

New Health Science Courses

The University of Western Sydney is introducing a new set of flexible health science courses in 2010. The new approach responds to the demand for healthcare professionals, especially in Greater Western Sydney. The structure of the new combined degrees:

- Provides flexible entry for school leavers, students articulating from vocational education and training, and graduates with other specialisations.
- Allows students to enrol in a specialisation, or pick up some specialisations after first year without losing time, to cater for school leavers who need more time to develop their talents.
- Recognises the importance of interdisciplinary professional competencies for ethical and safe practice and high quality health care and continuing professional development.
- Accounts for the shift towards evidence-based approaches to health care in teaching, learning, research and professional activities.
- Prepares graduates for work in multidisciplinary teams.
- Provides a firm foundation for further study and research.

The new courses are:

- Bachelor of Health Science with majors in Sport and Exercise Science, PDHPE, Health Promotion, Health Services Management and Therapeutic Recreation (3 year degree)
- Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Physiotherapy (4 year degree)
- Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Occupational Therapy (4 year degree)
- Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Podiatric Medicine (4 year degree)
- Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Traditional Chinese Medicine (4 year degree)
- Master of Physiotherapy (2 year graduate entry degree)
- Master of Occupational Therapy (2 year graduate entry degree)
- Master of Podiatric Medicine (2 year graduate entry degree)

The Master of Health Science and Master of Public Health provide opportunities for advanced studies in a wide range of health specialisations. Higher degrees by research leading to PhD and research masters degrees are also available and designed to enable students to focus on contemporary social issues and scientific problems.

The questions are in two sections: the first is mainly for future students and the second is mainly for continuing students.

Mainly for future students

1. Which courses are changing from Bachelor degrees to the combined Bachelor/Master format?

Two courses will change to combined degrees in 2010:

- Bachelor of Applied Science (Occupational Therapy) changes to Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Occupational Therapy
- Bachelor of Applied Science (Traditional Chinese Medicine) changes to Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Two new combined degree courses will be introduced in 2010:

- Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Physiotherapy
- Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Podiatric Medicine.

Graduates can also enter the program through the 2-year Graduate Entry Masters in one of the clinical specialisations of Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Podiatric Medicine. The Master of Podiatric Medicine commences in 2010. The other specialised Graduate Entry Masters programs commence in 2012.

2. What is the difference between the old Bachelor degrees and the new combined Bachelor/Masters degrees?

The new combined Bachelor/Masters degrees will lead to the same professional qualifications and registration as the old Bachelor degrees. The new courses have been designed to meet all the requirements for accreditation and the applications for accreditation are underway.

The new courses provide an increased emphasis on professional competencies in the workforce, evidence-based practice and multidisciplinary teamwork. The new program aims to train graduates who can contribute to the health workforce in a rapidly changing environment.

3. What is the duration of the new combined Bachelor/Masters courses?

All the combined Bachelor/Masters courses can be completed in 4 years of full-time study.

4. Are part-time courses available?

Part-time study is available in the Bachelor of Health Science for the key programs of Health Promotion, Health Services Management and Therapeutic Recreation. The combined Bachelor of Health Science/Master in a clinical discipline and the Bachelor of Health Science in Sport and Exercise Science and PDHPE require full-time study.

5. Is there a mid-year intake?

There is a mid-year intake for the Bachelor of Health Science leading to majors in Health Promotion, Health Services Management and Therapeutic Recreation.

6. What is happening to the 3-year health science courses?

The Bachelor of Health Science and its key programs in PDHPE, Health Promotion, Health Services Management and Therapeutic Recreation continue as 3-year programs and have been restructured to include core units in health and medical science and evidence-based practice. Students in the Bachelor of Health Science will study with students in the combined Bachelor/Masters courses in many units in their first and second years.

The Bachelor of Applied Science (Sport and Exercise Science) has been restructured as a 3-year Bachelor of Health Science (Sport and Exercise Science). It also includes the core units in health and medical science and evidence-based practice.

