



# Pharmacy

## Go beyond the script

“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 (BPharm)

Pharmacists help improve health outcomes for communities, while enjoying an amazing work-life balance.

As medicine experts, pharmacists work directly with patients, helping them understand their medicines and how to use them in the most effective way.

Pharmacists are essential members of the healthcare team. They're trusted by other healthcare professionals to assess prescriptions and recommend the best combination of medicines.

But this is just part of their role. As a pharmacist, you can also assess and treat health conditions, prescribe medication, and give life-saving vaccinations. This is the future of pharmacy – going beyond the script.

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## What is pharmacy?

Pharmacists often work in community pharmacies, in hospital pharmacies and in medical clinics.

For these reasons, pharmacists are the health professionals you see most often. They're truly at the heart of healthy communities.

Pharmacists can continue on to become pharmaceutical scientists to develop new medicines – or with government and research organisations.

Some patients have chronic or ongoing health issues, and rely on regular contact with community pharmacists to help manage their conditions. Other patients have an acute (short-term) condition that can be treated by medication.

As a pharmacist, you can make an authentic difference to the lives of your patients, their whānau, and their communities.

## 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 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 foundational sciences that underpin pharmacy such as drug design, delivery and pharmacology. You will learn about the practice and role of pharmacists in improving the health outcomes of patients and focus on person-centred care in clinical settings and patients in the community.

The integrated papers are supported by a comprehensive skills programme that teaches

you how to apply what you learn to the practice of pharmacy. You'll get hands-on time in our Virtual Professional Practice Laboratory, where you'll use the latest procedures and technologies. You'll also get real-life experience at our pharmacy clinic – the only university pharmacy clinic in New Zealand and Australia – and 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 internship programme which is overseen by the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand. This is undertaken as paid employment at an approved site in a hospital or community pharmacy.

## Admission to the programme

There are 120 places available for New Zealand students and some additional places for international students. Admission to pharmacy is competitive, you can apply:

- At the end of Health Sciences First Year. Entry is based on your grades achieved during this year. You will have a better chance of admission if you apply under the Single Programme Preference (where you only apply for pharmacy).
- In the Graduate category, once you have completed two or more years of University study.
- In the Alternative category.

We strongly encourage students who are of Māori or Indigenous Pacific descent to apply to pharmacy. Please request this to be taken into account as part of your application.

See [otago.ac.nz/healthsciences](https://otago.ac.nz/healthsciences) for details.

## Immunity status

Students who are admitted to pharmacy are required to be vaccinated during their first year of the programme, if necessary. Please refer to the Infectious Diseases Policy for Health Professional Students for further details: [otago.ac.nz/healthsciences](https://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](mailto:otago.ac.nz/international)

## Postgraduate study

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

## Career opportunities

You will have many opportunities as a pharmacist. You can work in, and/or own, a community pharmacy and enjoy close relationships with the local community by making medicine-related decisions, monitoring patient therapy, and consulting with physicians and other healthcare providers. Alternatively, you could work in a clinic and provide advice to patients and healthcare professionals about medicines.

As a hospital pharmacist, you are able to specialise in many areas, for example: diabetes, paediatrics, intensive care, respiratory medicine, infectious diseases, cardiology, mental health, cancer management, and more. Hospital pharmacists are a core team member and contribute to hospital ward rounds with the medical team, advise medical and nursing staff, and provide information to patients about their medicines.

Pharmacists also fulfil important roles in places such as the Ministry of Health, Medsafe (medicines registration agency), universities, drug companies, pharmacy regulatory bodies, Pharmac and the armed forces.

Finally, pharmacists can continue their education and complete graduate studies in a variety of disciplines including clinical pharmacy practice, clinical pharmacology, pharmaceutical sciences, and social and administrative pharmacy and embrace additional careers in academia or industry.

## PROFILE

### Diana Phone

PGDipClinPharm, BPharm

Otago is recognised as one of the top universities in the world. Having a degree from such a prestigious university is a privilege and I knew it would open many doors, both in New Zealand and internationally. Before I made my decision to study at Otago, I remember visiting Dunedin and the campus and I felt an instant connection with the University, the people, the atmosphere and the city.

I always wanted to study medicine and thought becoming a doctor was the career pathway for me. When I didn't make it into the competitive medicine school at Otago, I chose pharmacy. I fell in love with pharmacy and there was no going back – I realised there are many different ways to help people in health care apart from just becoming a doctor. And the staff at the School of Pharmacy were always so supportive and helpful.

I've been fortunate to have worked in several different areas of pharmacy and health care since graduating. I am passionate about community pharmacy; designing and implementing quality improvement and safety projects in primary care; collaborative models of care, health literacy, equity and person-centred care; and improving the health and well-being of our Pacific community.

Some career highlights so far have been completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Pharmacy from Otago in 2015, and receiving the Supreme Pharmacist of the Year award at the 2017 New Zealand Pharmacy Awards and the 2018 Honorary White Coat award from the Otago School of Pharmacy.

I co-founded New Zealand's first Pacific Pharmacists' Association to make a meaningful difference to our Pacific community and our pharmacy profession. Our purpose is to work together to empower Pacific communities to achieve equity and best medicines-related health outcomes.

I am currently studying towards a Master of Health Sciences with my focus being Pacific people, diabetes management and how community pharmacy can have a more active role in this. I'm also a professional practice fellow at Otago. My role is predominantly about mentoring and supporting fourth-year pharmacy students who come to Auckland for experiential learnings.



For questions about  
Pharmacy  
[otago.ac.nz/pharmacy](https://otago.ac.nz/pharmacy)

