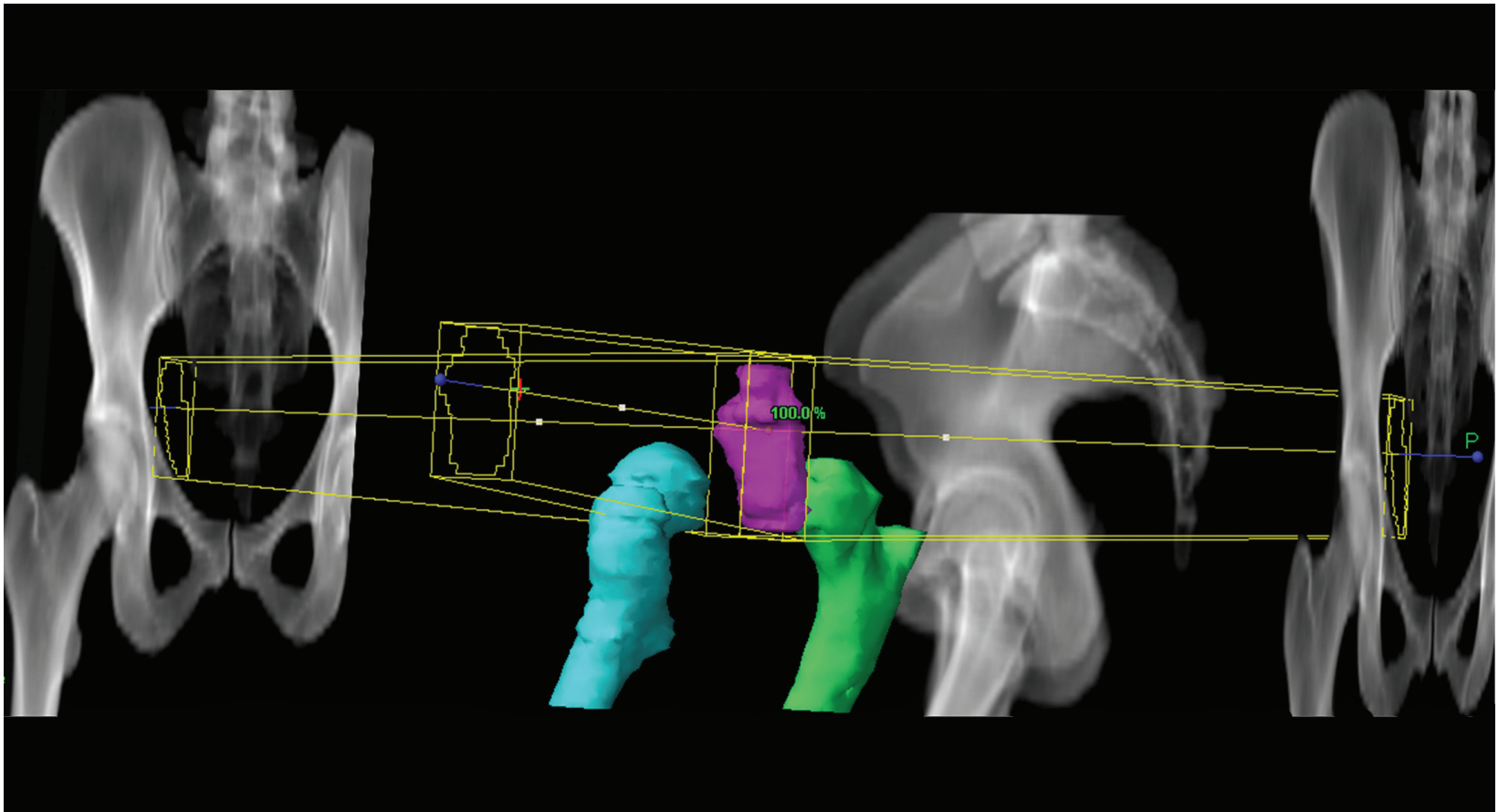


radiation therapy

Technology Meets Caring

YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD



Radiation Therapy uses radiation to treat disease. Most patients receiving radiation therapy are cancer patients. It's a highly skilled profession and because cancer affects so many people, qualified radiation therapists are in demand.

You'll work as part of a specialised team, under the supervision of a radiation oncologist – a specialist doctor who studies and treats tumours. As a radiation therapist you are the person within the team who plans a patient's radiation treatment using computer technology and clinical information. You are also the person who gives the patient their radiation therapy using a range of "high-tech" treatment machines.

"I have always enjoyed learning new things and prefer the hands-on approach, which is exactly what the degree in Radiation Therapy offered me."

Michele Gatfield
Graduate: Radiation Therapy

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
DIVISION OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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Why Study Radiation Therapy?

You will learn more about cancer which touches most families at some time or other. You will also play a vital part in the treatment and in the majority of cases, the cure of this disease.

