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# **Sport and Recreation Management Careers**



# What is Sport and Recreation Management?

Sport and recreation management tailors management to the sport and recreation sectors. 'Sport' and 'recreation' encompass a wide range of activities which take place in a variety of settings. Sport and recreation professionals are passionate in their roles, they are inspired to share what sport has to offer to people of all ages. These sectors comprise not only indoor sport at managed facilities (i.e. recreation, sport and events centres), but also outdoor landscapes used for recreation (i.e. swimming pools, playgrounds, botanic gardens, sports fields, and open spaces, including parks and forests, national parks, harbours, beaches, rivers, and lakes<sup>1</sup>).

A working knowledge of the key aspects of sport and recreation management that graduates attain at Lincoln University is highly valued across many sectors. The integrated theoretical and practical components equip graduates with the management skills necessary to excel in jobs related to sport, exercise, health and well-being, community recreation, outdoor recreation, resource management, and national parks. Furthermore, graduates gain a firm grasp on topics relating to psychology, sociology and social policy which furthers their employment potential.

<sup>1</sup>Nana, G., & Sanderson, K. (2013). Sport and recreation sector workforce to 2026. Business and Economic Research Ltd. Retrieved from [www.srknowledge.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Sport-and-Rec-Sector-Workforce-report-final-April-2013.pdf](http://www.srknowledge.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Sport-and-Rec-Sector-Workforce-report-final-April-2013.pdf)



## Sport and recreation management in New Zealand and the world

Employment opportunities in the sport and recreation sector are diverse and constantly evolving. Jobs are available in workplaces from small firms to large multi-national corporations, from community sport to national sporting bodies, from volunteer roles to executive management, and from inside a stadium to outside in the backcountry.

Sport and recreation make important contributions to the health and well-being of populations. Nationwide, the sector employs close to 78,000 people in New Zealand, with an additional 1 million volunteers annually<sup>2</sup>. While the sector is characterised by seasonality of roles and large contributions from volunteers, there is an increasing trend towards higher levels of professionalism and accountability. Careers within governance, management and strategic planning require professionals with specific sport and recreation qualifications prior to employment. The projected increase in demand for managerial roles nationwide, coupled with the construction of several major sports facilities in Christchurch as well as further afield, illustrates the significance of sport and recreation in New Zealand.

Alongside the urban facilities which provide city residents and visitors access to sport, outdoor recreation takes place in city fringes, rural townships and open spaces nationwide. Many New Zealanders consider access to 'the great outdoors' to be an important part of their national identity<sup>3</sup>, and they enjoy being outdoors for walking, tramping, fishing, camping, and other recreational activities<sup>4</sup>. The places and spaces where people have outdoor experiences need to be managed to ensure that future generations can also enjoy their use.

## Skills and knowledge developed by studying sport and recreation management

The types of skills gained from studying sport and recreation management are highly valued by employers. The applied nature of the coursework at Lincoln University gives graduates a range of practical skills that are transferable directly to the workplace. Lincoln University staff work directly with sport and recreation employers in the region to provide students direct work experience with potential employers during their course. Employers in the sector appreciate that Lincoln graduates come equipped with sector-specific knowledge in relation to policy issues and development as well as best practice experience in sport and recreation management.

Employers seek well-rounded, engaged graduates with a strong work ethic<sup>5</sup>. As in any sector, employers typically value those who have a professional attitude to their work. This includes good communication (including the ability to communicate to groups, as well as effective interpersonal and written communication), respect, self-motivation, initiative, time management and flexibility. The importance of these basic skills cannot be underestimated, even in voluntary roles, as future job opportunities often arise from a good reputation and a varied network of contacts.

<sup>2</sup> Skills Active Aotearoa (Organisation). (2016). Sport and recreation industries: Workforce scan 2016. Retrieved from [www.skillsactive.org.nz/assets/Industry/SARI\\_Workforce\\_Scan\\_2016\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.skillsactive.org.nz/assets/Industry/SARI_Workforce_Scan_2016_WEB.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Cessford, G. (2001). The state of wilderness in New Zealand. Department of Conservation.

<sup>4</sup> Sport New Zealand (2015). Sport and Active Recreation in the Lives of New Zealand Adults. 2013/14 Active New Zealand Survey Results.

