



University  
of Otago  
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

Ōtautahi  
Christchurch  
Campus

# Postgraduate Musculoskeletal and Pain Management programmes



# Contents



Welcome	2
Study with us	3
Distance learning	4
Qualification staircase	5
Programmes offered	6
Musculoskeletal Medicine	7
Musculoskeletal Management	10
Pain and Pain Management	13
Research methods papers	15
Paper details	16
Applying for entry	18
English language proficiency	19
Fees	19
Graduation	19

For enquiries related to admission and enrolment, please contact:  
Co-ordinator, Student Experience  
Email [postgrad.uoc@otago.ac.nz](mailto:postgrad.uoc@otago.ac.nz)

For enquiries concerning the content of the course, please contact:  
Email [msmandpainstudies.uoc@otago.ac.nz](mailto:msmandpainstudies.uoc@otago.ac.nz)  
Tel +64 3 364 0469

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Musculoskeletal Medicine  
University of Otago, Christchurch  
[otago.ac.nz/msm-pain-management](http://otago.ac.nz/msm-pain-management)

This prospectus is intended as a general guide for postgraduate students. The information provided is, as far as possible, up to date and accurate at the time of publication. The University reserves the right to add, amend or withdraw programmes and facilities, to restrict student numbers and to make any other alterations as it may deem necessary. The regulations of the University of Otago are published annually in the *University Calendar*.

# Welcome



On behalf of the MSM and Pain Executive Committee, welcome to the postgraduate suite of Musculoskeletal and Pain courses taught from the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Musculoskeletal Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch. We are proud that our programme in Musculoskeletal Medicine is the only course of its kind in Australasia, while our programme in Pain and Pain Management is the longest-standing comprehensive master's programme in New Zealand and is endorsed by the prestigious International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP).

Our courses are distinctive in that we:

- Integrate a biopsychosocial model of health and pain.
- Offer inter-professional learning for health professionals.
- Provide both clinical and academic training.
- Teach all but two courses via distance learning (there are two on-campus courses for Musculoskeletal Medicine).
- Offer opportunities for students to progress to PhD research in areas such as pain, musculoskeletal management, orthopaedics, spinal cord injury and brain injury rehabilitation, bio-engineering and virtual reality.

Our team consists of active senior clinicians and academics working in the areas of musculoskeletal medicine, pain and pain management, orthopaedic surgery and sports medicine. We review our material regularly, ensuring what we teach, how we teach it and our assessment approaches reflect current thinking.

Graduates of our programme have become leaders in their fields: we have graduates leading clinical teams, working as lecturers in professional programmes, participating in regulatory roles and establishing their own practices. We believe students who take part in our programmes develop the skills to influence the way musculoskeletal and pain problems are managed at individual patient level through to broad policy development.

We welcome your enquiries and are always happy to discuss options so that your particular requirements for study can be met. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

**Professor Gary Hooper**  
MB ChB MD (Otago) FRACS  
Chair of the MSM and Pain Executive Committee  
Head of Department  
University of Otago, Christchurch

# Study with us

The University of Otago's postgraduate Musculoskeletal and Pain programmes promote best practice in musculoskeletal and pain management and provide clinically oriented academic training in both these areas for a wide range of health professions. We emphasise acquiring practical and academic skills alongside theoretical knowledge. Our approach is founded on evidence-based healthcare that is person-centred and follows the interprofessional curriculum endorsed by the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP).

Participants should become more effective in assessing, diagnosing, managing and rehabilitating people presenting with musculoskeletal and other pain problems, with particular appreciation of the contributions from a range of health professions in primary and secondary care.

Critical appraisal skills are taught as part of the programmes and students may be supported in developing their postgraduate study to master's and eventually PhD level.

