

Future17: Sustainable Development Goals Challenge

Information pack for students

Future17 is a global education programme that bridges the worlds of higher education and work. It is multi-institutional and multidisciplinary, and brings together students, mentors and business partners to work on different challenges related to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Students who have embarked on Future17 come from a vast variety of fields. However, they have one thing in common: a passion for sustainability and desire to make an impact.

How does Future17 work?

You will work in a team with around five other students from a variety of disciplines and universities around the world, guided by two academic mentors from across the global network of partner institutions. Each student team is assigned a business partner — for example, a corporate organisation, charity, or NGO, located anywhere in the world — to work with on a real-world SDG challenge set by the business.

Future17 has an emphasis on developing students' 21st century skills. With guidance from their mentors, the teams work collaboratively to develop a solution to the SDG-related business challenge they have been set. This culminates in a showcase event where teams present their proposed solutions to the business partners.

Students are graded on a team presentation and written piece at the completion of their project. Academic mentors grade the assignments and qualitative feedback is provided by business partners. Grades are moderated and finalised by the University of Auckland Future17 Academic Lead

Future17 runs as a stage three 15-point undergraduate course and is administered as BUSINESS 301: Special Topic – Future17. Successful participants will receive credit towards their University of Auckland programme of study (subject to programme regulations allowing it). A standard course fee applies.

What are the benefits of undertaking a Future17 project?

You will engage in international, practice-oriented collaboration, working with students from a variety of disciplines, countries, cultures and year groups. You will also engage with organisations working in sustainability-related fields.

“The Future17 course was overall an exciting experience that gave me the exposure I had been yearning for outside my own academic studies. I would highly recommend the short course to anyone interested in challenging their thinking and being part of the greater efforts of seeking solutions to the world’s global issues.”

– 2022 Future17 Student

“I do not think anything would have prepared me for the enriching experience, which was enhanced by motivating teamwork and empathetic leadership amongst other qualities. The support from our mentors and Future17 Team was also a guiding light in some of the new topics we got to explore.”

– 2022 Future17 Student

Future17 will help you develop:

- Cultural competence
- Digital skills
- Collaborative working behaviours
- Critical problem-solving
- Design Thinking skills

When does Future17 run and for how long?

There are two Future17 intakes each year. The first intake commences in January and concludes in May. The second intake enrolls for semester 2 in July, with projects running from September to December.

Due to the global nature of Future17, project timelines do not fully match UoA semesters. Student grades for semester 2 will be available shortly before Christmas. This may impact your study plans for the following year – please discuss the implications with your Student Hub advisor if you have any concerns.

What are the prerequisites for Future17?

Expressions of interest (EOI) are invited from stage two or stage three undergraduate students. There are no prerequisites for enrolment, but some students may need permission to complete the programme as part of their degree.

What level of commitment does Future17 require?

You can expect to spend around 150 hours working on Future17. The time and work commitment is commensurate with a typical stage three undergraduate course at the University of Auckland.

Being a global programme, some of the work will need to happen outside your usual term and lecture times, as detailed below.

- The programme includes a self-paced, online induction, which will develop skills for collaborative, challenge-based and inter-cultural learning, promoting forms of design thinking for tackling global challenges.
- As you will be working as part of an international student team, you will need to participate in some virtual project meetings outside your usual New Zealand lecture hours.
- The final presentation for the business partner may also need to take place outside your usual lecture hours, depending on where the business partner is located.

The allocation of teams and business partners will aim to take into account the time zones where the universities and business partners are located, to ensure that virtual meetings can be arranged at reasonable times for all participants.

How do I apply for Future17?

If you are interested in participating, please complete an expression of interest (EOI), using either the link or the QR code below. The deadline for EOIs is available here.



https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=1W6z0VAN6UKVj7Y_qQa-qgw5-KrYpChOnE6_JaibWiRUM1hTUEpTNzhHS1g1WVBUSENBU0hTNkhHMC4u

What happens after submitting an EOI?

Short interviews will be held with potential participants. Further information about the interview format and location will be provided to applicants whose EOI the University would like to progress.

Successful applicants will be notified and invited to enrol into the course.

What else should I know?

Future17 was launched in 2022 by the charity arm of higher-education thought leaders and rankings organisation QS, in conjunction with the University of Exeter (England). The University of Auckland joined the programme in September 2022.

“Today our world is shaped by disruption, war and conflict, inflation, protectionism, polarisation, inequality, disinformation and climate change. It means the University, our students and staff must forge fresh approaches to what we do while remaining committed to our core values of respect and integrity, excellence and service and quality. The Future 17 consortium offers one such fresh approach through the SDGs, which are deeply embedded in our university strategy. Through the consortium, we will bring our sustainability-minded students and staff together with like-minded global partners, universities, businesses, and NGOs to develop actionable solutions to real-life SDG-focused challenges.”

– Professor Dawn Freshwater, Vice-Chancellor

Where can I find more information?

If you have any questions about Future17, please email the Future17 team at future17SDGs@auckland.ac.nz.

Annex: Sample Future17 projects

The attached SDG challenges, from 2022, are examples of the types of projects students complete in Future17.

Space for Good: Development of Satellite Programs to Address Sustainability Challenges

Spaceport Cornwall is a Consortium working together to open up access to space in order to benefit life on Earth. Their ambition is to provide a safe, dedicated and responsible way to access space, capable of supporting small satellite launches and connecting people, businesses and ideas. The first Kernow Sat mission in early 2023 will monitor the health of Cornwall's coastal areas, providing bespoke data to community groups and academia, to help identify wave height, areas of sea pollution, and the best place to plant a kelp forest for carbon sequestration. The project objective was to develop an idea that uses data collected from a the next Kernow Sat mission to benefit us on earth sustainably and addresses local needs.

Aligning Fashion Industry with SDG Values

Threading Change is a youth-led registered nonprofit organization, using their voice to work alongside industry, governments, and the UN to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and analysing fashion's impact across the 17 SDGs. The objective of this project was to outline the foundations of practical/actionable recommendations that align with global youth values and engage brands and fashion industry in SDG conscious decision making and strategy.

Coffeebriques: Transport and Storage of Used Wet Coffee Grounds

Diversey's mission is to protect and care for people through leading hygiene, infection prevention, and cleaning solutions. Diversey has a program called CoffeeBriques, which converts used coffee grounds into eco-friendly fuel for cooking and heating. However, the logistics of collecting the used coffee grounds presents a problem. Once collected, the used coffee grounds have to be processed immediately to prevent the grounds turning moldy. The project objective was to identify innovative solutions for transportation and storage of wet coffee grounds for longer periods without fungi growing on them.

Climate Solutions Game

Carbon Literacy Training for Educators, Communities, Organizations and Students (CLT-ECOS) is a virtual Train-the-Trainer project developed and upscaled by Nottingham Trent University, UK, in collaboration with the UN Global Compact PRME Working Group on Climate Change empowering people to embed high-impact climate solutions in their personal, professional and community life. The objective of this project was to create a simple, interactive game that will help participants get a good foundation of a) causes of climate change, b) related human day-to-day activities, c) carbon accounting and d) find alternative solutions with lower impact.