<sup>5</sup> [www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/about/news/news-archives/2015-news/survey-reveals-employers-wish-list-of-skills/2015-employability-skills-survey-executive-summary.pdf](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/about/news/news-archives/2015-news/survey-reveals-employers-wish-list-of-skills/2015-employability-skills-survey-executive-summary.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [www.maca.gov.nt.ca/school/tools/JD\\_docs/Recreation%20Coordinator%20%20JD.pdf](http://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/school/tools/JD_docs/Recreation%20Coordinator%20%20JD.pdf)

## Skills and knowledge valued in sport and recreation management roles:

Effective public relations

Team-leading

Financial management

Contract management

Analytical and critical thinking

Decision-making

IT and report writing skills

Time/stress management

Public speaking skills

People management

Supervisory skills

Strategic planning

Problem-solving

Negotiation

Programme development

Event management

## Where can sport and recreation management graduates find work?

Throughout the first two years of study, students are encouraged to volunteer in their sector of choice to improve the self-awareness of their skillset and to complement their study. The third year internship offers students the opportunity for direct involvement in the industry, and the chance to develop work competencies, networking skills and the work experience that is desired by sport and recreation employers. Graduates with a Bachelor of Sport and Recreation Management often comment that their practical experience with a sport and recreation organisation was of huge benefit for building their professional network and improving their job prospects. It is not uncommon for Lincoln Sport and Recreation graduates to be offered jobs directly by their internship supervisor or someone they met during their internship.

Potential places of employment include:

- City or District Councils (e.g., Christchurch City Council, Selwyn District Council)
- Regional Sport Trusts (RSTs) (e.g., Sport Canterbury, Sport Otago, Sport Tasman)
- Incorporated societies and charitable trusts (e.g., Selwyn Sport Trust, Rawhiti Community Sports)
- Government bodies (e.g., Department of Conservation (DoC), Ministry of Health (MoH), District Health Boards)
- Adventure tour operators (e.g., Hiking New Zealand, Active Adventures, Adventure South)
- National sporting organisations (e.g., Cricket New Zealand, New Zealand Rugby Union, New Zealand Football, Athletics New Zealand, Rowing New Zealand, Bowls New Zealand)
- Local/regional sport clubs or associations (e.g., Canterbury Rugby Union, Canterbury Cricket, Canterbury Basketball, Touch Canterbury, Mainland Football, Netball Mainland, Halswell Hornets Rugby League Football Club)
- National sporting bodies (e.g., Sport NZ, High Performance Sport NZ, YMCA, NZ Institute of Health and Fitness, NZ Recreation Association)
- Sport or recreation management consultancies (e.g., Opus International, Visitor Solutions, Matter of Sport)
- Event management companies (e.g., Vbase, 360 Degree Events, Hororata Games, Koru Games)
- Private sport or recreation providers (e.g., Christchurch Adventure Park, Christchurch Football Centre, Camp America)
- Sport and recreation training organisations (e.g., Skills Active Aotearoa, Lincoln University)

## Sport and recreation management job titles

People who have studied sport and recreation management use a variety of roles as career stepping-stones.

Business and Recreational  
Manager/General Manager/CEO

Communications Officer

Community Engagement Advisor

Community Sports Advisor/Assistant

Conference Management/  
Organisation

Defence Forces (NZ Air  
Force, Army, Navy)

Educator/Lecturer

Event Management

Health Promotion Specialist

High Performance Coaching

Holiday Programme Leader

Injury Prevention Specialist

Marketing and Promotions

New Zealand Police

Operations Coordinator  
(for specific sports)

Outdoor Instructor

Park Ranger/Field Worker

Planner (e.g., Parks, Sports  
and Recreation Planner)

Policy Analyst

Programme/Club/  
Activities Coordinator

Project Management

Recreation Advisor/Assistant

Recreation Coordinator

Regional Development Manager

Regional Relationship Manager

Researcher

Risk Assessment Coordinator/Officer

Schools Sports Advisor/Coordinator

Sport Development Officer

Sport Management Consultant

Sports Coaching

Sports Facility Manager

Sports Instructor/Coach

Sports Programme  
Manager/Facilitator

Strength and Conditioning Coaching

Tourism/Adventure Tourism/  
Recreation Guide



<sup>7</sup> Skills Active Aotearoa (Organisation). (2016). Sport and recreation industries: Workforce scan 2016. (p. 19)

## Pay rate Indications: full time equivalent (FTE) \$NZ per annum<sup>8</sup>

Most starting salaries for graduates of bachelor degrees fall between 40,000 - 55,000 per annum. Entry level jobs are stepping stones to roles with increased responsibilities and remuneration. Your employability is affected 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.

