



Dentistry Pūniho

“The BDS course encompasses so much. It is hugely practical and perfect for those people who love creating things as well as tackling interesting academic challenges.”

Sam Smith
Bachelor of Dental Surgery

Good oral health – a key factor in good general health

Dentistry is not just about teeth. It is about working as part of a team to promote good oral health – a key factor in good general health.

Dentists help prevent oral diseases and diagnose and treat oral conditions. Dentists have many roles; they can have family-based general dental practices, they may work in hospitals or community clinics with patients who are medically or socially disadvantaged, or they may undertake further postgraduate study and specialise in areas as diverse as paediatric dentistry to forensic dentistry and oral surgery.

Dentistry is both an art and a science. It covers the spectrum of oral health and supports all people in our community.

0800 80 80 98 | otago.ac.nz | university@otago.ac.nz



Why study Dentistry?

Dentistry is a challenging profession that combines a high degree of manual dexterity and precision with a thorough understanding of craniofacial biology, anatomy, pathology, biomaterials, and excellent communication skills. As a dentist, you are the leader of the oral health team and can diagnose and carry out treatment planned for each patient's oral needs.

If you are considering a career as a dentist, you can look forward to a health profession that provides considerable variety and lifelong learning as you work to maintain your practising standards.

As a graduate there are opportunities for full- or part-time work in New Zealand or overseas, in private general or specialist practice, academic careers, or hospital- or defence-based practice.

Dentistry teaches you:

- The scientific foundations in anatomy, physiology, oral biology, and biomaterials.
- About public health dentistry and how to develop your communication skills.
- Clinical skills, first in simulation classes and laboratories, and then in patient sessions.
- About a wide range of clinical dental disciplines including prosthodontics and clinical cariology, endodontics, paediatric dentistry, orthodontics, oral medicine, oral surgery, oral pathology, and special needs dentistry.
- Otago has one of the most up-to-date dental facilities in the world.

After admission from Health Sciences First Year (HSFY), or from other entry categories, you will undertake a further four years of study within the Faculty of Dentistry. You will commence studies in second-year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS2).

There are three themes that run through the entire course:

In second year, the largest theme is Biomedical Sciences, which lays the scientific foundations in anatomy, physiology and oral biology for the introductory clinical work you will undertake in the second theme, the Dentist and the Patient.

In the third theme, the Dentist and the Community, you will learn about cultural safety in dentistry, public health dentistry, and how to further develop your communication skills and ethical practice.

In third and fourth year, the Dentist and the Patient is a major component of the curriculum. Here you will develop your clinical skills, initially in simulation sessions in our state-of-the-art simulation laboratory and then managing patients in our new clinics.

You will cover a wide range of clinical dental disciplines including clinical cariology and prosthodontics, periodontics, endodontics, paediatric dentistry, orthodontics, oral medicine, oral surgery, oral pathology, and special needs dentistry.

To underpin your increasing clinical experience, the Biomedical Sciences papers will cover general and oral pathology, growth, development and ageing, oral medicine, oral surgery, and therapeutics. In the Dentist and the Community theme, you will explore epidemiology and determinants of oral health and culture, and ethnicity and oral health.

In fifth (final) year, you will consolidate your clinical experience either in Dunedin or our new clinical facility in Auckland.

Admission to the programme

Admission to dentistry is competitive. The majority of places are offered to students who have completed the HSFY programme at the University of Otago. An interview and high grades are required. All HSFY papers must be passed with a minimum of 70% and no paper mark less than 65%.

Applications are also considered in the Graduate, and Alternative categories. In all cases, you must have completed the HSFY papers or approved alternatives with the required grades.

Applicants may apply via the Te Kauae Parāoa policy, which aims to create a professional health workforce that reflects the ethnic composition of New Zealand. Places are also available for international students who meet the admissions criteria.

Want to know more about admission to dentistry?

Application information for admission into dentistry and other health sciences programmes is available online: otago.ac.nz/dentistry/undergraduate/dentistry/admission

International applications

If you are not a New Zealand or Australian citizen, or permanent resident, you can obtain information from the University's International Office: otago.ac.nz/international/undergraduate

For questions about
Dentistry
otago.ac.nz/dentalsurgery



PROFILES

Dr Peter Sese BDS, MDent, DCLinDent Oral Surgery Candidate | Oral Surgery Registrar

"I was born in Apia, Samoa, and completed all my schooling there before moving to New Zealand for tertiary study. After completing my BDS, I worked as a dental house surgeon in Samoa for two years, before returning to New Zealand, where I was given the opportunity to study a Master of Dentistry, endorsed in Rural Oral Health Care. This programme was fantastic, and it led me to specialist training in Oral Surgery (DCLinDent).

"It was a privilege learning and training to be a dentist, as it is very practical, and you get to see the end results of your treatment plans fairly soon. Going on the journey with your patient from start to finish is a rewarding experience. I hope to serve the community in New Zealand, but also in Samoa one day. I also want to show young Pacific students that dentistry is a very rewarding career, and our communities need us to take the lead."



Duncan McCrory BDS | Maxillofacial and Dental House Officer, Auckland District Health Board

"At Otago, you will make lifelong friends and get the chance to work with great people, some of whom are world-renowned clinicians in their field and keen to pass on their knowledge. Combine this with the brand-new facilities offered at Otago and it's easy to see why the education here is among the best in the world.

"The Faculty of Dentistry taught me about more than just teeth. To be a dentist, one

must be a doctor, engineer, and artist all in one, giving us the ability to apply scientific principles, artistic talents and human physiology, all while keeping the patient at the centre of our focus. Since graduating, I am grateful for the opportunity to work as a house officer. I am not opposed to the idea of postgraduate study, or even teaching in the distant future, so I might find myself back at the Faculty of Dentistry one day."

