



Medicine

Changing lives

“My medical degree sparked my passion and desire for life-long learning. It has allowed me to identify and bring my own experiences and strengths to the collective work of promoting and striving for equitable, sustainable and meaningful health outcomes for all patients in Aotearoa.”

Grace Macaulay
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery

Medicine is the general term used to describe what doctors (also known as physicians) do to assist you to care for your health and well-being. Medical doctors prevent, diagnose, treat and cure illness, injury and disease, and provide healthcare whenever required.

Doctors choose to work in one role or a combination of many roles, including clinical medicine (patient care in general practice, surgery, psychiatry, paediatrics and many more), medical research, teaching and administration (in hospitals, medical schools and government ministries).

There is no denying the hours worked by doctors are long and the need for continuing study is demanding. But the role of a doctor is rewarding and there is potential for great personal satisfaction.

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What is Medicine?

Medicine is a scientific, research and evidence-based profession, which covers many areas of specialisation, including general practice, public health and hospital-based specialities, including surgery, psychiatry, cardiology and many more.

If you are considering a career in medicine, you should be prepared for lifelong learning to maintain your practising standards. Society expects a high level of ongoing competence. Patients expect to be supported and treated with patience, kindness and humanity. Ethical behaviour and rapport with people are necessary so patients can trust you with problems of their body and mind.

What will I study?

After selection from Health Sciences First Year (HSFY), or the Graduate or Alternative categories, you commence the second year of the six-year Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB).

Second- and third-year Medicine offers an integrated course based on various body system modules and core clinical cases. The clinical cases run throughout the programme and act as a framework for learning, as well as bringing relevance to the underlying clinical and basic science.

Learning clinical skills and a focus on health in the community start at the beginning of the second year and feature prominently through a variety of modalities including experimental practice (laboratories, clinical skills, talking with people), lectures, small group discussions and independent learning. After the third year, you will complete studies at one of Otago's campuses in Dunedin, Christchurch or Wellington.

The fourth and fifth year offer increased interaction with people and are centred around clinical work in hospital wards and outpatient clinics in teaching hospitals, smaller rural practices and general practices. You will also complete components of public health and community medicine.

Sixth-year Medicine is an apprenticeship-style year, also known as the Trainee Intern (TI) year. You assume greater responsibility in hospital settings and general practices. This final year includes an elective involving a project or clinical work.

There are research opportunities within the medical programme, including the option of taking one year out after the third or fifth year to complete a Bachelor of Medical Science with Honours (BMedSc(Hons)) degree. Some medical graduates choose to undertake further research and may enrol in a higher degree such as a combined MBChB/PhD. The medical school offers scholarships to many of the students who undertake the BMedSc(Hons) or combined MBChB/PhD degree.

Before you can practise as a doctor in New Zealand, you must register with the Medical Council of New Zealand and complete a one-year internship in hospital and community settings. There are limited, if any, New Zealand hospital places available for international students who will normally complete registration requirements in their home country. An internship placement in a New Zealand hospital is not guaranteed for international students.

Background required

There are no subject requirements for entry into Health Sciences First Year, but we strongly recommend you take chemistry, physics and biology at Year 13. HSFY must be your first

year of university study. If you are considering tertiary study before enrolling, you are strongly advised to contact the Health Sciences Admissions Office beforehand.

Admission to the programme

Admission to Medicine is competitive, and there are only about 300 places available for New Zealand and international students. There are different categories of admission to Medicine, but the majority of places are offered to students who have completed the HSFY programme at the University of Otago.

Selection into Medicine from HSFY is very competitive. High grades are required and no compulsory paper grade can be less than a B.

Applications are also considered in the Graduate category and Alternative category (allied health professionals and mature graduates). Applicants may also apply via the Mirror on Society sub-categories, including Māori, Pacific, rural, low income and refugee categories, which are outlined in the Guidelines for Admission.

Want to know more about admission to Medicine?

Application information for admission into the Health Sciences professional programmes from all categories is available online: otago.ac.nz/healthsciences

International applications

Persons who do not hold New Zealand citizenship or permanent residence should address their enquiries to the University's International Office, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand.

PROFILE

Grace Macaulay

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery | Junior doctor/house officer Dunedin Hospital

I really enjoyed studying science at school, and I love working with people, so Medicine felt like a great fit, combining both. I'd also had a dream of being a doctor from a young age, seeing both my mother and grandfather practice Medicine and wanting to follow in their footsteps. Additionally, a couple of my own health experiences when I was younger gave me a strong desire to "give back" and "make a difference" in the lives of others by becoming a doctor. I've also loved the ability that Medicine has given me to develop and combine a range of important skills and interests in my career, including interpersonal, leadership, communication and research skills.

I chose to study at Otago for a number of reasons, including the University's beautiful campus and collegiate nature, and Dunedin's reputation as a student-friendly and easily accessible city for students. I was also attracted by the strong reputation of the Otago Medical School and its links with Dunedin Hospital and, as my mother had studied Medicine at Otago, I felt a connection with the city that I wanted to strengthen.

I really enjoyed my experience studying Medicine at Otago. The medical programme was varied and diverse in its teaching and clinical experiences. I enjoyed the focus on group work in the second and third years, and then the challenges and accelerated learning offered by the hands-on placements in the last three years. The people I met were amazing, and the student community is vibrant, supportive and fun.

Three key aspects of the course stand out for me. Firstly, I really enjoyed my rural GP/medicine placement in Central Otago, including my time at Dunstan Teaching Hospital. It was so hands-on and the medical team at Dunstan are brilliant clinicians and teachers. Secondly, I took an additional year of study to complete a BMedSc(Hons) in paediatrics. This experience was extremely valuable and sparked my passions for both clinical research and children's health. Finally, I really enjoyed my clinical experience at Dunedin Hospital throughout my last three years. I enjoyed engaging with patients, gradually learning and understanding the hospital systems, and I was inspired by the stories, experiences and teaching from a range of professionals from across the multidisciplinary team.

I am currently working as a junior doctor/house officer at Dunedin Hospital. I thoroughly enjoy my daily interactions with patients, trying to be holistic and inclusive in the care I provide them, and their whanau and families, and ultimately learning and being challenged by something new every day.

My medical degree sparked my passion and desire for life-long learning. It has allowed me to identify and bring my own experiences and strengths to the collective work of promoting and striving for equitable, sustainable and meaningful health outcomes for all patients in Aotearoa. My BMedSc(Hons) research experience has also fuelled my keen interest in pursuing a career in paediatrics and children's health.



For questions about
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otago.ac.nz/medicine

