



AUCKLAND SCHOOLS'
TEACHER TRAINING
PROGRAMME

A pharmacist, a pilot and a professional rugby player – all retraining as teachers under new model of immersive education

Hands-on learning programme offers career changes to candidates and helps address the country's teacher shortage

Auckland, August 2021 – A new model of teacher education currently in place at several Auckland secondary schools is set to address the country's critical teacher shortage with its unique focus on immersive and innovative learning in key subject areas.

The [Auckland Schools' Teacher Training Programme](#) for the one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching was developed jointly by a group of 12 Auckland secondary schools and the University of Waikato last year, with the first cohort of 24 trainees based in the group's range of co-ed, single sex, public and independent schools this year.

A novel approach to teacher training

Unlike the current University-based teacher training diploma, trainees studying under the immersive programme learn on the job. They initially shadow a teacher and observe their classes while being involved behind the scenes with lesson planning and conversations about effective pedagogy.

Course content is delivered online by the University of Waikato, while mentoring, professional development and placement opportunities are provided by the participating schools who also cover the trainees' fees.

The programme stemmed from a desire to attract high quality individuals into the teaching profession and address shortages in key subject areas, while supporting them through their training and ultimately retaining them at their allocated school.

Career changers make up more than half the cohort

More than 50% of the inaugural cohort previously worked in other roles and sectors, with trainees ranging in age from mid-20s to over 50 years, and previous careers including a radio announcer, a rugby player and an international marketer. The 2021 intake also includes a set of cousins – Louise Fisher, who was previously a pharmacist and is now training at St Cuthbert's College, and Andrew Bason, a former airline pilot, now training at Macleans College in Buckland's Beach.

David Ferguson, headmaster of Westlake Boys' High School, and spokesperson for the participating schools said, "The new programme offers a pathway for people who have always considered teaching as a career possibility but weren't sure how they could make the move.

"We're really interested in people who have worked in other jobs and are looking to change careers, as well as graduates from a wide range of disciplines," he said. "We feel that the life experiences and

professional backgrounds of our candidates gives an added perspective to their teaching, as well as enriching the lives of the students they teach.”

Focus on key subject areas helping address New Zealand’s teacher shortage

With its focus on attracting candidates who are trained in Maths, Physics, Chemistry, General Science, Economics and Te Reo, the programme is helping address the country’s teacher shortage in these key subject areas.

Feedback from the trainees, along with teaching staff at the participating schools, had been extremely positive, with many praising the cross-school innovation and collaboration to help address issues in the teacher training field.

Research shows that 92% of the trainees strongly agree that placement in the school for a whole year has prepared them well for a teaching career.

Increased retention rates one of the programme’s goals

Heather McRae, Principal at Diocesan School, which currently has two trainee teachers, said there were significant benefits from the programme for both trainees and the school.

“The reality of arriving in a school, once you’ve completed your 12-week practicums, can be overwhelming for many beginner teachers,” she said. “The immersion model gives applicants the advantage of real-world experience as they learn on the job, working alongside outstanding teachers in their field and experiencing first-hand the pace of full time teaching and school life.”

She said that one of the aims of the programme is increased retention rates for teachers.

“In the long term, we hope that it will result in new teachers staying on at our school and in the profession much longer.”

Alex Woodall, who has a degree in Biomedical Engineering, is one of the trainee teachers at Diocesan School and is currently based in the maths department there. He previously worked as a research assistant in the musculoskeletal group at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute, focusing on basketball players.

Alex is enjoying the transition into teaching, saying he enjoys the interaction with students and the ability to develop with the school as the year progresses.

“I feel as if I’m part of the school, rather than an outsider coming in for a restricted period of time,” he said.

Applications are currently open for the 2022 school year and can be made via the website [here](#).

Nine new schools have been included in the programme in 2022 (list is below).

