Entry Requirements

1. Admission to the programme

- Admission to the programme shall be subject to the approval of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Health Sciences)

- Every applicant shall:

  - Be a graduate or possess an appropriate health professional qualification requiring at least three years' full-time tertiary study.
  - Have experience of or be currently working in a relevant field of health care.
  - Present evidence of ability for advanced level academic study.

Postgraduate qualification options

Although we encourage students to consider PSME 401 plus PSME 405 as a strong foundation of knowledge for those interested in gaining a postgraduate qualification in mental health, there are several ways in which a Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences (Mental Health) may be completed. The certificate can be awarded with successful completion of a combination of either PSME 401 or NURS 403, plus one of a range of other papers offered within the department.

Students may also choose to progress to a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science (Mental Health) by combining four of these papers (or three papers and one approved external paper).

Our department also provides opportunities to complete a Master of Health Science (Mental Health) or PhD.

For further information on the range of papers offered, their years of availability and qualification structure please see:

otago.ac.nz/christchurch/departments/psychmed/courses

About the Department:

The Department of Psychological Medicine (Christchurch) has a strong history of leadership in clinically applied mental health teaching and research. The department comprises a mix of joint clinical/academic, research fellow, teaching fellow and administrative staff. Our joint clinical staff represent a range of professional disciplines and many have leadership roles within local services as well as national professional roles. Residing within the department are the Clinical Research Unit, National Addiction Centre and world renowned Christchurch Health and Development Study. Our department's Psychiatric Registrar training programme has a strong reputation across Australasia.

For information relating to admission and enrolment, contact:

Co-ordinator, Student Experience
University of Otago, Christchurch

Email postgrad.uoc@otago.ac.nz

otago.ac.nz/christchurch/psychmed

POSTGRADUATE

UNIVERSITY *of* OTAGO
Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo
NEW ZEALAND

CHRISTCHURCH

POSTGRADUATE

UNIVERSITY *of* OTAGO
Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo
NEW ZEALAND

CHRISTCHURCH

Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences (Mental Health)

Department of Psychological Medicine
University of Otago, Christchurch

The Postgraduate Certificate is comprised of two 30-point papers which can be completed in the same year or over consecutive years as a part-time student.

Our foundation certificate comprises PSME 401 and PSME 405, which have been designed to provide students with a coherent and clinically relevant learning experience. Other options for completing the certificate, or for progressing to a postgraduate diploma are outlined at that end of this pamphlet.

Who is the certificate aimed at?

Our papers cater to a wide range of health professionals either working in mental health settings, or other health and social service settings in which mental health issues commonly present, and staff would benefit from a strong grounding in assessment, case formulation and supporting those experiencing mental health difficulties. In addition to specialist mental health services, examples of appropriate work settings include primary care, corrections/justice and community based social support agencies.

Papers are distance-taught and so attract students from throughout New Zealand, working in a diverse range of mental health-related settings.

How is it taught?

PSME 401 is taught in semester 1, February–June, and PSME 405 in semester 2, July–October. The primary method for delivering teaching is through three-day block courses taught in Christchurch – two block courses per paper. These are supplemented with audioconference classes, email discussions and the provision of web-based learning resources.

For block course dates please visit:
otago.ac.nz/christchurch/departments/psychmed/courses

Our courses are taught by clinically experienced academic staff who are leaders in their fields of practice, with national and international reputations. Teaching staff include consultant psychiatrists, mental health nurses and clinical psychologists.

Students also experience peer to peer learning by participating in course activities with classmates from a range of professional groups, geographic locations, service types and diverse cultures.

PSME 401: Nature, Extent and Assessment of Mental Disorders (semester 1)

CONVENOR
Associate Professor Caroline Bell

This paper covers the symptomatology, natural history, aetiology, epidemiology, and pathophysiology of the common mental disorders of children, adults and the elderly.

Having successfully completed the paper you will be able to:

- Recognise and understand the symptomatology and pathophysiology of the common mental disorders.
- Understand the epidemiology and natural history of the common mental disorders.
- Have an understanding of the role of cultural factors in mental disorders.
- Understand classification and diagnosis of mental disorders – particularly the strengths and limitations of such classification systems.
- Consider the ethical issues involved in psychiatric assessment and diagnosis.
- Possess knowledge to enhance clinical skills involved in the assessment and recognition of mental disorders.
- Possess skills in recording and conveying a psychiatric history, with particular emphasis on the ability to develop an explanatory formulation.
- Understand some of the principles of immediate management of mental disorders.

Assessment

There are three assessment items for PSME 401: one essay, one case study and a class presentation.

PSME 405: Contemporary Approaches to Mental Health Practice (semester 2)

CONVENOR
Dr Dave Carlyle

Trauma informed care is a concept that is becoming recognised as important in New Zealand mental health policy and care. For practitioners, the challenge is to find ways to translate principles of trauma informed care into everyday practice in meaningful ways while negotiating the tensions it creates with a bio-medical perspective of mental disorder.

This paper takes the view that contemporary mental health practice requires mental health clinicians to assist people to develop a sense of mastery over their lives, and as such it presents a practical application of trauma informed principles to practice. To do this requires mental health workers to be creative and flexible in how they understand mental distress, and to have the skills to work collaboratively with people to make meaning from their experiences. It also requires the critical exploration of the barriers to achieving this that exist at both the level of individual practice and organisational systems.

On completion of this paper, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively with mental health service users.
- Demonstrate an understanding of interventions that promote self-understanding of mental distress.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the influence of a person's life history upon their present context.
- Discuss practical ways to implement principles of encouraging consumers to safely tell their story.
- Demonstrate an ability to work from a trauma informed perspective.
- Demonstrate an understanding of different psychotherapeutic approaches.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of therapeutic relationships and their relevance to the development of self-understanding.
- Discuss the relevance of a model of care to the way mental health services are provided.
- Critically reflect on their own practice and highlight areas for change.

Assessment

There are three pieces of assessment: one case study/presentation and two assignments