



# dentistry

## More than Teeth

YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD



What is dentistry all about? Not just teeth, but all the oral and maxillofacial tissues and it is increasingly being recognized 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.

*"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**  
4th year BDS Student

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Otago**

Division of Health Sciences

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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 practicing 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, first in simulation sessions, in our 'cutting edge' simulation laboratory opening in 2009, 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 Medical and Health Sciences Admissions 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 [www.acer.edu.au/umat](http://www.acer.edu.au/umat)

Applications are also considered in the Second Year of University Study, Competitive 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 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 Science programmes is available online, at [www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences](http://www.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, [www.otago.ac.nz/international/undergraduate/index.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/international/undergraduate/index.html)

# profile

## REBEKAH FRIEDLANDER

Rebekah Friedlander remembers a serendipitous meeting with a dentist at her school's career evening and the resulting offer of work experience that sparked her interest in dentistry.

Between that meeting and starting to study dentistry, Rebekah studied psychology, worked in Japan, worked in the UK as a nanny and at a summer camp in the United States, as well as enjoying some travel. After all that she still wanted to study dentistry, so she came to Otago to begin her studies.

The interest in dentistry has three aspects for Rebekah. "I like working with people. I really enjoy science. Dentistry also requires you to have good manual skills, to be able to work with your hands. Dentistry is a good combination of all three," Rebekah explains.

The programme hasn't disappointed Rebekah who especially loves "the practical component and the clinics", which start in your second year. "It's also nice to know that the learning is not finite. You can always continue your study by specialising."

While the programme is interesting it is also challenging. "It's challenging to learn new skills", she says, "but to also have a patient in front of you, which means you can't just switch off and focus on your self, is a further challenge", Rebekah adds.

As part of her final year of study, Rebekah went on a dental trip to Rarotonga for three weeks, where she and the other students completed voluntary dental services for the local community. "It was a fantastic experience and I learnt a lot about community dentistry." And now Rebekah wants to keep learning more about her chosen career.



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