

## INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Doing business internationally can be like a New Zealander learning to eat with chopsticks or a Chinese with a knife and fork. Every culture has its own context and ways of doing things. In a global economy where goods, services and knowledge flow easily across country borders, success depends on understanding how different cultures view the world, how they form business relationships and make contracts, how they negotiate, make and implement trade policy and direct investment plans. Studies in international business open up a world of commercial and cultural possibilities and give graduates the foundation skills and knowledge for a career in a global economy.



### WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS?

“Sweet temper and friendliness produce money” – the Chinese saying expresses the importance Chinese people place on harmonious relationships between business partners. In much of Asia, South America and the Pacific, business is personal and partnerships are made only with people they know, trust and feel comfortable with. So it is necessary to invest in relationship building before doing business. A typical Western style, where “the deal is the deal,” is more contractual and less personal. In fact personalising business can be regarded with suspicion in some Western contexts.

At university, International Business studies business and management across international borders. Studies include globalisation and the impacts of the global environment on organisations; trade, trade policy and foreign direct investment; strategies of international firms, strategic alliances and exporting, and international management, including cross-

cultural and international human resource management.

### WHY STUDY INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS?

Increasingly people work across borders or gain employment in foreign countries. New Zealand companies work and do business in many different parts of the world. The workforce in New Zealand is also becoming more multi-cultural and this has implications for human resource management. Future trade and business partners visit New Zealand from overseas, so while global competition has become more intense opportunities for cooperation across borders have never been greater. Long-term survival of businesses, and indeed entire economies, depend on how well these forces are understood and leveraged. Students of International Business will be well equipped in these respects when they enter the marketplace.

Double majors or conjoint degrees enhance employability. Additional capabilities in the areas of finance, economics, law, accounting, marketing and management and foreign languages are valuable complements to an international business degree. An interest in policy alongside international business is useful for careers in government, particularly in the areas of trade and investment and export development. An International Business major complements any other major by providing a global perspective and hence greater career

*Topical coverage of career related issues brought to you by Victoria University Career Development and Employment.*

*Areas covered include how degrees and courses relate to employment opportunities, to life/work planning, graduate destination information and current issues or material relevant to the employment scene. Your comments and suggestions always welcomed.*

opportunities. It is an exciting field requiring an interest in world events and the ability and motivation to keep up to date with economic and political changes.

## WHERE DO GRADUATES WORK?

As global markets become even more interconnected, thinking laterally and marketing your international business savvy to the private, public and non-government organisations could open up new doors of employment. Employers include government ministries and agencies, banks, import/export corporations, multinational manufacturers, financial service providers, consulting firms, international non-governmental organisations, electronics and transportation companies, trade promotion agencies, and tourism and hospitality organisations.

### Public Sector

Government departments, ministries and government agencies employ graduates to entry level positions. Some ministries have graduate development programmes, depending on their recruitment needs and the economic climate.

**The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE)** has core functions in economic development, business and immigration, among others. The Ministry works to improve international flows of people, ideas, investment and trade and make New Zealand businesses more productive and internationally competitive. An International Business degree would provide an initial setting to the broader operations of working across borders, and provide context to the immediate business and development needs for growing New Zealand's economy. Possible roles include policy analysts and business analysts in areas such as sector trends and performance; economic research; people, science and enterprise policy; tourism, sectors, regions and cities; trade and international environment; commercial and consumer environment. Other roles include business advisers in infrastructure, resource markets and corporate services; immigration managers; labour inspectors; human resource advisers; communications advisors.

**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade** is involved in developing trade policy and negotiating agreements with countries such as China, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and others. Recent graduates who may also have some work experience must have excellent academic records and have either an honours degree, post-graduate degree in any discipline or a conjoint degree that includes economics, law or science.

### **New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE)** is

New Zealand's international business development agency. An understanding of global business gained by International Business graduates would be a good start when considering work at NZTE. NZTE promotes New Zealand business internationally and helps businesses with advice, access to networks and influencers, research and market intelligence and sometimes, targeted financial support at different stages of their internationalisation journey – so experience in the international business world is also important. NZTE has offices in New Zealand and staff in 36 international locations across seven geographic regions. Roles relevant to International Business graduates include Customer Manager, Business Development Manager and Investment Manager roles. NZTE looks for highly capable people with commercial/business acumen and a 'can do' attitude. An international business degree, coupled with significant commercial experience in an international context is helpful when applying for customer facing roles. NZTE values people who are energised by challenges, are team players, and have a proven record of success in previous organisations. Cultural sensitivity and the ability to work with a diverse workforce and customer base are critical, alongside proven achievements and success in previous roles.

