



pharmacy

Medicines for Life



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 giving information about medicines, drug therapy and disease management to patients, doctors and other health professionals. Pharmacists may also be involved in the development and manufacture of medicines.

"What I liked best about the Otago Pharmacy Degree is that you grow from a student into a health professional. On that journey you're challenged and mentored by inspiring lecturers. Doing pharmacy was the best choice I ever made!"

Joshua W. Freeman BPharm (Otago)
Intern Pharmacist



Division of Health Sciences

www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences

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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 making and dispensing medicines through to providing patient care by providing information about medicines and monitoring their effectiveness. Some Pharmacy graduates undertake further studies and pursue research careers aimed at discovering new medicines.

Background required

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

What will I study?

After selection from Health Sciences First Year, or from one of the alternative categories, you commence the second year of your four-year degree.

In the second year and the first half of the third year you study pharmaceutical, biomedical and social sciences, including papers in biochemistry, microbiology, pathology, pharmacology and physiology. The second half of the third year and the final year are spent studying professional clinical practice and an integrated course of study called Quality Use of Medicines, involving real patients and taking a holistic approach to treating disease. Throughout the degree, some time is spent in community and hospital pharmacies, either in New Zealand or as part of an international exchange scheme in approved countries.

Once you complete your fourth year and graduate, there is a year's pre-registration training programme run by the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand (Inc). You must register with the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand to be eligible for the pre-registration training programme. This needs to be 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.

Postgraduate study

The School of Pharmacy also has a comprehensive postgraduate programme, including Masters and PhD study. There is a wide-range of professional postgraduate programmes which enable pharmacists to advance their current practice while they continue working.

Admission to the programme

Admission to Pharmacy is competitive, and there are only 120 places available each year.

Selection into Pharmacy from Health Sciences First Year is competitive. Selection is based on your grades achieved in the Health Sciences First Year papers.

Applications are also considered in the Second Year of University Study category, The Competitive Graduate category and Other category (allied health professionals and mature graduates). 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 to be taken into account as part of their application.

How do I apply for admission to Pharmacy?

Application information for admission into the Health Science professional programmes from all categories is available online, at: www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences

Immunity status

Students seeking admission to Pharmacy must provide evidence of their serology status to the following infections: Hepatitis B and C, measles, mumps, rubella and varicella.

International applications

Persons who do not hold New Zealand citizenship or permanent residence should address their enquiries to the University's International Office, PO Box 56, Dunedin, 9054, New Zealand.

Careers in Pharmacy

Most pharmacists work in community pharmacies. The community pharmacist dispenses prescriptions, supplies medicines and advice for minor ailments, works with prescribers to select the most appropriate drug therapies, answers health related queries, and supplies medical and surgical aids. There is an increasing emphasis on information provision and counselling, with some pharmacists offering specialist medicine review services to rest homes or people with complex medication regimens.

Hospital pharmacies are responsible for serving the medicinal needs of thousands of hospital patients, as well as outpatients who require specialised medicines. The hospital pharmacists' activities are varied, including, as well as the traditional dispensing duties (although most of these are carried out by technicians), expertise in the field of formulation and quality control of medicines, drug information, advising on drug therapy selection, and working closely with medical and nursing staff participating in ward patient care.

A range of opportunities is open to the pharmacist working in industrial pharmacy. Development of new pharmaceutical products for human or veterinary use, formulation and production, quality control, provision of information on new products, clinical evaluation of new products and the marketing of medicines are some of the responsibilities undertaken by industrial pharmacists.

An increasing number of pharmacists work in university teaching and research, while governmental agencies and health organisations employ pharmacists to carry out legal, advisory, technical, editorial and general administrative responsibilities. The medical publishing industry also employs pharmacists as editors and writers.

profile

SCOTT BRYDON

Scott Brydon knew at school that a career in Pharmacy is what he wanted to pursue. "Around 7th form (Year 13) I began thinking that Pharmacy would be a good career choice, because I had a real interest in how such simple things as tablets and capsules could be used to relieve and treat diseases," he explains.

In his first year of university study, Scott completed the Health Sciences First Year programme and was successful in gaining entry into Pharmacy. He graduated with a Bachelor of Pharmacy, and is now a qualified pharmacist after completing the required internship year, which he did in Wellington.

For Scott "there was never a dull moment in the pharmacy school." He loved being part of the relatively small class, where everyone did the same lectures and workshops. He also liked "the broad range of subjects the school offers, from law to ethics and communication to chemistry, and how medicines work."

Scott discovered that the School of Pharmacy offered more than just lectures. There is a strong Pharmacy Students' Association that "organised great sporting and social events." Scott appreciated the support that this offered so ran for and was voted President of the New Zealand Association of Pharmacy Students. "I ran for president because I wanted to give something back," he explains.

The future holds lots of opportunity for Scott, he is hoping to travel and work for pharmaceutical companies, eventually working in a leadership position in healthcare.

Scott's last piece of advice is "if you are looking for a professional degree that encompasses a broad range of subjects, is great fun, and shorter than other health professional degrees, choose pharmacy!"