## 10 reasons to study with us

1. Study by distance learning from anywhere in the world.
2. Our broad range of papers cover almost all major areas of musculoskeletal practice.
3. You can start with the postgraduate certificate and add papers to earn a diploma or master's degree.
4. Our qualifications are the only New Zealand programmes in musculoskeletal and distance-taught pain management.
5. Teaching staff are active researchers and clinicians, encouraging rigour in clinical reasoning and using a strong evidence base.
6. The programme structure allows flexibility to build your academic success at a pace that suits you.
7. You'll benefit from the support and knowledge of highly committed staff interested in encouraging students to develop their careers.
8. We run a truly interprofessional programme with staff and students from multiple healthcare disciplines.
9. Students with our qualifications offer specialist skills for patients with musculoskeletal and pain problems.
10. Distance learning students are able to make use of the extensive facilities at all three Otago campuses.



Our courses are endorsed by the International Association for the Study of Pain.

# Distance learning

With the exception of our two on-campus courses for medical practitioners, we use distance teaching for all of our papers. This means you can study with us in your own time, wherever you live.

Professionals throughout New Zealand and overseas can join the programme, avoiding the need to take time out from clinical practice.

## Online teaching sessions

Our courses are taught by practicing clinicians and researchers who have a special interest in musculoskeletal pain.

Teaching sessions are conducted via Zoom videoconferencing, and these are recorded and available for review. Most teaching takes place during the early evening, with sessions held every two weeks during the semester. Confirmed dates and times will be provided at the start of the semester. Additional teaching sessions are provided from time to time.

To participate in the teaching sessions, you'll need a computer, stable internet, web camera, and headset with a microphone.

## Online resources

All of our teaching material, and access to the library, is provided via Blackboard. This is an online learning platform that allows us to use the resources available on the internet to augment students' learning. Links to readings, videos, websites and presentations are available. In some papers, participating in online discussions within Blackboard is part of the course.

Since all of our teaching is online, you'll be expected to have basic familiarity with electronic files and word processing.

## Assessment

Each paper uses assessments to suit the expected learning outcomes. Most papers in the Pain and Pain Management programmes use internal assessment only, while those in the Musculoskeletal programmes will have a combination of internal assignments and end-of-semester written examinations. Written assignments are designed to provide students with an opportunity to apply skills in their clinical contexts. Some papers allow students to self-select topics to deeply explore concepts relevant to their practice. Where examinations are part of the assessment approach, these will either be sat in the city/country where you live, or be held online. Examination dates are published at the beginning of each academic year.

## What is the time commitment for postgraduate study?

Studying while also working as a clinician involves commitment, organisation and self-management. Postgraduate studies are intended to extend your capabilities, and you'll be expected to be pro-active about acquiring study skills and using University resources.

As a rough guide, each 15-point paper requires at least 10–12 hours of study each week, for a total of 150 hours minimum.

We offer support and guidance to help you develop your skills in assessing, interpreting, and synthesising theory and practice at an advanced level. These skills are increasingly important for you as practicing clinicians who need to embrace evidence-based practice.

# Qualification staircase

There is a range of options that can "staircase", each building on the other. Depending on prior academic learning, you can step onto the staircase at different levels, but it is possible to get on and off as it suits your needs.

## Postgraduate certificate

A postgraduate certificate is a coursework qualification that recognises continuing professional development and requires 60 points of papers (normally four 15-point papers). Most students take two papers a year while working full-time, although it's possible to complete a postgraduate certificate of four papers in one year. Each 15-point paper requires at least 10–12 hours of study a week.

## Postgraduate diploma

A postgraduate diploma is a specialist postgraduate qualification. Students can focus on a preferred area of study and may begin to consider future research plans. Most students working full-time will take four years of part-time study to complete a postgraduate diploma which consists of 120 points (normally eight 15-point papers). Some papers are offered in alternate years, so students should plan their programme of study carefully.

## Master's degree

A master's degree is a combination of coursework and research. Working from a strong background of study, with at least a B grade average from prior work and a B+ grade in a 30-point research methods paper, master's degree candidates have the opportunity to contribute to existing fields of enquiry or begin to develop new areas of research. Students are able to choose to undertake 120 points of papers and a 120-point thesis, or 180 points of papers and a 60-point dissertation.