### Private Sector

#### **Export and Manufacturing**

A wide range of companies are involved in this sector so it is worth researching the internet in your areas of interest. A general understanding of the special challenges associated with doing business across borders is useful as companies differ significantly – whether the business is forestry or dairy products, agriculture supplies, transport logistics, wine export, biotechnology or software engineering. Roles are possible in business analysis, research, sales, marketing, purchasing, engineering, accounting and finance which all have international elements. Flexibility and the ability to learn, to research, and to implement that learning are very useful skills. Industry specific knowledge is advantageous but not critical and an appreciation of the differences between particular commodities and specialist channels is important.

Some companies have graduate programmes. For example **Fonterra**, one of New Zealand's largest export companies runs a worldwide operation in over 100 countries. When recruiting for its global sales of ingredients operation Fonterra looks for people who have strong commercial acumen, are self-starters, achievement focused, have an interest in and respect

for people and are curious about other cultures. International Business is a useful background for understanding and running the human resource management operations of a global business.

### Business and Finance

Banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions are multi-national or, if locally owned, connected with international markets. ANZ for example continues to develop both customers and ANZ staff in the Asian market. A degree or major in International Business would be an advantage and a point of difference for roles in the bank's business and risk and wealth units. **Marsh** insurance broker and risk advisor is another example of a multinational company that employs over 20,000 people worldwide in 26 countries. Like other multinational insurance firms Marsh has diverse roles and recruits graduates with potential. Relevant roles for International Business graduates include customer service representatives and business development managers, roles in human resources and communications. With a conjoint degree in law or finance and previous work experience, there are positions such as insurance broker, claims professionals and risk consultants.

### Education

Teaching at university level usually requires a PhD. Graduates can advance their research and teaching skills by undertaking a Master's degree or PhD and may have the opportunity to tutor undergraduate students. Many students also go overseas to study. Teaching in secondary schools in New Zealand and overseas are other options.

### Journalism and Media

Graduates wanting to work as permanent editorial staff (reporters, sub-editors, editors) in the media (print, radio, television, the Internet) usually require

a Diploma in Journalism. It is possible to write freelance for niche publications without an industry qualification. Finance and business writing is a niche market for journalists with a background in finance.

### Public Relations, Communications, Marketing, Advertising

Whether it's selling a product or service, creating and maintaining a brand, or keeping staff up to date and informed, how businesses communicate is crucial to success. Organisations need to establish a distinctive brand both at home and in the international marketplace; they maintain goodwill and understanding with customers, business partners, suppliers and other stakeholders. Public relations and the language of advertising gets more complex at an international level where commercial relationships and cultural understandings differ significantly across physical and cyber-borders.

### Human Resource Management

Human resource management (HRM) professionals manage the individual aspects of the employment relationship - from employee recruitment and selection to international employment relations, salaries and wages. At higher levels they are often part of the senior management team and concerned with the strategic needs of the organisation, leading change in practices to respond to a changing market or, in the case of public organisations, changing political leadership. In companies that operate globally international business acumen helps many aspects of human resource management from knowing what customers want in different markets so that the business can







deliver, to budgeting, writing reports and putting forward recommendations. International business knowledge also helps HRM communicate with staff in the language of the business.

#### Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

NGOs are not-for-profit groups organised on a local, national or international level. NGOs are based on humanitarian values and often address specific issues such as human rights, environment or health. Some such as Red Cross, Oxfam, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Save the Children and World Vision are international organisations. While NGOs in New Zealand are small, worldwide they all need people with cross-cultural understandings and financial, business and human resource skills to help run the organisation.

**The Global Volunteer Network (GVN)** values skills in cross-cultural communication, social media, marketing, fundraising and administration. GVN says, “We also value candidates with international travel and volunteering experience. Most of all, we seek staff who believe in our mission and are passionate about inspiring action to unlock the potential of communities around the world. A degree in International Business provides students with skills in cross-cultural communication, strategic-thinking and global partnership development – all skills which are valued at GVN. International Business graduates would potentially be suitable candidates to apply for a range of positions within GVN, including campaign internships and volunteer program support roles.”

