



Pharmacy

Caring for our communities

“The School of Pharmacy gave me the knowledge, the skills, and the confidence to begin my career as a pharmacist. You feel that you graduate as a health professional with a vast knowledge base to build upon.”

Kiri Aikman
Pharmacy Graduate

As the experts on medicines, pharmacists are essential members of the healthcare team. They have the skills and knowledge to help patients understand and use their medicines in the most appropriate way. They are responsible for optimising medication use and may also be involved in the development and manufacture of medicines.

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What is Pharmacy?

Pharmacy is the health profession that links the health sciences with the chemical sciences, and ensures the safe and effective use of medication. Pharmacy is a varied profession, from manufacturing medicines through to optimising patient health-related outcomes and providing ongoing monitoring of their effectiveness.

Background required

There are no subject requirements for entry into the Health Sciences First Year (HSFY) programme, which makes up the first year of the Pharmacy degree, but we do strongly recommend you take chemistry, physics, and biology to Year 13. HSFY must be your first year of university study and can only be studied at Otago. If you are considering tertiary study before enrolling, you are strongly advised to contact the Health Sciences Admissions Office first.

What will I study?

After selection from Health Sciences First Year, or from one of the other categories, you will commence your Pharmacy degree in the second year of university study. Here you will build on the fundamental sciences studied during the HSFY. You will also learn about the practice of pharmacy along with the legal and social aspects of healthcare which are continued throughout the course. You will then study a series of integrated module-based papers where the focus is person-centred care in clinical settings and patients in the community. The integrated studies teach you how to apply what you learn at university to the practice of pharmacy. During these studies, you will have opportunities to learn in different types of pharmacy environments alongside practising pharmacists.

Once you complete your fourth year and graduate, there is a one year pre-registration programme. You must register with the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand to be eligible for the pre-registration training programme. This is undertaken as paid employment at an approved site in a hospital or community pharmacy. It is the graduate's responsibility to arrange the employment at this site.

Admission to the programme

Admission to Pharmacy is competitive, based on your grades achieved in the Health Sciences First Year papers, and whether you either apply only for Pharmacy (called the Single Programme Preference) or for all Health Sciences Professional Programmes.

See otago.ac.nz/healthsciences for details.

There are 120 places available for New Zealand students and some additional places for international students.

Applications are also considered in the Two or More Years of University Study, the Graduate category and the Alternative category. Places are also available for international students. Applicants who are of Māori or Indigenous Pacific descent may request this to be taken into account as part of their application.

How do I apply for admission to Pharmacy?

Refer to the Health Sciences website for further information: otago.ac.nz/healthsciences

Immunity status

Students who are admitted to Pharmacy are required to be vaccinated during their first year of the Pharmacy Professional Programme, if necessary. Please refer to the Infectious Diseases Policy for Health Professional Students for further details: otago.ac.nz/healthsciences

International applications

Persons who do not hold New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency should email their enquiries to the University's International Office: otago.ac.nz/international

Postgraduate study

The School of Pharmacy has a comprehensive postgraduate programme, including clinical and social pharmacy programmes up to master's level. The School also offers research qualifications such as a PhD.

Careers in Pharmacy

While most pharmacists work in community and hospital pharmacies, many also work in primary healthcare environments (with general practitioners), government organisations, industry, medical writing, and academia. Opportunities for pharmacists are constantly growing as the healthcare sector changes to meet the needs of our communities.

These opportunities include adherence and clinical medicine review services which aim to optimise health outcomes for their patients. Pharmacists also provide long-term care services for patients with chronic illnesses, as well as dispensing prescriptions, and assessing and treating some ailments. The goal of clinical medicines review services is to optimise health outcomes of patients by appropriate choice of medicine and dosing schedule, to both increase the effectiveness of medicines and avoid unwanted side-effects or drug interactions. Some pharmacists offer specialist medicine review services to rest homes or people with complex medication regimens.

Hospital pharmacists are responsible for serving the medicinal needs of hospital patients, as well as outpatients who require specialised medicines. Their role also centres on patient care with the majority of hospital pharmacists conducting clinical medicines reviews to optimise health outcomes for patients. Hospital pharmacists may also be involved with the manufacture of intravenous and oncology medicines, while others provide expert advice on medicines.

Some pharmacists work in industrial pharmacy, developing new pharmaceutical products for human or veterinary use. Some responsibilities undertaken by industrial pharmacists are formulation and production, quality control, provision of information on new products, clinical evaluation of new products, and the marketing of medicines.

PROFILE Kiri Aikman

Kiri Aikman has no regrets about choosing to study pharmacy at the University of Otago. "It was one of the best decisions I've made to date," she says, "I am passionate about helping people and making a positive difference to their health."

Kiri's decision to become a pharmacist grew from a part-time job at a community pharmacy while she was at secondary school. After completing Health Sciences First Year, she entered Pharmacy and never looked back. "The School of Pharmacy gave me the knowledge, the skills and the confidence to begin my career as a pharmacist," she says, "you feel that you graduate as a health professional with a vast knowledge base to build upon."

There were countless highlights in Kiri's degree, but she particularly benefited from the tight bond, due to the small class size, that students form from day one. She also enjoyed learning about diseases, and about the patient behind the disease. "There was always a strong patient focus," she emphasises. The variety of subjects were both challenging and rewarding and the lecturers were fantastic. "We were taught, and

inspired, by some of the best professionals in their field. They became great mentors."

Where has Kiri's degree led her? She is now working as a fully-registered clinical pharmacist at Auckland City Hospital, and deals with patients and their medical conditions on a ward-based level as part of a multidisciplinary team.

Kiri has many goals for the future. She hopes to complete further postgraduate study to specialise as a clinical pharmacist and travel the world in this role.

"The rewarding thing about pharmacy is that that career path is not narrow," Kiri says, "there are many different avenues to explore and it is an evolving profession."



For questions about
Pharmacy
otago.ac.nz/pharmacy

