

ENVIRONMENTAL TOURISM

Where tourism, te taiao and the future of the West Coast come together

NEW
for 2027!

Te Tai o Poutini is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most distinctive tourism destinations. Visitors come from around the world to experience our ngahere, mountains, coastlines, wildlife, national parks, local stories and communities. The future of tourism on the West Coast depends on how well we care for these taonga while creating meaningful and sustainable visitor experiences.

Environmental Tourism – West Coast explores the important relationship between tourism, conservation, environmental sustainability and regional prosperity. Through practical and experiential learning, ākonga will discover how tourism businesses, communities and mana whenua work together to protect te taiao, respond to environmental challenges and create experiences that benefit both visitors and local people.

Working alongside tourism operators, community organisations and environmental specialists, ākonga will gain real-world insight into regenerative tourism, visitor experiences and the unique natural and cultural identity of Te Tai o Poutini. They will explore how our landscapes, biodiversity, heritage and pūrākau help shape unforgettable visitor experiences and contribute to the success of one of the West Coast's most important industries.

Learning will take place in authentic locations throughout the region, allowing ākonga to experience a wide range of tourism operations while exploring how businesses balance environmental responsibility, visitor expectations and economic sustainability. They may participate in guided experiences, visit tourism destinations and investigate how the West Coast is leading the way in sustainable and regenerative tourism.

The kaupapa of Papa Taiao sits at the heart of this programme. Ākonga will develop a stronger connection with te taiao while growing their understanding of kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga and their role in supporting the wellbeing of the whenua, local communities and the future of tourism on the West Coast.

Alongside industry knowledge, students will build confidence, communication, teamwork, leadership, customer service and problem-solving skills. This course is ideal for students who enjoy practical learning, meeting people, exploring new places and contributing ideas about the future of tourism in Aotearoa.

What you will learn:

- The importance of environmental tourism to the West Coast and Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Sustainable and regenerative tourism.
- Visitor experiences and destination management.
- West Coast tourism businesses and career opportunities.
- Local history, pūrākau and cultural perspectives.
- Guiding, interpretation and storytelling.
- Manaakitanga and creating exceptional visitor experiences.
- Tourism business challenges, including seasonality and sustainability.
- Health and safety within tourism workplaces.
- Communication, teamwork, leadership and employment skills.
- Planning and presenting sustainable tourism ideas.

Course details



Vocational Pathway:
Service Industries



Credits:
Level 2 and 3



Duration:
This is a 1 year programme



Timetable:
9am to 3pm Thursdays
Starts: February 2027
Finishes: November 2027

This programme is delivered primarily as a weekly day course and may include field trips and occasional overnight experiences.



Provider:
Papa Taiao Earthcare

Employment options

- Tourism Guide
- Eco-tourism
- Visitor Experience Host
- Tourism Operations
- i-SITE and Visitor Services
- Tourism Marketing
- Events and Experience Coordination
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Regional Tourism Organisations
- Conservation Tourism

Further study options

- Further study in Tourism, Business, Sustainability or Environmental Management

Designed for both Year 12 and Year 13 students, this programme can be delivered at either NZQA Level 2 or Level 3. Learning and assessments are tailored to suit individual students and support their future education and career goals.