The 12-strong group of schools in the 2021 programme includes the following:

- Auckland Grammar School
- Baradene College of the Sacred Heart
- Diocesan School for Girls
- Macleans College
- Massey High School
- Mount Albert Grammar School
- Rangitoto College
- Sacred Heart College
- St Cuthbert's College
- St Peter's College
- Westlake Boys High School
- Westlake Girls High School

The nine new schools joining the programme in 2022 includes the following:

- ACG Strathallan
- Dilworth School
- Henderson High School
- Long Bay College
- Northcote College
- Orewa College
- Rutherford College
- Takapuna Grammar School
- Whangaparaoa College

CASE STUDIES

Matt Johnson, St Peter's College

Matt Johnson, an old boy of St Peter's College, is a former Blues, Northland, Southland and Counties Manukau midfielder. He underwent three major heart surgeries before retiring from the game last year after an 11-year playing history. He was first spotted by NRL scouts playing for the St Peter's College 1st XV when he was 16, and moved to play for Melbourne Storm two years later.

Matt (aged 27) studied a Bachelor of Sport & Exercise at the Southern Institute of Technology while he was playing for Southland, and says physical education has always played a huge part in his life as a professional athlete.

He is specialising in Health and Physical Education at St Peter's and credits them with supporting him on his new career path.

Lance Dunne, Westlake Boys' High School

Lance was a radio announcer for 15 years and was tutoring at the New Zealand Radio Training School when the opportunity to join the school-based teacher trainee programme came up. Being a teacher is something that he always thought about and he enjoys the full-immersion experience and the daily classroom interaction of helping students reach their full potential.

Lance is specialising in Media Studies/English but is also assisting in other areas such as outdoor education.

He's a former Macleans College student, and took part in a personal development workshop there as part of the inter-school training programme. He says some of his teachers who are still at the school were excited that he was getting into the profession.

Andrew Bason, Maclean's College

Andrew Bason, who's in his late-20's, had worked in the airline industry for five years when COVID-19 struck. After graduating from University with a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Science, he started work as a training analyst at Air New Zealand before realising his real passion lay in flying. He qualified as a pilot and started flying short-haul routes for a regional airline, but with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last year and uncertainty in the aviation sector, he decided to make a career change.

Andrew is specialising in maths and has become fully involved in school life, coaching the 2nd XV. He has already been offered a full-time teaching job at Maclean's College in 2022.

Andrew says he'd always had an interest in teaching, and his mother and sister were both teachers. His cousin, Louise Fisher, is also on the school-based teacher trainee programme and is currently at St Cuthbert's College.

Louise Fisher, St Cuthbert's College

Twenty-six-year old Louise Fisher started considering a career change during last year's COVID-19 lockdown. With a Bachelor in Pharmacy degree, Louise had worked as the dispensary manager at Te Ngae Pharmacy in Rotorua for three years but says she missed the interaction with people and was looking for a more varied career.

With a specialisation in Chemistry, Louise has her sights set on becoming a Senior School Chemistry teacher once she graduates. She comes from a family of educators - her mother and grandmother were both teachers, and sister Emily is currently teaching at St Cuthbert's Junior School.

"What I appreciate most about this school-based teacher trainee programme is having the opportunity to observe a range of teaching approaches and being able to fully participate within and outside the classroom setting. It's wonderful to be part of a community where teachers are so willing to share their ideas within a collaborative and engaging environment. It's a privilege to be part of a dynamic team who are preparing and supporting me on this exciting learning journey," she says.

Lilly Lee, Westlake Girls' High School

At 50 years old, Lilly Lee is the second oldest trainee on the programme. She initially trained and worked as a mechanical engineer in her native Beijing, and then moved into a marketing role after doing a Master's Degree in Finance. Lilly and her family emigrated to New Zealand in 2003 and she joined Westlake Girls' High School as Head of International Marketing in 2011.

The mother of two is specialising in Maths but says learning the subject is quite different to teaching it. She says her previous experience in the education sector has been an advantage and given her a greater appreciation of the role of teaching in the wider school system.

She says a postgraduate diploma in teaching will complement her existing business and engineering skills, and create greater employment opportunities for her.

Ruth Chong, Rangitoto College

Prior to joining the programme, Ruth Chong spent five years working in healthcare, delivering nutrition talks within the Auckland community. She has a Master of Health Sciences (nutrition and dietetics) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health.

Rangitoto College holds a meaningful connection for Ruth as her late father Samuel Zhang was a Science teacher at the school from 2002 to 2020. Ruth (26) is specialising in Science and Biology.

Ruth says the programme has provided a valuable training experience, with the ability to follow both junior and senior classes throughout the entire school year, involvement in a range of co-curricular activities within the school, along with participating in numerous professional development workshops hosted by partnership schools.

For further information and interview opportunities, please contact:

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