



Dentistry

More than teeth

"The BDS course encompasses so much. It is hugely practical and perfect for those people who love doing things as well as throwing out interesting academic challenges."

Sam Smith
Fourth-Year BDS Student

What is dentistry all about? Not just teeth, but all the oral and maxillofacial tissues, and it is increasingly being recognised that good oral health is important for good general health. Dentists prevent oral diseases, and diagnose and treat pre-existing conditions. Dentists have many roles; they may have a family dental practice, they may specialise in high-tech implants and restorative procedures, and they may work with medically- or socially-compromised patients. Dentistry is the art and science of the maintenance of all aspects of oral health and function for all people in our community.

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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 and pathology, and excellent communication skills. The dentist is the leader of the oral health team and can diagnose and carry out treatment planned to each patient's oral needs. If you are considering a career as a dentist, you should be prepared for lifelong learning to maintain your practising standards. As a graduate there are opportunities for full-time or part-time work in New Zealand or overseas; and opportunities include private general or specialist practice, academic careers, or hospital-based practice.

What will I study?

After selection from Health Sciences First Year (HSFY) or from other entry categories you commence studies in second year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS). 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 public health dentistry and about how to further develop your communication skills.

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 cutting-edge simulation laboratory, and then in patient sessions. You will cover a wide range of clinical dental disciplines including prosthodontics and clinical cariology, endodontics, periodontics, paediatric dentistry, orthodontics, oral medicine, oral surgery, and special needs dentistry.

To underpin your increasing clinical experience the biomedical sciences papers will cover general and oral pathology, growth and development, medicine, surgery, and

therapeutics; while in The Dentist and the Community you will explore epidemiology and determinants of oral health and culture, and ethnicity and oral health.

In **fifth year** you will consolidate your clinical experience and undertake a research project, either in Dunedin, elsewhere in New Zealand, or overseas.

Background required

There are no subject requirements for entry into the HSFY programme, 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 Dentistry is competitive. The majority of places are offered to students who have completed the HSFY programme at the University of Otago. Selection into Dentistry from HSFY is based on your grades in the HSFY, your results in the Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admission Test (UMAT), and a structured interview. High grades are required and no compulsory paper can be less than a B-. The UMAT and the interview assess non-academic attributes.

For more information on UMAT go to acer.edu.au/umat.

Applications are also considered in the Graduate, and Alternative categories. In all cases, you must have completed the HSFY papers or approved alternative with the required grades, the UMAT, and be available for interview. A small number of places are available for international students who return to their home country after graduating. Applicants who are of Māori or Pacific Island (Polynesian) descent, or who have had a rural New Zealand upbringing and/or education, may request this be taken into account as part of their application.

How do I apply for admission to Dentistry?

Application information for admission into Dentistry and other Health Sciences programmes is available online at otago.ac.nz/healthsciences.

International applications

Persons who are not New Zealand or Australian citizens or permanent residents can obtain information from the University's International Office, otago.ac.nz/international/undergraduate.

PROFILE Nicholas Cutfield

Nicholas Cutfield is passionate about dentistry and knows that he has made the right decision to follow this career path. He began his studies at the University of Otago with Health Sciences First Year followed by a Bachelor of Science majoring in physiology, and now a Bachelor of Dental Surgery.

Although dentistry was not part of his original plan, once introduced to it he was hooked. "There are loads of cool toys and exciting technology to play with," Nick explains.

"I loved the hands-on approach to dentistry. Right from the very start you have a handpiece (drill) in your hand," he says. Skills are developed through practice on fake teeth in the brand new state-of-the-art dental simulation suite.

From second year you have your own patients. "You even get to practise injections on your colleagues," Nick adds.

All the time you have tutors who are world-class specialists on hand if you need it.

It is not just the technology and practical aspects that are appealing to Nick, but also the lifestyle opportunities that dentistry offers, "there are fantastic business opportunities and it is definitely the lifestyle choice out of all the health professions. You graduate with a practicing certificate meaning there are no intern years," he says.

Nick also adds, "you can work the hours you choose and develop your practice to suit your own style."

Nick's final view on his career choice is, "I think the profession has a very exciting future. And New Zealand needs dentists!"



For questions about
Dentistry
otago.ac.nz/dentistry

