

Motu Summer Internships

Motu Economic and Public Policy Research offers summer internships for economics and/or statistics students completing their degree and planning to return to graduate study. Internships provide valuable experience working alongside internationally recognised economists. Students can work within any of Motu's major research programmes.

To apply, send your cover letter, CV and academic record to Rhylic Alexander at rhylic.alexander@motu.org.nz. The position remains open until we find the right candidate, so early applications are encouraged.

Simon Ngawhika, Summer Intern 2007-2008

Simon came to Motu after completing an honours year in Economic Geography at the University of Auckland. He was attracted to the approach Motu takes to its projects and the way it deals with a wide range of other interested stakeholders. He was also attracted to the working conditions: "You've got a job to do and you do it, and as long as you fulfill your obligations it doesn't matter too much if you aren't around between 9 and 5 everyday."



Simon's research focused on the viability of a nutrient trading market to improve water quality in Lake Rotorua. His key contribution was to complete a literature review exploring the trade-offs between economic efficiency and environmental efficiency.

Simon's time at Motu has given him direction in his future career. In addition to starting a policy analyst role at the Ministry of Maori Development, he "left determined to take up an economics paper part-time and with a much clearer idea of what to study for my Masters than I had three months ago." He describes Motu as an extremely well-connected and well-regarded organisation, and a great stepping stone for those beginning their careers.

Dale Warburton, Summer Intern 2006-2007

Dale completed a BSc in Geography and Development Studies and a BCA in Economics at Victoria University before joining Motu at the end of 2006. He was attracted to the calibre of researchers at Motu, along with its networks and available data.

Dale describes Motu as an excellent working environment. His internship focussed on female labour supply in New Zealand, working with labour economist Dr Steven Stillman.

Following his internship, Dale returned to Victoria University to undertake a Masters in Geography. He remains in close contact with Motu. Dr Stillman is co-supervisor for his masters, and he also attends Motu's internal seminars when relevant topics arise.



Ruth Pinkerton Summer intern 2009 – 2010



Ruth Pinkerton came to Motu after completing three years of a Management Degree at the University of Waikato, majoring in Economics. She was interested in public policy issues and in particular labour economics, so when the opportunity came up to work with a group of the most highly regarded research economists in New Zealand, she jumped at it.

Ruth's research project looked at residential sorting patterns in Auckland. She worked with senior fellow Dave Maré. This gave her an opportunity to carry out a range of tasks, from literature reviews to data analysis. Ruth says she really enjoyed her time at Motu. It gave her the opportunity to learn many new things through a hands-on approach. Ruth says that at Motu you are surrounded by incredibly well connected and talented people. She found it to be a friendly and supportive environment, and an invaluable experience.

On returning to Waikato to complete her Honours year in Economics, Ruth will take more papers involving econometric techniques, as her time at Motu taught her that they are very useful for this sort of research.

Darian Woods summer intern 2009 – 2010

Darian Woods studied towards a B.A. in economics at the University of Canterbury. After finishing the B.A. in 2009 and before starting his Honours year in 2010, Darian worked as an intern at Motu.

This twelve-week internship was dedicated to one project, considering how farmers could respond to the Emissions Trading Scheme by rearranging trading patterns. Darian worked with senior fellows Suzi Kerr and Andrew Coleman. He used international trade data to test the degree to which New Zealand farmers and agricultural processors held market power internationally. He reviewed literature on relevant topics, reshaped data, learned how to write code to analyse the data, drew graphs, and wrote a paper discussing his findings. The basic principles of economics that his lecturers had taught him at university helped his understanding of the topics involved, but he learned most of the specific data-manipulation skills by interacting with colleagues.



During his time with Motu, Darian met many economists and enjoyed the engaging guest seminars. He says that Motu helped him understand the nuances of research that could not be taught in a lecture theatre. Motu's flexible work hours, friendly colleagues, and relaxed working environment made the summer internship an enjoyable experience. Darian says that it was not so much a summer of hard work but a summer of learning.