

Earth Sciences

Key facts:

- Christchurch has become a hot spot for international geologists, civil engineers and other specialists
- Local research ranges from renewable energy development and natural hazard mitigation, to environmental management and conservation
- Christchurch is home to New Zealand's Natural Hazard Research Centre
- The University of Canterbury's school of Geological Sciences prepares students for a diverse range of career options, including geo-exploration, volcanology, hazard management, engineering geology, environmental planning, water resources, science teaching and geoscience research
- Geological modelling, geo-statistics and geo-consulting companies like Seequent and ENGEO are based in Christchurch.

New Zealand is positioned on the boundary of the Australian and the Pacific tectonic plates – giving the country a complex geology and active record of significant events. These unique geological features attract interest from international and domestic tourists, as well as industry professionals in science, energy, environmental management and civil engineering. Their research ranges from renewable energy development and natural hazard mitigation, to environmental management and conservation.

Given its recent earthquake history, disaster response, and regeneration, Christchurch in particular has become a hot spot for international geologists, civil engineers and other specialists. These experts visit Canterbury to study, test and measure the region's seismic history – most notably the 2011 Canterbury earthquake sequence and the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake – as well as the city's low-damage, resilient infrastructure and the South Island's evolving landscapes. Christchurch is also home to New Zealand's Natural Hazard Research Centre.

Fact sheet



Based in the department of geological sciences at the University of Canterbury, the research centre was established in 1997 to promote and undertake high-quality research in the broad field of natural hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis.

Over the years, its international collaborative links have promoted the exchange of data and earth science research across countries – with the goal of increasing public awareness and education of natural hazards and their effects on a country's economic and social environment.

The University of Canterbury's college of science is also world-class, and is well-positioned for site programmes and in-the-field study. The school of Geological Sciences in particular provides local and international students with cutting-edge, challenging courses and research programmes, as well as access to well-resourced laboratories and field stations across the South Island. Graduates from the School of Geological Sciences are prepared for a diverse range of career options, including geo-exploration, volcanology, hazard management, engineering geology, environmental planning, water resources, science teaching and geoscience research.

There is also a thriving earth science technology business sector in Christchurch. Geological modelling, geo-statistics and geo-consulting companies like Seequent and ENGEO are based here, and continue to create world-class software, systems and solutions for businesses, governments and agencies to better understand their earth, environment and energy challenges.

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