



physiotherapy

Keeps a Body Moving



Physiotherapy plays an essential role in helping people to achieve optimal physical function and healthy lifestyles. Physiotherapists treat people of all ages and from all sorts of backgrounds – they might have a painful back, occupational overuse syndrome, cystic fibrosis, or have recently given birth. They could be recovering from an accident, a sporting injury or maybe they have undergone heart surgery. Physiotherapists are educated to assess, treat and prevent this vast range of physical limitations and dysfunction. By using therapy such as exercises and manual and electrotherapeutic techniques, physiotherapists are able to assist their patients to lead independent, healthy and fulfilling lives.

"The range of physiotherapy is so broad it covers every spectrum of healing the body and I think that everyone eventually finds their own niche. With a physiotherapy qualification you can travel anywhere and find work."

Emma Ferris BPhy



Division of Health Sciences

www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences

Otago *Get there!*

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
TE WHARE WĀNANGA O OTĀGO

0800 80 80 98 | www.otago.ac.nz
txt 866 | university@otago.ac.nz

EMMA FERRIS

Emma Ferris chose to study physiotherapy because she wanted a “hands-on career”. “I was really interested in the human body, how it works, how it can break down and how to fix it,” she says. The problem-solving aspect of physiotherapy appealed to her too: “You can have someone come in complaining about a sore elbow and as you work through the problem you can discover that it’s actually a problem in their neck.” Emma says that physiotherapy involves treating the whole person and having a holistic view of the body. As well as having a sound scientific knowledge about the human body, physiotherapists also needed to be good communicators. “Because you spend quite a long time with patients, and touch them, people open up and trust you. They can tell you quite a lot of detail about their lives,” she says.

The School of Physiotherapy is an excellent place to study, with supportive lecturers and a tight knit group of students. In fact, her mentor was so encouraging and inspiring that Emma decided to do postgraduate study straight away, rather than after a couple of years in the workforce, and to complete a Masters in Manipulative Physiotherapy. “Of the three main areas of physiotherapy – cardio-pulmonary, neurorhabilitation and musculoskeletal – musculoskeletal is the one that really attracted me.”



Career Opportunities

The more we learn about how the human body operates, the greater the opportunities there are for qualified physiotherapists to practise and undertake research, not only in New Zealand but around the world. Physiotherapists are valued for their work in hospitals, aged care facilities and rehabilitation centres. They are responsible for helping people maintain peak physical condition, as integral members of sports teams, fitness centres and sports clinics. Others find employment in schools or community care organizations, and many establish their own private practices. A growing awareness of the importance of keeping workers healthy and productive in today’s industrial environment has also created employment opportunities within large companies as occupational health and safety professionals, and in the area of health management.

What is a Physiotherapist?

Physiotherapists are people who are educated to assess, treat and prevent a vast range of physical limitations and bodily dysfunction. By using therapy such as exercises and manual and electrotherapeutic techniques, physiotherapists are able to assist their patients to lead independent, healthy and fulfilling lives. This makes physiotherapy an extremely rewarding career. The best physiotherapists are those with exceptional communication skills, a genuine desire to improve the well-being and quality of life of others and who have a good level of physical fitness.

What will I study?

The Otago Bachelor of Physiotherapy (BPhy) is a prestigious four year programme. It is internationally renowned for excellence, because its graduates are among the best, and because it ensures its clinical teaching and research programmes are continually refined and improved, to keep in step with modern physiotherapy practice, the latest research, and teaching methodologies.

The first year is the University of Otago Health Science First Year programme. This is a prescribed set of papers designed to provide a broad understanding of the scientific principles and communication skills which will underpin your further studies in health science.

In the second year, the course focuses on the scientific knowledge you will need as a physiotherapist, including Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology, and an introduction to Physiotherapy Science and Clinical Practice.

The third year builds on your understanding of the human body, and introduces Pathology and some of the broader issues encountered in practice, including management skills, and engagement with the community. Clinical Practice is also a key element of third year.

In the fourth and final year, you will be based at one of the School’s clinical centres in Dunedin, Christchurch or Wellington. You will spend the majority of the year undertaking supervised clinical practice in a variety of rotations around the city as well as in other towns and cities in the surrounding province. At the completion of your degree you may be registered with the New Zealand Physiotherapy Board or with the regulatory body in the country that you intend to practice.

Postgraduate Study

The School of Physiotherapy also has a comprehensive postgraduate programme, enabling physiotherapists who wish to further their study to pursue independent research and specialised clinical skills to the highest level. Postgraduate students perform an important role in advancing the field of physiotherapy, and many move into teaching physiotherapy at a tertiary level and research.

Background Required

There are no subject requirements for entry into the Health Sciences First Year 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 Physiotherapy is competitive, of the 120 places available, approximately 80 places are offered to students who have completed the HSFY programme at the University of Otago.

Selection into Physiotherapy from HSFY is competitive. Selection is based on your grades in the HSFY papers and results in the Undergraduate Medical and Health Sciences Admission Test (UMAT). The minimum grade point average requirement is a B-, and no compulsory paper grade can be less than a C. The UMAT is a test which measures non-academic attributes, for more information go to www.acer.edu.au/umat.

Applications are also considered in the Second year of University Study category, the Competitive Graduate category (UMAT required) and Other category (allied health professionals, and mature graduates). Additional 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 in to account as part of their application.

How do I apply for admission to Physiotherapy?

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

Clinical Requirements

Some aspects of teaching in the Health Sciences professional programmes require students to partially disrobe and take part in activities that include physical contact between students. This training is closely supervised and all students are required to participate. Students who anticipate situations sensitive to their culture or beliefs should contact the school for advice.

Immunity status

Students seeking admission to Physiotherapy 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.