The integration between the programs provides some options at the end of the first year for you to transfer between the various streams if you meet the criteria, with advanced standing for the units which you have completed. Note that transfer places may be limited and are not available in all programs.

7. How are the new courses structured?

The first year is a largely common year for students in health science which introduces the health and medical sciences, the factors affecting health and core competencies for health professionals. Students learn in an interdisciplinary environment and develop an understanding of their chosen profession and how it relates to other health disciplines.

The integration between the programs allows some options at the end of the first year for you to transfer between the various streams if you meet the criteria, with advanced standing for the units which you have completed. Note that transfer places may be limited and are not available in all programs. For example, a student who completes year 1 of the Bachelor of Health Science (Sport and Exercise Science) with good grades may apply to transfer to the Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Physiotherapy, or Occupational Therapy, or Podiatric Medicine. Transfer will depend on the availability of places and will be competitive.

The second year is a combination of common units in health science, development of pre-clinical and workplace skills and studies in the profession which the student has chosen.

In the third year, students expand the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of their chosen profession. The emphasis is on the application of knowledge and techniques and evidence-based practice. At the end of the third year, students in the Bachelor of Health Science complete the course in their key program (Sport and Exercise Science, PDHPE, Health Promotion, Health Services Management, Therapeutic Recreation). Double majors are also possible. Students in the combined Bachelor/Masters course may also exit after the third year and take out a Bachelor of Health Science with no designated major.

The fourth year of the combined Bachelor/Masters courses concentrates on advanced professional practice. Extended clinical placements are a feature of the program. Students apply their knowledge and skills to the professional practice of their chosen discipline.

8. What are the prerequisites for entry to the health science courses?

All the courses specify assumed knowledge equivalent to 2 units of English at the NSW HSC.

In order to enrol in first year, all students must have a NSW Health National Criminal Record Check and a Prohibited Employment Declaration Form. By week 10 in first semester, all students must have a First Aid Certificate. To be eligible for fieldwork placements in public hospitals, students must comply with vaccination requirements and be prepared to submit a completed Adult Immunisation Card to placement institutions. Students must also comply with the NSW Health Records and Information Privacy Act (2004) and complete the required declaration.

Each course also has recommended HSC studies appropriate to the area of specialisation.

- PDHPE: Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, or Community and Family Studies.
- Sport and Exercise Science: Two units of Science and two units of Mathematics. Personal Development, Health and Physical Education can be counted as a science unit for this course.
- Physiotherapy: Mathematics, Physics and/or Biology
- Occupational Therapy: Physics, Chemistry, Biology and/or Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
- Podiatric Medicine: Mathematics, Physics and Biology
- Traditional Chinese Medicine: Biology.

The prerequisites for entry have not changed.

9. Are there special entry requirements such as interviews and tests?

No. Admission is based on previous academic performance in the HSC or in prior university studies.

10. Is the entire course available as a Commonwealth Supported (HECS) Place, or will parts of the course charge full fees?

The entire course is Commonwealth Supported for eligible students who are offered a place in either the Bachelor of Health Science or a combined Bachelor/Masters course.

Eligible students who enter the Graduate Entry Masters program will also be offered a Commonwealth Supported place.

11. If I am eligible for a Commonwealth Scholarship, will this support me throughout the duration of my course?

Commonwealth Scholarships are currently under review by the Commonwealth Government. There has been discussion of an extension to the eligibility conditions to allow eligible students to hold a Commonwealth Scholarship for up to 4 years in an undergraduate degree or an approved postgraduate degree which leads to initial professional registration, but this has not yet been approved. Further advice from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is expected in 2010.

12. What are the advantages of the UWS model for health science courses?

The program is extremely flexible:

- Students can select and enrol in their chosen profession straight from secondary school.
- Students who have not decided on their chosen profession can enrol in the course and, in many cases, transfer to their chosen profession at the end of the first year after learning about the relationships between the health science disciplines. Transfer places may require good grades and may be limited by a quota.
- Graduates can also enter the clinical programs through the 2-year Graduate Entry Masters in one of the specialisations.

