



# Sonyta's Story

## A University Partner Success Story

### Tell us about yourself

Hi! My name is Sonyta, and I'm from Cambodia. I started my studies in New Zealand at the University of Auckland International College (UoAIC) Foundation Programme in 2020. After completing my foundation year, I went on to study architecture at the University of Auckland and recently graduated with my bachelor's degree. I'm currently on an open work visa and actively seeking a position in an architecture firm to gain hands-on experience and learn from industry experts.

### What motivated you to pursue architecture?

I've loved architecture since I was young. For me, it's more than designing buildings—it's about creating spaces that connect people and bring communities together. I enjoy walking around Auckland, appreciating the different architectural styles. New Zealand is an amazing place to study architecture because the industry values both creativity and practicality, and I find that balance inspiring.

### What made you choose New Zealand for your studies?

New Zealand has always appealed to me because it's peaceful, safe, and beautiful. The people are friendly, and I've had wonderful experiences here—from meeting supportive friends to having teachers who genuinely care about my progress. One of my first friends in New Zealand is someone I met at UoAIC, and we still keep in touch. My teachers have also been a huge support, checking in on me throughout university. I don't regret coming here and hope to continue my journey by becoming a permanent resident.

## Student Profile

### STUDENT NAME

Sonyta Seng

### NATIONALITY

Cambodian

### PROGRAMME

The University of  
Auckland Certificate in  
Foundation Studies  
(Standard)

### INTAKE:

Jan 2020 to Dec 2020

### COMPLETED DEGREE

University of Auckland,  
Bachelor of Architecture

### GRADUATION

May 2024

### How has UoAIC helped you in your academic journey?

The support I received at UoAIC was invaluable. My teachers, especially my design teacher, guided me in preparing my architecture portfolio, which was essential for my university application. They helped me understand the requirements and encouraged me every step of the way. UoAIC provided a solid foundation and prepared me for the challenges of university, helping me develop both academic and creative skills.

### What's your favourite thing about studying architecture at the University of Auckland?

One of the best parts was access to incredible facilities, like the design workshops and digital studios. These tools really enhanced my learning and made it easier to develop my skills. The creative environment at the university was also inspiring, allowing me to network with other students and professionals from various fields. It's a place where students can explore their creativity and grow.

### How is studying in New Zealand different from Cambodia?

The education system here is quite different from what I was used to in Cambodia, where we focused a lot on memorisation and lectures. In New Zealand, the approach is more student-centered, with an emphasis on critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. I love that students are encouraged to discuss and work together, making learning interactive and engaging. It's not just about remembering facts; it's about understanding concepts and applying them in real-life situations.

### What's it like being back at UoAIC after graduating?

Coming back to UoAIC after a few years feels surreal. So much has changed! The campus has had amazing upgrades—it looks so modern and inviting. There's more greenery, and the security doors make it easier for students to access classrooms, which is great. It's impressive to see how the school keeps improving and creating a welcoming environment for students.

### What are your future plans?

I'm actively looking for an internship at an architecture firm here in Auckland. My goal is to gain practical experience, improve my skills, and eventually work full-time in this field. I also hope to deepen my understanding of New Zealand's building codes and architectural standards. In the meantime, I'm open to other part-time opportunities while I pursue my architecture career.

### Any advice for students considering UoAIC?

Don't hesitate to explore and enjoy the world around you. Starting out may feel challenging, but it's all part of a unique journey you'll treasure forever. You'll experience newfound independence, make friends from around the world, and learn so much both academically and personally. Embrace the supportive and friendly environment here—there's always someone ready to help, and the experience will help you grow in ways you can't imagine.



*"New Zealand's education encourages critical thinking and collaboration, making learning interactive and engaging—not just about remembering facts."*

**SONYTA IS SHAPING HER FUTURE.**

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