



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.”

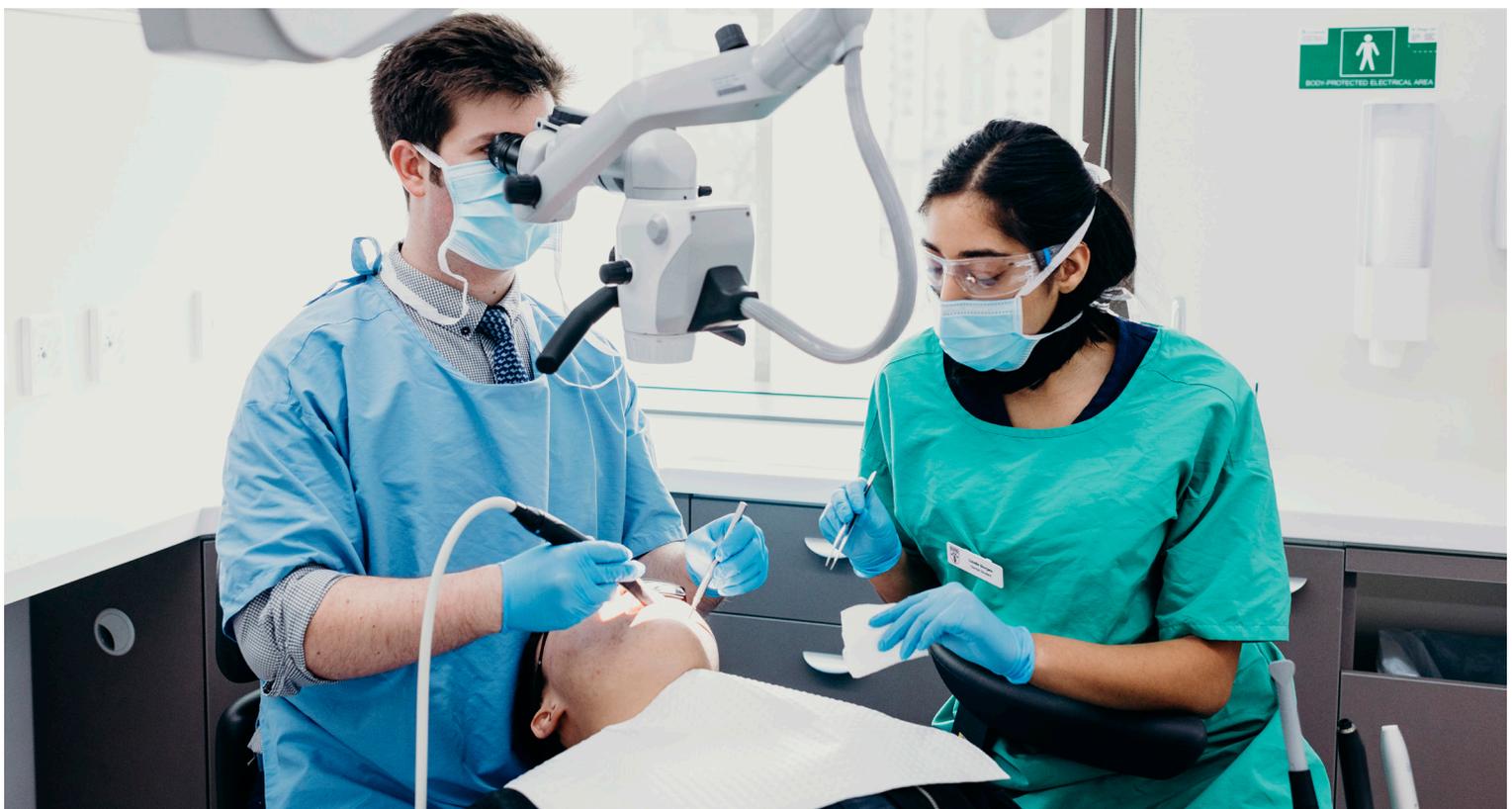
Sam Smith
Bachelor of Dental Surgery

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 oral conditions. Dentists have many roles; they may have a family-based general dental practice, they may specialise in high-tech areas such as implants and restorative procedures, and they may work with medically- or socially-disadvantaged patients.

Dentistry is the art and science of the maintenance of all aspects of oral health and function for all people in our community.

0800 80 80 98 | otago.ac.nz | txt 866 | 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 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- or part-time work in New Zealand or overseas; and opportunities include private general or specialist practice, academic careers, or hospital- or defence-based practice.

Dentistry teaches you:

- The scientific foundations in anatomy, physiology and oral biology.
- About public health dentistry and how to develop your communication skills.
- Clinical skills, first in simulation classes in the Faculty's cutting-edge simulation laboratory, and then in patient sessions.
- About a wide range of clinical dental disciplines including prosthodontics and clinical cariology, endodontics, periodontics, paediatric dentistry, orthodontics, oral medicine, oral surgery, oral pathology, and special needs dentistry.

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 state-of-the-art 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, oral pathology 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. 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 very competitive. The majority of places are offered to students who have completed the HSFY programme at the University of Otago. High grades are required and no compulsory paper can be less than a B-.

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.

A small number of places are available for international students who return to their home country after graduating. Applicants may also apply via the Mirror on Society subcategories which are outlined in the Guidelines for Admission.

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/healthsciences

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

PROFILE

Ming Yap

Bachelor of Dental Surgery | Maxillofacial and Dental House Officer,
Waikato District Health Board

Spending time in several dental practices during Health Sciences First Year (HSFY) cemented Ming Yap's future in dentistry.

"I loved the hands-on, practical nature of the profession. Seeing the look on a patient's face after being in the dental chair, either out of pain or with a completely new smile and boosted confidence, was second to none."

Ming always knew he wanted to work in health care but wasn't sure which direction to take after completing secondary school. HSFY gave him entry pathways to all the professions he could see himself in.

"HSFY lay a solid foundation for the Bachelor of Dental Surgery. Most importantly, I believe that HSFY teaches you how to study. In secondary school, most learning is spoon-fed at a pace that everyone is comfortable with. At university, everything is self-directed at a much higher concentration. HSFY made me more adept at organising my studies."

Ming spent some of his time at Otago working in the new Clinical Services Building.

"The facility uses dental chairs, technology and equipment similar to that found in private practice, so there's less of a learning curve when you graduate. The Dental School used to rely on paper files and film radiography which made me appreciate the efficiency and accessibility of the new digital system."

He says one of the best things about studying at the Dental School was being surrounded by like-minded people.

"You are taught by world-renowned researchers and specialists who have a passion for dentistry. Small class sizes mean you know each and every one of your classmates intimately.

"I can remember my first patient like it was yesterday. The Dental School makes sure you're ready, from doing histories and examinations and even injections on your classmates to practising drilling and placing fillings on plastic teeth. And there is always a tutor around if you find yourself in trouble."

Since graduating, Ming has been working as a maxillofacial and dental house officer for the Waikato District Health Board.

"The great thing about dentistry is that after graduation you can go straight into private work or take up a house officer position which exposes you to a whole new side of dentistry.

"Being in a high-paced hospital environment and dealing with complex maxillofacial patients has been interesting and encouraged me to pursue a career in hospital dentistry and oral and maxillofacial surgery. To do so, you have to study medicine so maybe it's back to university for me!"



For questions about
Dentistry
otago.ac.nz/dentistry