| Job title  | Indicative pay   |
|--|------------------|
| Sports and Activities Officer                            | From 50,000      |
| Recreational Advisor                                     | 39,162 – 59,315  |
| Sport Related Graduate Programme                         | 40,000 – 45,000  |
| Clubs/Activities Coordinator                             | 47,383 – 66,951  |
| Sports/Recreation Coordinator                            | 38,239 – 49,000  |
| School Sports Coordinator                                | 32,720 – 70,000  |
| Health Promoter  | 35,000 – 75,000  |
| Assistant Researcher                                     | 33,000 – 38,394  |
| Parks Officer Cadet                                      | 38,000 – 45,000  |
| Defence Force Recruit (NZ Air Force, Army, Navy)         | From 33,489      |
| Army (e.g., Physical Training Instructor, Fire Fighter ) | 44,925 – 103,889 |
| Police Officer   | From 61,560      |
| Outdoor Instructor/Guide                                 | 33,282 – 52,000+ |
| Academic Lecturer/Professor                              | 74,000 – 120,000 |
| Event/Conference Manager (entry level)                   | 33,000 – 60,000  |
| Event/Conference Manager (experienced)                   | 45,000 – 90,000  |
| Sports Coach (general)                                   | 35,000 – 60,000+ |
| High Performance Manager                                 | 50,000 – 100,000 |
| Recreational Policy Planner                              | 60,000 – 80,000  |
| Sport Facility/Facility Management                       | (up to) 150,000  |



## Sport and recreation management tasks

Sport and recreation sector managers are expected to wear many hats in their day to day work. The following list indicates tasks one might encounter as a coordinator in the sport or recreation sector<sup>9</sup>.

Facilitate opportunities for people of all ages to engage in social activities through sport and recreation programmes

Engage one on one with elite or aspiring athletes, coaches and officials

Develop and/or implement strategies to recruit sport or club members

Coordinate staff and/or volunteer recruitment, rosters, training, duties, meetings

Communicate with community groups and local authorities (verbal and written)

Design and implement recreation or training and coaching programmes

Clerical support for registration, database management and other administrative duties

Manage projects, contracts, events, and budgets

Collect, collate and record results, achievements of teams/participants

Elicit community or organisational sponsorship for programmes and initiatives

Evaluate effectiveness of programmes, events or sponsorship

Manage marketing communication including publicity and advertising across a range of platforms (e.g., social media, press releases, newsletters)

Prepare reports

Liaise and network with industry contacts via email, meetings, conferences and symposiums

Serve as spokesperson for your institution, facility or sport club

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

<sup>8</sup> <https://careerhub.lincoln.ac.nz/students/jobs/search>; [www.sportspeople.co.nz/?Page=2759](http://www.sportspeople.co.nz/?Page=2759); [www.seek.co.nz/jobs-in-sport-recreation/management/in-new-zealand/](http://www.seek.co.nz/jobs-in-sport-recreation/management/in-new-zealand/); [www.defencecareers.mil.nz/army/lifestyle-salary/salaries-working-conditions/](http://www.defencecareers.mil.nz/army/lifestyle-salary/salaries-working-conditions/); [www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/files/University%20Staff%20Academic%20Salaries%20and%20Remuneration%20-%20Final.pdf](http://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/files/University%20Staff%20Academic%20Salaries%20and%20Remuneration%20-%20Final.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [www.stpeterspn.school.nz/user/file/61/Sports%20Co-ordinator%202010.doc](http://www.stpeterspn.school.nz/user/file/61/Sports%20Co-ordinator%202010.doc); [www.weltec.ac.nz/Portals/0/Sports%20Coordinator%20Job%20Description.pdf](http://www.weltec.ac.nz/Portals/0/Sports%20Coordinator%20Job%20Description.pdf); [www.sportbop.co.nz/downloads/Sport%20Coordinator%20Induction%20Booklet%20Updated%20\(003\).pdf](http://www.sportbop.co.nz/downloads/Sport%20Coordinator%20Induction%20Booklet%20Updated%20(003).pdf)

## Graduate profiles



**Blair Minton**  
**Bachelor of Sport and Recreation Management**

Injury Prevention Specialist, New Zealand Football



**Jenn Halliday**  
**Bachelor of Sport and Recreation Management**

Parks, Sports and Recreation Planner, Opus International



**Tammy Mehrtens**  
**Bachelor of Sport and Recreation Management**

Coach Developer, Netball Mainland

## Industry bodies

Membership of an industry specific body enhances the professional status of students and employees. By joining a professional body, members can research career options, access training and events, and network and collaborate with industry colleagues at all levels. Industry bodies can provide opportunities for professional development and sometimes list sector vacancies. In some roles, registration with or membership of a professional body is compulsory.

Examples of sport and recreation industry bodies include:

The New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA)

[www.nzrecreation.org.nz](http://www.nzrecreation.org.nz)

Generate Network

[www.generatenetwork.org](http://www.generatenetwork.org)

Women in Sport

[www.womeninsport.org](http://www.womeninsport.org)

Sport and Exercise New Zealand (SESNZ)

[www.sesnz.org.nz](http://www.sesnz.org.nz)

Sport and Exercise Research Lab. (SERL)

[www.education.canterbury.ac.nz/research\\_labs/sport/index.shtml](http://www.education.canterbury.ac.nz/research_labs/sport/index.shtml)

New Zealand Association of Event Professionals (NZEAP)

[www.nzaep.co.nz](http://www.nzaep.co.nz)



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