



WELLINGTON

Radiation Therapy

Technology meets caring

“I realised I wanted to work within the health sector, helping people, so I decided to follow up my BSc with a degree in Radiation Therapy, which is the perfect combination of technology, science, anatomy and patient care – all the things I’m passionate about.”

Ariana Cann
Ngāti Ruanui
Bachelor of Radiation Therapy
Radiation Therapist

Radiation therapists are involved in the planning and delivery of radiation treatment and care for patients with cancer. Radiation Therapy is a highly skilled health profession and, because cancer affects so many people, qualified radiation therapists are in demand.

A degree in Radiation Therapy combines a variety of learning from health science to technology, patient care and teamwork.

It is taught from the Wellington campus of the University of Otago, next to Wellington Hospital. Students go on clinical placements at cancer centres around the country during their study, gaining the experience that allows an easier transition to working once qualified.

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Why study Radiation Therapy?

You will be working in a fast-paced high-tech environment which also involves patient care. You will play a vital part in the treatment of cancer and learn about this disease which touches most families at some time. Due to the lengthy nature of cancer treatment, five days a week for up to seven weeks, you'll get to know the patients and their whānau well, which is very rewarding.

Excellent communication skills are required as you will be providing a high level of care and support throughout each patient's course of treatment.

You will be working in a field that is globally at the forefront of research and technology development. This ensures you will keep up-to-date with new ways of treating cancer.

It also offers a good opportunity for work/life balance as working hours are typically within a normal working day.

What does a Radiation Therapist do?

As a radiation therapist, you are the person within a specialised healthcare team who plans a patient's radiation treatment using computer technology and clinical information. You are also the person who delivers the radiation therapy, using a range of high-tech treatment options, and who supports the patient during their course of treatment.

Careers in Radiation Therapy

A career in Radiation Therapy offers excellent career opportunities both in New Zealand and overseas. Radiation oncology departments in New Zealand are at six public hospitals (Auckland, Waikato, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin), and four private centres (Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch).

As a qualified radiation therapist you may have the opportunity to specialise in the area of treatment delivery, planning, research and development or clinical education.

On qualification, Otago Bachelor of Radiation Therapy graduates are eligible for registration with the New Zealand Medical Radiation Technologists Board, so your employment prospects are immediate.

Radiation Therapy is an international profession and New Zealand educated radiation therapists are highly regarded overseas for their excellent level of skills and broad knowledge of the field.

What background is required?

There are a number of ways that you can enter the programme; we take students straight after Year 13 as well as those who have done one or more years of university study, already have a degree or are looking for a career change. Look on our website for the entry requirements of each category.

Personal attributes of empathy, attention to detail, adaptability, and excellent communication skills are required.

Admission to the programme

We welcome applications from those interested in this great career choice. Admission involves consideration of your academic ability and your suitability to the profession, as demonstrated at an interview. Selection for interview is based on academic performance and interviews are held in October each year.

Applicants who are of Māori or indigenous Pacific descent may request this to be taken into account as part of their application.

Department visit and careers presentation

To help you see what is involved in the profession, we highly recommend that all applicants attend one of our career information sessions/department visits. These are held at radiation oncology departments around New Zealand between June and September each year and are a great opportunity to see first-hand what this career is all about.

The timetable for visits will be available on the Department website as details are confirmed.

otago.ac.nz/radiationtherapy

What does the programme involve?

The programme is based at the Wellington campus of the University of Otago. The class size is limited to about 30 students, so entry to the programme is competitive.

The programme is full-time and takes three years of study to complete. In addition to the academic papers, there is a large component of clinical work within the degree, particularly in the second and third year where half the time is based in clinical placements. Students are usually placed at a different radiation oncology department in Year 2 and Year 3, to give a range of clinical experience.

Postgraduate study

There are options of completing an honours thesis and/or postgraduate papers in radiation therapy advanced practice. These can lead to a postgraduate certificate, diploma, master's degree, and Doctor of Philosophy qualifications.

PROFILE

Ariana Cann

Ngāti Ruanui
Bachelor of Radiation Therapy
Radiation Therapist

I initially completed a Bachelor of Science majoring in Anatomy. I enjoyed learning about the gross and microscopic anatomy of the human body through the hands-on lab work – it was a great way to learn.

I realised I wanted to work within the health sector, helping people, so I decided to follow up my BSc with a degree in Radiation Therapy, which is the perfect combination of technology, science, anatomy and patient care – all the things I'm passionate about.

The second and third years of the programme are a combination of theory and clinical placement in a hospital. This allowed me to apply theoretical knowledge and develop the various skills required to be a qualified radiation therapist. The course also prepared me to help people of different backgrounds and cultures by immersing me in clinical settings.

Through my interactions with patients, I learnt the skills required to ensure equitable care for everyone.

After finishing my degree, I was offered a job at the Centre where I had completed my third-year clinical placement, and I've been working as a radiation therapist since January. At the end of the third year, you are essentially working as a radiation therapist, so I was well prepared to begin working.

As my first degree was Dunedin-based and the second was in Wellington, I was lucky enough to experience the student culture of Dunedin as well as the busy city that Wellington is.

Throughout my entire university experience, a highlight has been the people I've met. It was easy to find and connect with people with similar interests and I've made lifelong friendships.



For questions about
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