

BUILDING OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Developed by:



**BUILT
ENVIRONMENT
CAREER
STREAMS**

Ngā ara rerekē o te ao
hanga taiao

He ara whiria
A braided river



CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAREER STREAM FOR YOU

Inspired by Aotearoa New Zealand's many braided rivers, this helpful guide has been created for anyone entering or changing careers in the construction industry. Like a river, your chosen career stream may twist and turn throughout your career, but all streams can lead to rewarding and impactful roles – enabling you to make a tangible impact on New Zealand's built environments.



BUILDING OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

This guide gives you an overview of the opportunities and expectations within building operations and management – including typical career pathways, key skills required, what the role looks like day-to-day, and how to get started.

Operations and management professionals oversee property and infrastructure assets, delivering value, performance, and user experience throughout their lifecycle, from early design input through to decommissioning. Roles can include:

- Project involvement during design and construction to ensure that buildings meet operational and investment needs
- Strategic portfolio planning and investment decisions for long-term value creation
- Day-to-day operational management and maintenance coordination
- Tenant and stakeholder relationship management throughout occupancy
- Financial performance monitoring and cost management across portfolios
- Regulatory compliance and risk management
- Sustainability and technology integration to enhance building performance

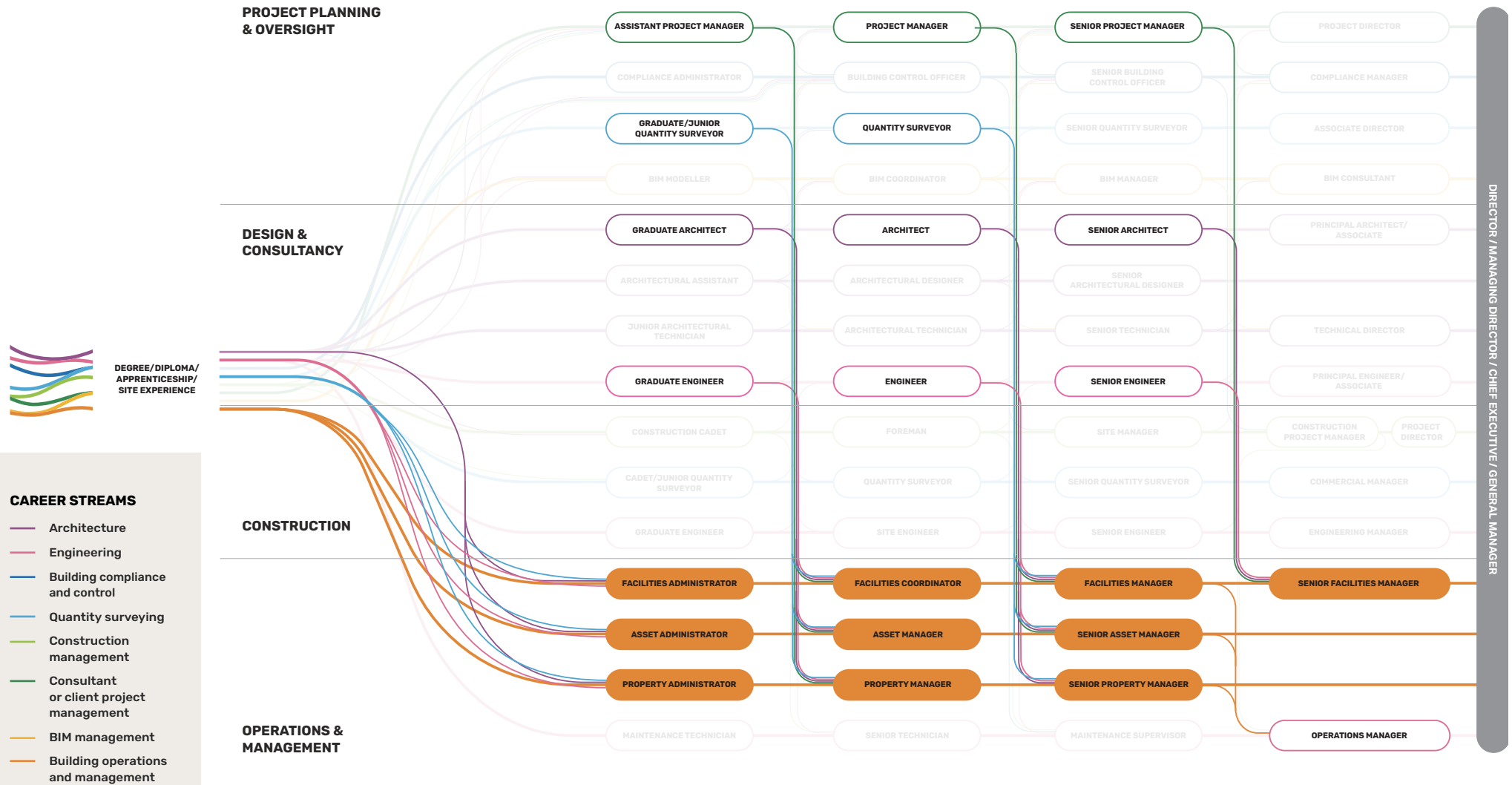
Facilities Managers ensure that buildings and facilities are safe, healthy, sustainable, productive and fit-for-purpose. They focus on improving building performance and user experience while managing operational costs.