## WHAT SKILLS DO GRADUATES DEVELOP?

Through their International Business degree students develop highly marketable foundation skills and knowledge. These include:

- Financial and business knowledge
- A multi-cultural and global perspective
- Cultural sensitivity
- High-level verbal and written communication skills
- Business problem solving across sectors, industries and national boundaries
- Effective negotiating skills that can be applied with customers and suppliers in different countries
- Research design and data collection skills
- Analytical, logical and quantitative thinking
- Creative thinking
- A broad and diverse business approach
- Self-confidence and good presentation skills
- A high level of organisational ability and motivation
- Initiative and a focus on achievement

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Many local New Zealand businesses are looking to expand into the global market. An International Business degree can be an excellent springboard for graduates interested in exploring roles within the global business market. Some jobs may require further study at postgraduate level, which can contribute to your employability. It enables you to extend your knowledge and skills, indicates your motivation and ability to persevere at a high level academically and can make you more competitive in the job market. Postgraduate study may be a prerequisite for certain jobs.

### Job Titles

Account manager • Business analyst • Export advisor • Financial service provider • Foreign currency investment adviser • Foreign sales representative • Human resource adviser • Import/export agent • International management adviser/consultant • International marketing executive • International trader • Marketing assistant • Policy analyst • Travel and tourism operator

# GRADUATE PROFILES

## Florian Nebel

*Trainee – Commercial and Agricultural Graduate Programme, ANZ*

Like many people, I came to university with a general idea of what I wanted to study but definitely no hard-and-fast plans. So for all those in the same position – don't stress. As I enjoyed business studies at college, I decided to keep going and enrolled in a commerce degree majoring in Economics.

After my first year of study I spent a semester studying abroad in Germany through the Victoria International Overseas Exchange Program. It was an incredible seven months that changed my life. Alongside class I enjoyed road trips around Europe with other exchange students, cheap flights to random places and my fair share of skiing. It sounds clichéd but it was a truly eye-opening experience and something I totally recommend to anyone considering (and especially those not considering) doing. Coming back to New Zealand, I knew I wanted to keep the international theme going and enrolled in a few International Business papers. Immediately the hands-on nature of International Business appealed to me. Hearing first-hand from incredibly passionate people who have poured heart and soul into their ventures and the places it has taken them was undoubtedly the highlight for me. International Business provided the real-life context I felt was lacking in some of my other classes. Not only is International Business particularly relevant in New Zealand, given the amount of international trade we engage in, the skills to think critically from a business point of view can be applied almost anywhere.

As a Victoria commerce graduate in International Business and Economics, I've been fortunate enough to step into a role in ANZ's graduate programme where I get to deal with both commercial business owners and farmers whose farm or business is their life. It's incredibly fun and rewarding working closely with people to help them achieve their business goals, whether that is funding a warehouse purchase or facilitating the import of a private plane. Looking back, it's not where I thought my career would begin but that's what makes it even more exciting. My role has a range of international opportunities so I can't wait to see what the next five years will bring.



## Brogan Sulzberger

*Personal Assistant to Executive Creative Director/Creative Assistant, Clemenger BBDO*

Having spent a year living abroad after finishing school I was able to travel through much of Europe and the UK. I decided then that I would without a doubt at some point want to work overseas. To complement this passion an International Business degree and the skills learnt studying this seemed like a logical step. Throughout my International Business studies some of the highlights were learning about large organisations that I was familiar with and how they manage working across various borders. It was also fascinating to see how globalisation is affecting traditional business models and therefore putting businesses under pressure to constantly adapt their processes and structures to accommodate these changes. My International Business studies taught me about organisations needing to work in ways that are cross culturally friendly and obstacles that they may come across.

An International Business degree is highly relevant with the increasing ability of consumers nowadays to demand services and products from international destinations, often at the click of a mouse. It is a common occurrence in the advertising industry for advertisements to be made in one country but rolled out in a number of different countries throughout the world. To successfully pull this off and have the advertisement work effectively an awareness of cultural differences must be understood. This will identify whether elements of an advertisement need to be altered for varying audiences due to cultural, religious or political factors. Technologies such as Facebook and Twitter are assisting International Business and becoming essential to organisations. They provide access to, and separate target markets through customers choosing what they 'like' and follow, and allow barriers of cross-cultural communication to be broken down.