The advanced professional work completed in the clinical programs is recognised through the award of a combined Bachelor/Masters degree.

13. How do I transfer between courses?

Transferring between courses is possible because of the common core units in the early years.

At the end of the first year, the structure will allow you to move to another program. Transfer places may be limited and so will depend on the grades you obtain and the availability of places in the program.

See also the entry 7. *How are the new courses structured?*

14. Will the ATAR cut-offs for the new courses be higher?

The ATAR cut-off for entry depends on the number of available places, the student demand for the course and the quality of the applicants. Currently, demand for health science course is high, especially in the clinical areas. We expect the demand for the courses to remain strong and this may lead to some increase in the cut-offs for entry.

15. Will the new combined Bachelor/Masters courses be harder than the current 4-year Bachelor degree programs?

The course has been designed to help students complete the requirements and progressively achieve the knowledge and skills for professional practice. Academic advising and peer mentoring will be provided. By the time students reach the fourth year, they will be operating at the Masters level.

16. Which campuses will offer the health science courses?

The Bachelor of Health Science and the specialisations in Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Podiatric Medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Sport and Exercise Science, Health Promotion, Health Services Management and Therapeutic Recreation will be offered at Campbelltown. The Campbelltown campus also houses the School of Medicine and the biomedical sciences and provides students with modern facilities for studying and practicing the health sciences, including UniClinic, the University's clinical health practice.

The Bachelor of Health Science (PDHPE) will be offered at the Werrington South campus in close proximity to the School of Education. This assists students who plan to undertake a Master of Teaching after their first degree and work as school teachers.

17. Can I do honours in health science?

High performing students are encouraged to do honours. There are two types of honours programs.

The Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) is a 1-year extension of the Bachelor of Health Science available in Sport and Exercise Science, PDHPE, Health Promotion, Health Services Management and Therapeutic Recreation. Honours students undertake research design and methodology and complete a research thesis. Admission to the honours year depends on academic performance and the availability of appropriate supervision.

The 4-year combined Bachelor/Masters courses contain an option for embedded honours. Students apply for entry to the honours stream during their third year. Honours students undertake an advanced unit on evidence-based practice and research methods and complete a research thesis. Part of the thesis work is done during the summer semester between years 3 and 4 of the course and the thesis is completed during year 4 in parallel with the advanced clinical placements. The whole program is equivalent to 4.25 years of full-time study but is completed in 4 calendar years. Admission to the honours year depends on academic performance and the availability of appropriate supervision.

Honours graduates with good grades can apply for admission to higher degrees by research (research masters and doctoral programs). Honours is also an excellent preparation for a research-based career and for professional leadership.

18. How will I feel part of my chosen discipline in the large health science program?

One unit in the first year aims to introduce students to their chosen special area and the roles and responsibilities of its practitioners.

In many of the common units, students will work in discipline-specific tutorials on problems and case studies which focus on their chosen speciality.

19. What support will be available for students having difficulties with their studies?

General advice is available through the Student Centre. First Year Central provides dedicated support for first year students. The Student Learning Unit has a variety of programs on academic and study skills.

The School of Biomedical and Health Sciences supports students through a team of expert academic advisers.

20. Is there an opportunity to take elective subjects?

Most of the courses are fully specified to meet the requirements for professional accreditation. However, each course offers a great deal of variety in both the subjects and the learning approaches.

21. Have the new courses been accredited at this stage?

The new courses have been designed to meet all the requirements for accreditation and the applications for accreditation are underway. In some disciplines, the professional body will not

complete the full accreditation process until the first cohort of students has graduated. The University intends to have the courses fully accredited so that graduates will be able to obtain professional recognition on graduation and expects to achieve this outcome.

22. What are the entry requirements for the Graduate Entry Masters courses?

The minimum requirement for entry to a Graduate Entry Masters course is a Bachelor degree or equivalent in Health Science or a related discipline such as nursing, medical science, or science, completed in the last 10 years with a grade point average of 5.0 (credit average) or higher, provided that prerequisite studies are completed.

There is a quota of places available and entry will be competitive based on academic merit.