Property Managers coordinate the strategic and operational management of property portfolios so that they are well-maintained, compliant, and deliver the best returns for property owners. They focus on managing tenant relationships to sustain or increase rental income and property value.

Asset Managers provide strategic management of property portfolios to deliver long-term value and maintain required levels of service throughout their life cycle. They focus on capital allocation decisions and investment performance across a property portfolio, while managing risk and meeting organisational objectives.

All of these roles combine analytical skills, stakeholder management expertise and commercial acumen, offering rewarding pathways for those who value strategic thinking, relationship building, and measurable impact on property performance. Work in building operations and management suits individuals who are detail-oriented and service-focused. You'll also need strong communication and analytical skills, commercial awareness, and the ability to balance multiple stakeholder priorities to deliver sustainable outcomes.

BUILDING OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT CAREER STREAM



* Depending on project scale and experience levels, some steps between streams may require transitioning to a less senior role.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE ROLE

Facilities management

- **Building systems oversight and maintenance coordination** – You'll manage building systems including HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and security systems, coordinating with contractors and service providers to ensure reliable operation and compliance with health and safety requirements.
- **Space management and user experience** – Balancing space utilisation with user needs requires understanding organisational workflows, managing change requests, and coordinating relocations while maintaining productivity and satisfaction levels.
- **Emergency response and business continuity** – You'll coordinate rapid response to system failures, security incidents, and safety issues that could impact hundreds of building users and organisational operations. Many facilities management roles include after-hours on-call responsibilities for critical building systems.

Property management

- **Tenant relationship management and dispute resolution** – You'll handle interpersonal situations ranging from rent arrears and lease negotiations to noise complaints and maintenance requests, requiring diplomatic communication skills and legal knowledge.
- **Financial performance monitoring for investment returns** – Property performance directly affects owner returns and portfolio values. You'll track rental income, manage expense ratios, and identify opportunities to enhance property value through strategic improvements.

- **Legal compliance across multiple jurisdictions** – Navigating tenancy legislation, building codes, health and safety requirements, and property-specific regulations requires continuous learning and attention to regulatory changes.
- **Market analysis and competitive positioning** – Understanding local property markets helps inform rent setting, marketing strategies, and investment recommendations to maintain competitive advantage.

Asset management

- **Long-term lifecycle planning and risk assessment** – Assets require decades-long planning timeframes. You'll need to balance immediate operational needs with long-term value preservation, considering technological obsolescence, regulatory changes, and market evolution.
- **Stakeholder management across multiple levels** – You'll coordinate between board members, investment committees, operational teams, and community stakeholders, and translate financial analysis into clear strategic recommendations.
- **Financial modelling and performance measurement** – Advanced analytical skills support the evaluation of investment scenarios, lifecycle costing, and measuring portfolio performance against organisational objectives and market benchmarks.

ALTERNATIVE CAREER PATHS

After gaining experience in building operations and management, other roles that become possible include:

- **Crossover across building operations and management** – moving between property manager, asset manager and facilities manager roles
- **Property development and investment** – Applying operational knowledge to development feasibility, due diligence, and investment decisions
- **Client or consultant project management** – Managing construction and fit-out projects using building operations expertise
- **Business and corporate services** – Transitioning to broader organisational management roles using operational and stakeholder management skills
- **Sustainability and environmental management** – Specialising in green building certification, environmental compliance, and sustainability strategy
- **Technology and smart buildings** – Focusing on building automation, IoT implementation, and digital facility management solutions
- **Education and training** – Sharing expertise through property and facilities management education and professional development