The BBDO network, which Clemenger BBDO is part of, has offices all over the world. I was employed through a recruitment agency and I'm sure that having an International Business major helped me to stand out. I have learnt about the often complicated process of recruiting employees from overseas and contributed to making sure their transition ran as smoothly as possible. Overall I recommend studying International Business. It will give you extremely



valuable knowledge that is useful in many different industries. With all the opportunities available to graduates to work in so many beautiful and exciting countries, why not gain the skills that will open those doors for you?

### **Anushka D'Souza**

*Manager, HR and Operations  
Novelo Commercial Brokers,  
Financial Solutions*

Victoria University was my first choice when considering universities. I enrolled in a commerce degree after an eventful summer working for one of New Zealand's leading banks. In my second year at Victoria University I was accepted by the Victoria Overseas Exchange programme for a student exchange and travelled to Italy where I attended LUISS Guido Carli. Being exposed to new cultures and interacting with people from dynamic walks of life gave me the zest to work in cross-cultural environments. I have always had a passion for travel and business, so a major in International Business seemed right for me as I wanted to gain a sound theoretical understanding of the many factors that influence conducting business across borders.

A commerce degree in International Business exceeded my expectations and I learnt more than I ever could have imagined. In addition to theory, my degree taught me skills such as time management, teamwork, effective communication, analytic reasoning, problem solving and critical thinking. All these skills have been valuable to me in the real world. What I appreciate most about the International Business major is that it incorporates all aspects of business, giving students exposure to export logistics, marketing, management, human resources, finance and so much more. I even had the opportunity to work with local businesses as part of the coursework and that was a fantastic way to test theory and gain practical experience. One of the courses gave me the opportunity to participate in the Global Enterprise Experience, in which my teammates around the world and I defied time zones and came up with an environmen-



tally sustainable business proposal in just two weeks.

One of my favorite courses was cross-cultural management, which inspired me to co-found and chair the board of the Indian Multicultural Club, where I interacted with students and staff from different cultures and also with local businesses and sponsors. My participation in the university's leadership programmes, the Victoria Plus Award and Victoria International Leadership programmes, where I attended speaker events and participated in workshops about various global issues complemented my degree. I also had the opportunity to partake in career development sessions with Victoria's Careers Service. I believe that all these opportunities added more credence to my education and helped shape me into a confident and open minded person, ready to face real world challenges.

Upon completing my degree I took up the opportunity to work for a financial solutions firm in the United Arab Emirates. The versatility of an International Business degree helped me enormously in settling into my new job role. My firm provides expatriates from all around the world with financial solutions such as wealth management, insurance, offshore accounts, personal finance and mortgage consulting, where I am in charge of recruitment and operations. A commerce degree presents endless opportunities. My advice to someone interested in International Business is to always have an open mind and don't be afraid to share your ideas. Read the newspapers and actively engross yourself in world news. Enhance your networking skills by being active in the community; forming lasting relationships now will benefit you tomorrow. Be proactive.





### **Nikki Everton**

*Territory Representative  
Wellington Region  
NZ Lotteries Commission*



After spending my last year of high school abroad on a student exchange and realising how much the success of the New Zealand economy relied on international relations, I decided to study towards a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) majoring in International Business and a Bachelor of Arts majoring in International Relations and Politics. From the moment I sat down in my first International Business lecture, I was hooked. The course was so broad and covered a range of topics, from managing diverse cultures to acquisitions and mergers, and the lecturers delivering this information were from a variety of cultures and had first-hand experience working in different countries.

I gained a variety of skills during my studies, such as time management, critical thinking and influencing skills to name a few. However, the most valuable skill that I gained from studying International Business during my Honours year was confidence with public speaking.

My degrees were highly regarded in the work place and after graduating from Victoria University I started working for a global supply chain solutions company on their graduate programme. After two years working there, I decided it was time for a change and moved into the sales team at NZ Lotteries where I currently work. I use the skills I learned whilst studying for my International Business degree on a day to day basis in my current workplace. Because presenting course content was such a big part of the Honours programme, I feel confident when putting forward my ideas in the workplace, whether that be informally in a small group of colleagues or formally to large group of clients. Without the constant encouragement to test my boundaries that I received as part of my studies, I would never have the independence or self belief that I have today.

To any prospective students considering studying International Business I would say, "give it a go." The broad nature of the subject means that you will always find something to focus on that interests you, and the lecturers all have real life experience. They are so passionate about teaching that it is almost impossible not to have their enthusiasm rub off on you.