Due to the lengthy nature of the treatment – five days a week, often for four to six weeks, you'll be closely involved with the patients. This means getting to know them and their families quite well at what is often a stressful time for everyone. But this has its own rewards. With recent advances in the early detection of cancer, many patients are cured, so the job satisfaction is immense.

You will be working in a field at the forefront of research around the world. This means keeping up to date with new ways of treating diseases.

Background required

Applicants will require NCEA Level 3 or equivalent level education. The subjects given preference for entry are: English or an English rich subject, Mathematics (Statistics or Calculus) and Biology or Physics. Upon acceptance into the programme you will be assigned clinical placements to ensure access to the clinical aspects of the degree. You will be required to complete health screening tests in New Zealand before commencing the programme and you must also have a current approved comprehensive first aid certificate on entry to the programme. Health tests and the First Aid certificate must be kept current throughout the programme.

Careers in RT

Radiation Therapy is an international profession. If you decide to travel, there are many opportunities. New Zealand radiation therapists are extremely well regarded overseas for their high level of skills and broad knowledge of the field.

Within New Zealand there are many career opportunities for a radiation therapist. Radiation Oncology departments in New Zealand are at six public hospitals (Auckland, Waikato, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin), and also at two private centres in Auckland and Christchurch.

As a qualified radiation therapist, you may have the opportunity to specialise in the area of treatment delivery or treatment planning or as a clinical educator.

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

There are also options of doing an Honours thesis and/or postgraduate programmes, including Advanced Practice.

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Course Outline

Selection

Selection into the degree involves consideration of your academic ability and your suitability to the profession as demonstrated at an interview. Places on the degree are limited to the number of clinical placements available.

Interested applicants are asked to contact rtenquiries.uow@otago.ac.nz to organise a visit to a radiation oncology department. These visits take place from June onwards.

The Course

The course is full-time and will take three years to complete. In addition to the academic papers, there is a large component of clinical work within the degree. The 2nd and 3rd year clinical placements are at different radiation oncology departments which gives a range of clinical experience.

First Year

This year is spent at the University of Otago, Wellington in a class of about 30 students. During this first year, you will also spend two weeks in the clinical environment of a radiation oncology department.

You will need to complete the following papers:

- RADT 111 Anatomy and Imaging
- RADT 112 Cancer Cell Biology
- RADT 113 Health and Human Behaviour
- RADT 114 Healthcare Communication
- RADT 115 Radiation Technology I
- RADT 116 Radiation Therapy and Oncology I
- RADT 117 Radiation Therapy Planning Concepts I

Second Year

Your first semester is based in a radiation oncology department, where you'll continue your education in a clinical setting. Your second semester is at the University of Otago, Wellington studying academic papers.

You will need to complete the following papers:

- RADT 211 Radiation Therapy Practice II
- RADT 212 Principles of Research
- RADT 213 Advanced Healthcare Communication
- RADT 214 Radiation Technology II
- RADT 215 Radiation Therapy and Oncology II
- RADT 216 Radiation Therapy Planning Concepts II

Third Year

Your first semester is at the University of Otago, Wellington taking further academic papers. Your second semester is based in a radiation oncology department, where you'll continue your education in a clinical setting.

You will need to complete the following papers:

- RADT 311 Radiation Therapy Practice III
- RADT 312 Literature Analysis
- RADT 313 Professional Development
- RADT 314 Radiation Therapy and Oncology III
- RADT 315 Radiation Therapy Planning Concepts III

You will be required to complete work experience in a radiation oncology department in the summer breaks to get the necessary clinical experience to meet the requirements of your degree and registration.

For questions about Radiation Therapy
Tel 0800 80 80 98
Email university@otago.ac.nz

www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences

profile

MICHELE GATFIELD

Michele Gatfield has lived most of her life in the greater Wellington region and when she finished school she chose to study at the University of Otago while she decided what she would do with her life.

She knew that she wanted to work in the health sector, but wasn't sure in what particular area. She began her studies with Health Sciences First Year and then after the first semester changed to study papers of interest and those that she felt would help her apply to Radiation Therapy.

"I chose Radiation Therapy after a close family member of mine had been diagnosed with cancer and was explaining the types of treatment she was receiving. It seemed like a really good way to get involved in the health sector and a great way to help people, which was what I really wanted to do with my life," explains Michele.

Michele soon knew that she had chosen the right career path, "I really enjoyed the hands-on clinical experience, especially the patient and staff interaction."

There are some sections of group study, which in the beginning Michele found challenging, however were "definitely useful. It really set you up with the experience of working in a team. I got a real sense of the role."

Now Michele works at Wellington Hospital as a fully qualified radiation therapist and is part of the new graduate programme. The programme offers transitional support to move from being a student to becoming a professional.

Her plans for the future are to continue with the career she loves and work in radiation therapy both nationally and internationally.

And her advice, "the career choice of radiation therapy is definitely worth the study."



Image: Michael Roberts, University of Otago, Wellington.