SALARY BANDS*

Asset management	Asset coordinator	Asset manager	Senior asset manager	Asset director	
Minimum time in role	2-3 years	3-5 years (destination role)	5-8 years (destination role)	(destination role)	
Salary range	\$55,000 - \$75,000	\$75,000 - \$105,000	\$105,000 - \$150,000	\$150,000 - \$300,000+	
Facilities management	Facilities administrator	Facilities coordinator	Facilities manager	Senior facilities manager	Facilities director
Minimum time in role	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-6 years (destination role)	4-8 years (destination role)	(destination role)
Salary range	\$45,000 - \$55,000	\$55,000 - \$75,000	\$75,000 - \$115,000	\$100,000 - \$150,000	\$150,000 - \$200,000+
Property management	Property administrator	Property manager	Senior property manager	Property director	
Minimum time in role	2-3 years	4-6 years (destination role)	5-8 years (destination role)	(destination role)	
Salary range	\$45,000 - \$65,000	\$55,000 - \$95,000	\$85,000 - \$130,000	\$120,000 - \$220,000+	

*Salaries and time in roles is indicative only and can vary significantly based on experience, performance, firm size and structure, regional location, specialisation, and market conditions.

ROLE OVERVIEW

KEY DAILY ACTIVITIES

Facilities management

- Building systems monitoring and maintenance coordination
- Health and safety compliance management and contractor oversight
- Space planning and utilisation
- Vendor management and contract administration for service providers
- Budget management and cost control across facility operations
- Stakeholder liaison with building users, management, and external service providers

Property management

- Tenant relationship management and lease administration
- Property inspections and maintenance coordination
- Rent collection and financial reporting for property owners
- Marketing vacant properties and processing tenancy applications
- Dispute resolution and legal compliance management
- Performance analysis and investment reporting for property portfolios

Asset management

- Monitoring portfolio performance and financial analysis
- Developing investment strategy and market research
- Coordinating due diligence for acquisitions and disposals
- Stakeholder reporting and presentation to investors and boards
- Risk assessment and management framework implementation
- Capital allocation decisions and life cycle planning for asset portfolios

WHERE YOU COULD WORK

Facilities management

- Large organisations with significant property portfolios (healthcare, education, corporate, government)
- Specialist facilities management companies providing services to multiple clients
- Property management companies offering integrated FM and property solutions

Property management

- Property management companies specialising in residential or commercial portfolios
- Real estate agencies with property management divisions providing comprehensive services
- Corporate in-house roles managing organisational property portfolios

Asset management

- Territorial authorities and government entities managing public asset portfolios
- Organisations overseeing long-term asset performance and investment
- Large property investment companies and institutional investors
- Specialist asset management consultancies serving diverse client portfolios

WHO YOU'LL WORK WITH

Building users, property owners, tenants, contractors, service providers, consultants, engineers, quantity surveyors, project managers, regulatory bodies, investors, board members, and senior organisational leadership.

TYPICAL WORK ARRANGEMENTS

- Mix of office-based coordination and administration, and on-site inspections and stakeholder meetings

- Technology-intensive roles using specialised management software, building automation systems, and data analytics platforms
- Regular reporting and presentation requirements to stakeholders, property owners, and senior management
- Variable travel requirements depending on portfolio size and geographic spread, with some roles requiring regional or national travel
- Increasing flexibility with hybrid working arrangements for office-based activities, though site presence remains important

REWARDS AND SATISFACTION

- The opportunity to directly impact people's lives by creating safe, productive, and comfortable environments for building users and tenants
- Variety in daily activities across different building systems, property types, and stakeholder needs providing diverse challenges
- Problem-solving satisfaction with immediate visible results and tangible improvements to building performance and user experience

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- Standard business hours for most routine activities
- After-hours availability required for critical building systems, tenant emergencies or urgent maintenance issues, particularly in facilities management roles
- Project and deadline pressures during busy periods such as lease renewals, major maintenance programmes, or investment reporting cycles
- Travel considerations depending on the scope of the portfolio

GETTING STARTED

Building operations and management offers a range of entry pathways depending on your background and interests. The field values practical experience, customer service skills, and analytical thinking – with successful professionals coming from administrative, technical, or business backgrounds.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

- **Develop foundational knowledge** – While no specific qualifications are required for facilities management entry, diplomas or degrees in facilities management, property, business, engineering, or construction provide valuable background. Property and asset management companies increasingly prefer candidates with formal qualifications.
- **Gain relevant experience** – Administrative, customer service, or technical roles are a great way to prepare for work in building operations and management. Building maintenance, trades, or construction experience is particularly valuable for facilities management roles.
- **Develop customer service skills** – Strong communication, problem-solving, and relationship management capabilities are essential for success across all building operations and management roles.