### **Hannah Cunneen**

*Merchandise Assistant  
Karen Walker International*



My decision to study International Business was a result of me wanting to include my interests and keep my options open as well as have knowledge applicable to a variety of industries. I didn't want to pledge to a non-versatile profession and decide later in life that I wanted something different. At high school I always had a particular affinity for politics and culture but decided I wanted to approach that curiosity commercially rather than anthropologically - hoping that a more business-based degree would give me an advantage when entering the job force. The beauty of this major is that the structure of the course is so wide-ranging. It includes core commerce studies but has elements of trade, culture, human resources and politics, so I enjoyed learning about the effects that these factors have on markets. A huge aspect of International Business is learning to work with a range of different people on cases - something that is integral to all jobs.

As a result I was able to exit Victoria with a wide range of transferable skills. My focus was on entering the primary trade sector and I was lucky enough to move into a position as a graduate trainee for the International Trade team at PGG Wrightson. I didn't even know how much I had retained or had learnt until it was asked of me. I enjoyed my time there immensely and once the opportunity presented itself to move into another area of great interest, I felt ready to apply my education at Karen Walker as a merchandiser. Who knows where it will take me next.

My advice to students considering this major is that it's a perfect area of study for those wanting to gain the invaluable knowledge of a commerce degree whilst having interests in diverse areas of life. I have found that what I learnt is applicable to so many industries, and yet is highly regarded as it encompasses the many facets of the world economy.

## INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AT VICTORIA

International Business courses are taught within the School of Marketing and International Business within the Victoria Business School (Faculty of Commerce).

Degrees offered within the School are designed to provide a broad educational foundation as well as developing specialist skills in your chosen major. Employers value the breadth and flexibility of skills in thinking, communication and developing a global perspective that our programmes provide.

In addition to the Bachelor of Commerce (BCom), the School offers a number of graduate and postgraduate qualifications to suit the objectives and backgrounds of prospective students, including:

- Graduate Diploma in Commerce
- Graduate Certificate in Commerce
- Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing
- Bachelor of Commerce with Honours
- Master of Commerce
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

We also contribute to executive-level education through the Master of Business Administration and the Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing programmes.

Our academic staff have the knowledge and experience that enable them to contribute uniquely to our programmes. The School's staff are actively engaged in high-quality academic research and consultancy in a range of areas relating to both the theory and practice of marketing and international business. Many are internationally renowned in their field and attract prestigious external funding. Application of research findings in business and government settings is an important consideration in the research staff undertake. For example, staff members engage in research and debate with senior staff in businesses, government departments, industry associations and other public and private sector organisations. These links to and joint projects with business and govern-

ment bring relevance to teaching and research which allows our graduates to succeed in today's workplace. Whatever your career aspirations, the School offers programmes and expertise that will help you achieve that goal.

Research and consulting interests of the School's staff include:

- Internationalisation and service recovery
- Exporting and international competitiveness
- International strategy and management
- Foreign direct investment
- Cross-cultural management

A huge range of opportunities exists for applying knowledge and skills in international business. Additional capabilities in the areas of marketing and/or management are valuable complements to an international business degree in the workplace. An interest in policy alongside international business is useful for careers in government, particularly in the areas of trade and investment and export development. An International Business major complements any other major by providing a global perspective, hence greater career opportunities. It is an exciting field, requiring an interest in world events, and the ability and motivation to keep up to date with economic and political changes.

The School is active in Victoria's international exchange programme, enabling students in the School to study for one or two trimesters at one of a range of universities worldwide.

Major corporations and government organisations increasingly require at least an Honours degree for entry into high-level positions. Indeed, any career path is enhanced with the experience and qualification that an Honours degree provides.

Victoria has one of the most respected programmes in New Zealand and produces highly valued professionals. Our Honours graduates are highly marketable in the corporate and government sectors and also well placed to continue their studies for a Master's degree or a PhD.

## Special thanks to:

The School of Marketing and International Business, in particular Prof Kim Fam, Head of School and Dr Yang Yu, Lecturer; graduates Hannah Cunneen, Anushka D'Souza, Nikki Everton, Florian Nebel, Brogan Sulzberger; and all those people who contributed to this publication.

*Career View* is published by Career Development and Employment  
Victoria University of Wellington, Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui  
PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, Tel: 64-4-463 5393

[www.victoria.ac.nz/careers](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/careers)

September 2013

ISSN 1172-4315

**Vic Careers**  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT