



# Te Pū Hono

## Cadetship Programme



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

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*Photo: Mark Tantrum*

## About our name

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Te Pū Hono is more than just a name — it reflects the heart of the programme.

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It speaks to connection with Papatūānuku, to each other, to the mahi and to the learning that happens along the way.

Being great kaitiaki (guardians) means working across networks of knowledge, people and places. It also means being connected with our whenua (land), our people and our stories. Through strong connections, we gain the deep, practical knowledge needed to care for te taiao.



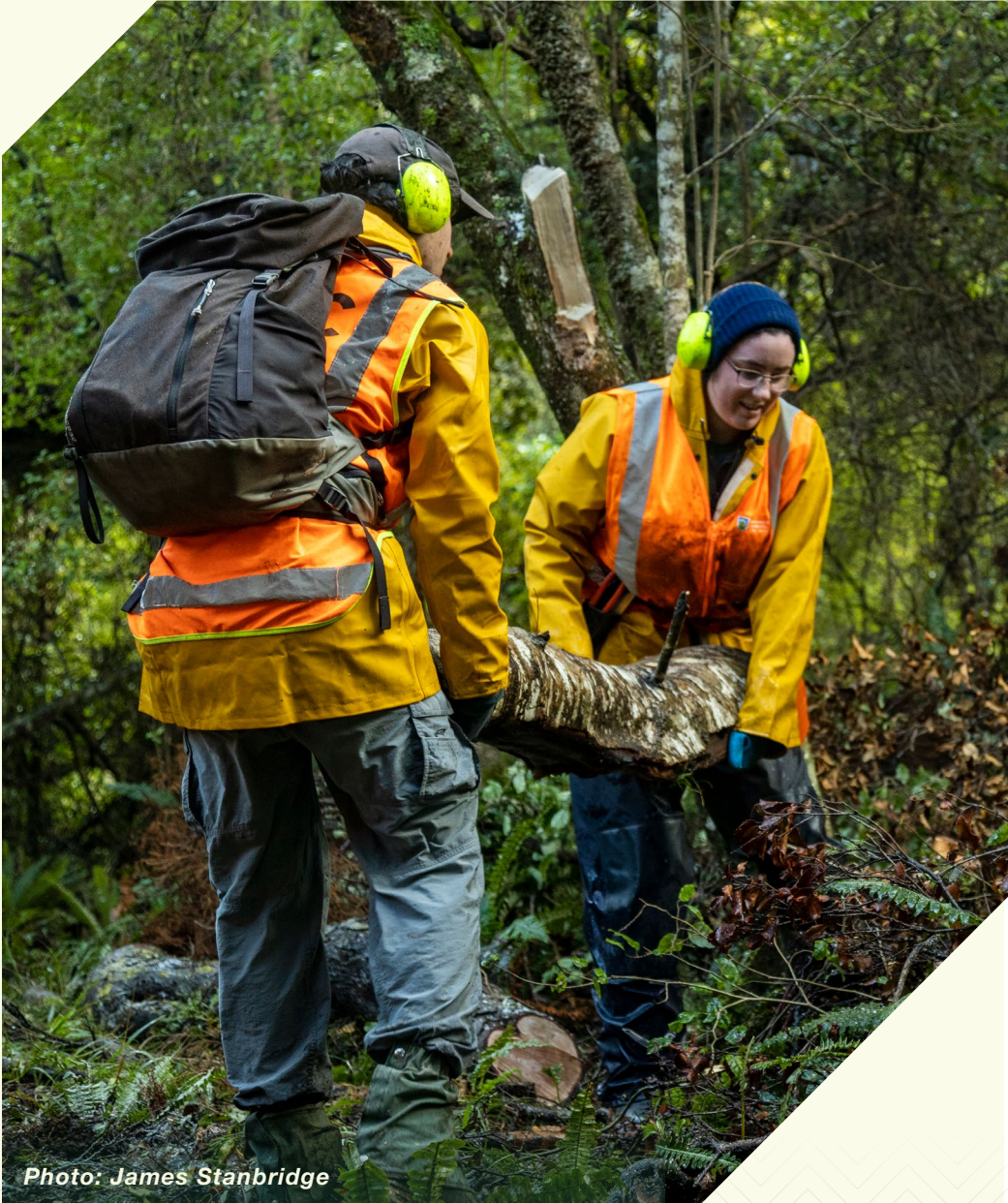


Photo: James Stanbridge

## How the programme works

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Te Pū Hono is a hands-on, full-time work programme that sets Kaihonoa Taiao (cadets) up for a career in conservation.