HOW TO GET INTO BUILDING OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

- Start in administrative support roles within property, facilities, or construction organisations and progress to coordination responsibilities
- Transition from trades or technical backgrounds using practical building knowledge as a foundation for facilities or property management

- Apply for graduate programmes with large property companies or facilities management organisations offering structured development
- Consider specialised training programmes in facilities management, property management, or asset management through polytechnics and private providers

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Knowledge of building systems including HVAC, electrical, plumbing, security systems, and maintenance requirements
- Financial management and budgeting knowhow for cost control, performance analysis, and investment evaluation
- Contract management and procurement skills for vendor coordination and service delivery oversight
- Stakeholder relationship management abilities for managing diverse interests and expectations
- Technology proficiency with property management software, building automation systems, and data analytics platforms
- Regulatory knowledge including health and safety legislation, building codes, tenancy law, and environmental requirements
- Project coordination skills for managing maintenance programmes, fit-outs, and capital improvement projects
- Communication and presentation abilities for reporting to stakeholders and senior management



CAREER STORY



Rose Smits – Property Manager,
Auckland Council

“There’s a lot around time management and planning, especially in connection with other people. If you’re relying on facilities managers or contractors, you’ve got to manage them as well.”

Following a Bachelor of Business Studies majoring in property and valuation, Rose Smits intended to pursue a career in valuation, but graduating in the middle of the GFC meant opportunities were limited. Instead, she got her foot in the door of the property world as a residential property assistant on a minimum wage, mastering tenant screening, lease processing, and maintenance coordination. Promotion to property manager added negotiation and conflict resolution skills.

Her transition to property and facilities manager at Smales Farm marked her entry into commercial property. Despite lacking direct experience, her honesty about knowledge gaps and eagerness to learn got her the role, one which she now considers pivotal to her career. Managing five buildings, she developed expertise handling lease negotiations, maintenance management, budgeting, and project coordination. The blended role scope meant managing “absolutely everything” from rent arrears and cleaning audits to major capital projects including roof replacements and new construction. Rose found this variety particularly satisfying, noting it “wasn’t just doing the same thing over and over.” She also learned to make autonomous decisions and manage complex stakeholder relationships.

Rose’s next job scaled up these skills even further. As a property asset manager for Foodstuffs, she managed 90 diverse buildings including supermarkets and distribution centres across the North Island. This role expanded her responsibility into strategic portfolio management. She developed expertise in managing both owned properties and leased premises, requiring dual perspectives as landlord and tenant representative. She gained deep operational knowledge, explaining that, “I really had to understand the business ... it wasn’t just about the building.”

Her current position at Auckland Council combines property and facilities management with dedicated support teams. “Relationships are important for this sort of work – communication is an essential skill,” she emphasises. Her pathway illustrates progression from entry level to senior positions, demonstrating how experience across property and facilities management can create wide-ranging expertise and career opportunities.

Rose particularly values the constant opportunity to learn new things, and she credits mentoring from colleagues and contractors with helping her master the diverse challenges of her role, from reporting and documentation requirements through to air conditioning systems and loading dock operation.

CAREER STORY



Tracy Massam – Water Services Asset Life-cycle Engineer, Hamilton City Council

“You can’t always rely on data being there, and even when it’s there, it’s not always right. It’s a really cool challenge – if you don’t have the data, what do you do? What assumptions can you make? You can think through any problem and figure out a way to overcome it. You just have to take the handbrake off and understand there are risks in doing this, but there are also risks in doing nothing.”

Tracy Massam discovered asset management by accident. After leaving school, she started teacher training but quickly realised teaching wasn’t for her. She took time overseas, then returned to New Zealand and landed a receptionist job at the Ministry of Education. Within six months, a property team manager noticed Tracy’s communication skills and invited her to join their team. This mentor became crucial to Tracy’s development, teaching her not just the technical aspects of the role but how organisations actually function behind the scenes.

Tracy spent nine years at the Ministry, moving through increasingly complex property-focused roles. These positions revealed her natural ability for planning and strategic thinking. She then joined Auckland Council for seven years, helping to manage major maintenance contracts. This role taught her to make sound decisions even when working with incomplete or imperfect data.

Her next move was to the Tāmaki Regeneration Company, where Tracy acted as asset owner and managed over 2,500 social housing units. This presented unique challenges because, unlike commercial facilities, people live in them 24 hours a day, seven days a week, meaning these assets need to be able to operate continuously. She learnt to balance immediate operational needs with long-term strategic planning, developing skills in managing assets where service interruption isn’t an option.

