

Summer Studentships 2026/2027

PROJECT TITLE:

Students' and clinical teachers' perspectives of facilitators and barriers to learning in the medical outpatient clinic

AIM:

This project aims to explore students' and clinical teachers' perspectives of facilitators and barriers to medical student learning in outpatient clinics in General Medicine and medical sub-specialties for Mb ChB students at the University of Otago Wellington, and to obtain actionable recommendations to enhance student learning in medical outpatient clinics.

METHODS:

This project will use a qualitative research design, involving semi-structured focus groups of clinical teachers and medical students. The data will be analysed using thematic analysis to identify key factors influencing learning in outpatient clinic settings and recommendations for enhancing learning. The findings will be used to develop practical recommendations for the Department of Medicine and support the preparation of a manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE:

Clinical placements are a cornerstone of medical education, providing opportunities for students to learn the clinical and professional skills required for medical practice. International studies suggest that active participation in outpatient consultations enhances learning and confidence, but that barriers such as time constraints, limited space, supervision, administrative challenges, and increasing student numbers may reduce the educational value of these placements. There is limited research on outpatient clinic learning experiences in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Understanding the current experience of students and clinical teachers at the University of Otago Wellington and generating local recommendations will assist clinical teachers in creating student-centred educational approaches and provide students with approaches to optimise their learning in outpatient clinics. The findings will inform initiatives to enhance clinical learning environments to better prepare medical students for future clinical practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

STUDENT'S ROLE AND EXPOSURE TO SCIENTIFIC METHOD:

- Support participant recruitment
- Organise and facilitate focus groups with students and clinical teachers
- Undertake, with supervision and guidance, thematic analysis and interpret findings in relation to existing literature
- Manage and securely store research data in accordance with University and ethical requirements
- Participate in regular research meetings to discuss study progress and findings
- Contribute to the preparation of a manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed journal

RELEVANT PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS (Education or Research):

Students with an interest in education and qualitative research are encouraged to apply. Prior experience is helpful but not required. Preference may be given to a University of Otago Wellington medical student as experience of the local clinical learning environment will provide valuable contextual insight for the project.

Main supervisor:	Professor Rebecca Grainger	
Email address:	Rebecca.grainger@otago.ac.nz	
Other Supervisor/s:	Dr Euphemia Li (Senior Teaching Fellow)	
Host Department:	Department of Medicine, University of Otago Wellington	
Location:	University of Otago Wellington	
	Can students work remotely?	Yes but some in-person attendance is expected