscape architecture usually want to be a landscape architect. Because of the specialist vocational nature of the training, there is not the wide variety of clear career paths for graduates as in other degrees. However, many of the skills gained during study are transferrable across a range of professional roles. In the event that design roles are hard to come by, graduates can consider roles in associated industries.

## Landscape architecture job titles

Academic Lecturer

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Designer (Urban, Rural, Residential, Public Landscapes)

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Garden Consultant

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Graphic Design/ Illustrator

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Horticultural Team Leader

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Horticultural Consultant

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Horticultural Designer

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Interior Landscaper

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Landscape and Amenity Horticulture Sales Manager

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Landscape Architect

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Landscape Consultant

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Landscaping Contractor

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Landscape Ecologist

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Landscape Planner

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Landscape Project Manager

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Landscape Researcher

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## Pay scale indications: full time equivalent (FTE) NZ\$ per annum<sup>1</sup>

Most starting salaries for graduates of bachelor degrees fall between 50,000 - 70,000. Entry level jobs are stepping stones to roles with increased responsibilities and remuneration. Your employability is enhanced by all of your life experiences, be they employment related, or the transferable skills and competencies gained from community involvement, volunteer work, or previous work or study - all of which can grow competency, expand networks, and demonstrate enthusiasm to future employers.

<sup>1</sup> Rates sourced from SEEK, MBIE, Careers NZ, Universities NZ, PayScale, PQOS survey data

Job title	Indicative rate
Landscape Architect	65,000 - 120,000+
Horticultural Consultant	50,000 - 150,000+
Urban Designer	100,000+
Landscape Planner (Urban/ Regional)	65,000 - 130,000+
Landscape Consultant	55,000+
Garden Consultant	45,000+
Graphic Designer	65,000 - 105,000
Content Writer (for landscape publications)	50,000 - 130,000
Academic Lecturer	75,000 - 200,000+

## Landscape architecture tasks

The following list includes the types of tasks that landscape architecture graduates might undertake.

Establish and understand client requirements

Select appropriate materials for construction

Use design software to prepare detailed plans and designs

Meet deadlines

Coordinate with suppliers and manufacturers

Write reports

Generate new business opportunities

Take responsibility for the management of projects from the ground up

Provide cost estimates for projects

Present design proposals to clients

Make changes to plans to meet client specifications

Prepare applications for consents

Conduct visits to worksites

Monitor progress on-site

Conduct environmental assessments

Liaise with industry professionals (e.g., planners, engineers, architects, heritage officers, surveyors, site managers)

Job tasks are role-specific, so the above is an indication only. For more information on roles, registered Lincoln University students can search LU Career Centre (online) for job titles similar to those they are interested in. Job descriptions, including tasks and skills required, are often available.



## Industry bodies

Membership of an industry specific body enhances the professional status of graduates. By joining a professional body, members can research career options, access training and events, and network and collaborate with industry colleagues at all levels.

In some roles, registration with, or membership of, a professional body is compulsory.

Examples of landscape architecture industry bodies include:

New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects  
[www.nzila.co.nz](http://www.nzila.co.nz)

Urban Design Forum  
[www.urbandesignforum.org.nz](http://www.urbandesignforum.org.nz)

New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI)  
[www.planning.org.nz](http://www.planning.org.nz)

New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA)  
[www.nzia.co.nz](http://www.nzia.co.nz)

New Zealand Association of Resource Management (NZARM)  
[www.nzarm.org.nz](http://www.nzarm.org.nz)

Landscaping Industries Association of New Zealand (LIANZ)  
[www.lianz.org.nz](http://www.lianz.org.nz)



### Find out more:

#### Career Centre

Learning, Teaching and Library  
E: [lucareercentre@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:lucareercentre@lincoln.ac.nz)



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