Tracy now works as a water services lifecycle engineer at Hamilton City Council, applying her experience to infrastructure systems with complex compliance requirements. Despite having no formal qualifications in asset management, she has built expertise through continuous learning, professional development, and working alongside specialists.

Looking back on her career progression, Tracy notes “there were things in all of those jobs that just really gelled well with who I am and the way that I work and the things I like to do inside and out of work. It just seemed to fit my personality really, really well.”

Tracy identifies several characteristics that lead to success in asset management: curiosity, willingness to learn, strong communication skills, and the ability to see both big picture strategy and detailed implementation. She believes the role suits people who plan naturally, think systematically, and can hold their ground under pressure.

Her advice for people considering asset management is practical: examine your personal interests and working style first. Consider whether you naturally plan your day-to-day activities and enjoy solving complex problems. She recommends shadowing professionals already working in the field, but says it’s important to see the reality of the role: “Show them the things that most would find boring, the annoying things, the non-sexy things, because if they come back the second day, then you know there’s something about them that’s hooked them in.”



EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

TYPES OF EMPLOYERS

Property or facilities management specialist

- Diverse client experience across multiple building types and sectors providing broad exposure
- Service delivery focus, with an emphasis on managing client relationships and measuring performance
- Varied project exposure with opportunities to work across different organisational types and requirements
- Professional development support with structured training programmes and clear progression pathways

Large organisations (in-house)

- Complex building portfolios with comprehensive systems and well-defined team roles
- Specialised compliance requirements, particularly in sectors with critical or continuous operations
- Strategic focus with long-term planning capabilities and significant resource availability

Smaller organisations (in-house)

- Broad role scope requiring skills across facilities, property, and asset management functions
- Direct involvement in all aspects of property operations from strategic planning to day-to-day maintenance coordination
- Close working relationships with senior management and direct input into business decisions
- Accelerated learning opportunities through exposure to diverse challenges and responsibilities

Government and infrastructure organisations

- Long-term asset life cycles with regulatory compliance and community service focus
- Specific public accountability and governance processes and requirements
- Structured role scope with professional development opportunities

NEXT STEPS AND RESOURCES

BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Industry connections

- Attend property and facilities management conferences and professional development events
- Join local property industry associations and facilities management networking groups
- Participate in sector-specific events for healthcare, education, or commercial property management
- Build relationships with contractors, consultants, and service providers in your region

Professional development networks

- Connect with other operations management professionals across different organisations and sectors
- Participate in professional body training and industry update sessions
- Engage with mentoring programmes and emerging professional networks
- Join cross-disciplinary groups that link property, construction, and business professionals

Upskilling and continuing education

- Building systems and maintenance training covering HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and building automation
- Financial management and investment analysis courses for property performance and portfolio optimisation
- Customer service and stakeholder management development for relationship building and conflict resolution
- Technology and digital systems training including property management software and building automation
- Regulatory compliance updates covering health and safety, building codes, and tenancy legislation

Industry resources

- Facilities Management Association of New Zealand (FMANZ) fmanz.org
- Property Institute of New Zealand propertyinstitute.nz
- Āpōpō – Infrastructure Asset Management Professionals apopo.co.nz
- Property Council New Zealand propertynz.co.nz

MAKING YOUR DECISION

Building operations and management offers diverse sector opportunities and the satisfaction of creating positive environments for building users and property owners. Consider your interest in relationship management, your tolerance for emergency response responsibilities, and your preference for strategic versus operational focus when choosing between facilities, property, or asset management strands.

This career pathway suits individuals who enjoy variety, problem-solving, and stakeholder interaction with a service focus on property performance and user experience. The field rewards analytical thinking, communication skills, commercial awareness, and continuous learning about technology, regulations, and industry best practices.

This guide draws from research including in-depth interviews with construction professionals across New Zealand, industry surveys, and analysis of career progression patterns. For the complete research report and additional career pathway information, visit buildinginstitute.nz/resource/file/27



IS THIS THE RIGHT CAREER STREAM FOR YOU?

A career in **building operations and management** is more than just a job. It's a pathway to professional growth, community contribution, and long-term job satisfaction. Whichever career stream you choose, you'll be playing an important role in protecting communities, contributing to high-quality construction, and making a tangible and lasting difference to New Zealand's built environment.



GET THE GUIDE

Use the QR code to download the full Built Environment Career Streams guide and explore the many rewarding pathways in the construction sector.

Or head to the website using this link: buildinginstitute.nz/resource/file/27