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You will work alongside other cadets and Department of Conservation (DOC) teams across the motu, gaining hands-on experience in conservation delivery, across the core field skills needed to thrive as a ranger.

The work is varied, physical, and often remote - and it's designed to build capability, confidence, and resilience.

The programme is roughly divided into three years and is structured around modules that combine practical work with targeted training. You will complete core modules, take part in placements with other teams, and explore electives based on your interests.

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## There are three types of modules:



### Core

These are mandatory modules and cover essential skills and standards for conservation work

#### FOR EXAMPLE:

Predator trapping, weed control, using a chainsaw, or monitoring species.



### Placement

Experience working with different DOC teams across the motu.

#### FOR EXAMPLE:

Track and hut maintenance, monitoring hoiho in the Caitlins or restoration planting with your team and volunteers.




### Elective

These are optional modules to give you an opportunity to try out a range of conservation mahi.

#### FOR EXAMPLE:

Carpentry, abseiling, wildlife health, operational planning and reporting, species translocation.



## Who can apply

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We're looking for people from all walks of life — whether you're just starting out, thinking about a career change, or already have some experience under your belt.

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You might have a degree, some work experience, or simply be passionate about conservation and the outdoors. If you're ready to take on a challenge, work hard and grow your skills, we'd love to hear from you.

This programme is best suited to people who are already living and/or working independently, can handle time away from home and take on physically demanding fieldwork. It's a great fit for those who are looking for their next step and are ready to commit to a full-time development opportunity.



## Eligibility checklist

You need to:

- 
- ☐ Have achieved at least NCEA Level 2 literacy and numeracy
  - 
  - ☐ Be in excellent health and have a high level of fitness
  - 
  - ☐ Be able to commit to field work and travel (up to three months away from your home base at a time)
  - 
  - ☐ Be comfortable working in challenging environments (for example, travelling in helicopters, working at heights and in remote areas)
  - 
  - ☐ Be willing to live and work in different parts of the country
  - 
  - ☐ Hold a full and clean New Zealand driver license
  - 
  - ☐ Be a New Zealand or Australian citizen or permanent resident

## Selection criteria

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When we assess and shortlist applications, we're looking for a mix of skills, experience, and people with a great attitude.

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*Photo: Mark Tantrum*

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## Here's what we're looking for:

### **A strong interest in conservation**

You care deeply about nature and want to be part of protecting and restoring it.

### **Reliability and resilience**

You show up, work hard, and stay positive – even when things get tough or plans change. You're open to learning and keen to grow.

### **Literacy, numeracy and attention to detail**

You have sufficient ability in reading, writing and working with numbers to carry out the work of a Kaihonoa Taiao, with a high level of accuracy and attention to detail. This is important for reliable and precise data collection.

### **Relevant skills and experience**

Experience in conservation or related fields is a bonus. Skills like 4WD driving, first aid or chainsaw use are helpful but not essential.

### **Flexibility**

You're ready to be deployed anywhere in the country, including spending up to 40 days in the backcountry or up to three months in other DOC regions around Aotearoa New Zealand.



*Photo:*  
**James Stanbridge**

## How to apply

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For the most up-to-date application steps and recruitment information, visit the Te Pū Hono Cadetship Programme page on the Department of Conservation website.

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We want to get a good sense of who you are, what drives you and why you're keen to be part of Te Pū Hono. There are a few things you'll need to prepare, so give yourself plenty of time to pull everything together.



*Photo: Yang Gan*

## Application checklist

What you'll need:

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### **DOC application form**

Take your time, answering honestly and thoughtfully.

☐

### **CV**

Keep it clear and simple. Tell us what you've done so far – work, study, volunteering, hobbies. Highlight anything that shows your interest in conservation or the outdoors.

☐

### **Cover letter**

Use your cover letter to explain why you're keen to join Te Pū Hono and what makes you a great fit.

☐

### **Academic transcript or NCEA certificate**

If you're not sure how to get your NCEA certificate or transcript, contact your school/tertiary provider or NZQA.



# Application process

## Timeline



**OCTOBER**

### Applications open



**NOVEMBER**

### Applications close

After the application closing date, applications will be assessed against our selection criteria. Applicants who progress past this stage will be asked to complete an additional assessment step before we confirm the shortlist.



**DECEMBER**

### Final selection made

Successful applicants offered positions and new Kaihonoa Taiao start relocation to allocated home base.



**MID-JANUARY**

### Relocated to home base

New Kaihonoa Taiao complete relocation to allocated home base.



**END OF JANUARY**

### Programme start

Programme starts with an induction at end of January.



Photo: James Stanbridge