Pre-requisite knowledge is required, depending on the particular discipline. All applicants will be assessed on their prior learning and given advice if additional units need to be completed in order to satisfy the pre-requisite knowledge required.

In order to enrol, students must also have a NSW Health National Criminal Record Check, a Prohibited Employment Declaration Form and a First Aid Certificate. To be eligible to undertake fieldwork placements in public hospitals, students must comply with vaccination requirements and be prepared to submit a completed Adult Immunisation Card to placement institutions. Students must also comply with the NSW Health Records and Information Privacy Act (2004) and complete the required declaration.

23. Which disciplines will have a Graduate Entry Masters program?

The Graduate Entry Master of Podiatric Medicine will commence in 2010.

The Graduate Entry Master of Physiotherapy and the Graduate Entry Master of Occupational Therapy will commence in 2012.

24. How can I obtain further information?

Please contact Course Enquiries at the following contact numbers:

- Australian students: phone 1300 897 669 or 61 2 9852 5588 (from outside Australia); fax: 61 2 9678 7160; email: study@uws.edu.au
- International students: phone 61 2 9852 5499; fax: 61 2 9685 9314; email: internationalstudy@uws.edu.au

Mainly for current students

1. I am a current student. Do I have to transfer to one of the new courses?

As far as is reasonably practicable, all current students will be able to complete the courses in which they are enrolled. The core units in existing programs will be maintained or replaced by appropriate substitute units to provide an equivalent course experience and outcomes.

Most current students, especially those in an early stage of their program, will also have an option of transferring to the new course in the same discipline. If you transfer, you will receive full credit for all the core units you have completed. However, note that some elective units may not be counted towards the requirements for the new programs.

Detailed academic advice is available and students should consult their Head of Program and discuss their options, especially where they may have failed some of the core units.

2. Which courses will be moving to a different campus?

The key programs in the Bachelor of Health Science in health promotion, health services management and therapeutic recreation will take in new students at Campbelltown in 2010. The key program in PDHPE will continue to be offered at Penrith at the Werrington South campus. Students currently enrolled at Kingswood will be able to continue their studies at Penrith in 2010 and to finish their courses there provided they make reasonable progress.

3. I am currently studying health science at Kingswood. Do I have to move to Campbelltown?

As far as is reasonably practicable, all current students will be able to complete the courses in which they are enrolled. Students currently enrolled at Kingswood will continue their studies at Werrington South campus in 2010. The core units in existing programs will be maintained or replaced by appropriate substitute units to provide an equivalent course experience and outcomes.

Detailed academic advice is available and students should consult their Head of Program and discuss their options, especially where they may have failed some of the core units.

4. I am currently enrolled in the BHSc. How can I transfer to physiotherapy, occupational therapy, or podiatric medicine?

Transferring between courses may be possible. However, transfer places will be limited and so the prospects for a transfer will depend on the grades you obtain and the availability of places in the

program. Detailed academic advice is available and students should consult their Head of Program and discuss their options.

The first year of the new combined degree courses in physiotherapy, occupational therapy and podiatric medicine includes essential units in human anatomy and physiology which must be completed before the specialised clinical units. For this reason, most current students in the BHSc will not be able to transfer directly into the second or later years of the clinical programs. Current students may apply for a new place through UAC. If successful, you can then apply for advanced standing for the units you have already completed.

5. I am currently enrolled in the BHSc (PDHPE). Can I transfer to the BHSc (Sport and Exercise Science)?

Transferring between courses may be possible. However, transfer places will be limited and so the prospects for a transfer will depend on the grades you obtain and the availability of places in the program. Detailed academic advice is available and students should consult their Head of Program and discuss their options.

The first year of the new course in sport and exercise science includes essential units in human anatomy and physiology which must be completed before the more specialised units. For this reason, most current students in the BHSc will not be able to transfer directly into the second or later years of the program in sport and exercise science. Current students may apply for a new place through UAC. If successful, you can then apply for advanced standing for the units you have already completed.

6. How can I obtain further information?

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