Student research is supervised by active researchers. Most students who are working full-time choose to complete their thesis or dissertation part-time. The dissertation is a piece of secondary analysis such as a systematic review of the literature to answer a clinical question, while the thesis may be a primary research project such as a qualitative enquiry or a pilot study using experimental design.

## PhD

A PhD provides an unequalled opportunity to carry out in-depth research and analysis of a particular musculoskeletal or pain issue. The University of Otago offers the supervision of leading researchers and we aim to create a stimulating and supportive environment for emerging researchers.

Intending applicants for doctoral study will have demonstrated the ability to progress to an advanced degree and have a keen interest in research. Interested students are encouraged to view staff profiles on the web.

Those interested in embarking on a PhD should contact the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Musculoskeletal Medicine for further information (see back cover for contact details). Enrolment in a PhD is not limited to the beginning of semesters; they may be accepted at any time of the year.

# Programmes offered

# Musculoskeletal Medicine

All qualifications, with the exception of the Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma in Musculoskeletal Medicine, are available to appropriately qualified allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, osteopaths, chiropractors and exercise therapists.

Postgraduate Certificate	Postgraduate Diploma	Master of Health Sciences
<b>Musculoskeletal Medicine (medical practitioners)</b> MSME 701, PAIN 710 + two papers from MSME 702, 703, 705, 706, 707, 709, 710, PAIN 711, PAIN 712	<b>Musculoskeletal Medicine (medical practitioners)</b> MSME 701, 702, 703 and 709 PAIN 710 + three papers from MSME 705, MSME 706, MSME 707, MSME 710, PAIN 711, PAIN 712	
<b>Musculoskeletal Management</b> PAIN 710, 711 + two other MSME papers	<b>Musculoskeletal Management</b> PAIN 710, 711 + MSME 707 + 75 points from approved papers (must include research methods paper/s to the value of 30 points if intending to go on to master's)	<b>Musculoskeletal Management</b> Completion of the PGDipHealSc MSMT (120 points) Thesis option: + 120-point thesis Coursework option: + 60 points from approved papers + 60-point dissertation
<b>Pain and Pain Management</b> PAIN 710, 711 + two other PAIN papers	<b>Pain and Pain Management</b> PAIN 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, and 715 + 30 points from research methods paper/s or other approved papers (must include research methods paper/s to the value of 30 points if intending to go on to master's)	<b>Pain and Pain Management</b> Completion of the PGDipHealSc PAIN (120 points) Thesis option: + 120-point thesis Coursework option: + 60 points from approved papers + 60-point dissertation
60 points		
120 points		
240 points		

See page 16 for details on paper content.

Musculoskeletal medicine is an important discipline dealing with patients who have musculoskeletal and neural dysfunction of both an acute and chronic nature. Patients with these problems constitute up to 20 per cent of a general practitioner's caseload, and those with back and neck pain, in particular, impose a heavy economic and social burden on the community.

Musculoskeletal medicine is based on biomedical and psychosocial knowledge, and utilises a range of therapeutic skills, including manual medicine, needling, pharmacotherapy, injection techniques, applied biomechanics, psychosocial management and the need for appropriate referral.

This programme is the only one of its kind in Australia and New Zealand.

## Who is it intended for?

The course is intended for medical practitioners and is based on biomedical and psychosocial knowledge. It utilises a range of skills including appropriate history taking and physical examination, the use of pharmacotherapy, diagnostic and therapeutic interventional techniques, and applied biomechanics, as well as manual medicine, myofascial and needling skills. Psychosocial management and the use of appropriate referral is emphasised.

Candidates study alongside other health professionals, especially in papers within the PAIN suite, an ideal preparation for working in interdisciplinary teams.

## Where will it take me?

Graduates of the Musculoskeletal Medicine qualifications have gone on to:

- Assume clinical leadership and clinical specialist positions.
- Undertake specialist advisory and health management roles.
- Successfully gain funding for service initiatives.
- Become skilful consumers of clinical research.

- Complete diplomas, master's and PhDs in rehabilitation.
- Studied further to become a Fellow of the New Zealand College of Musculoskeletal Medicine (a vocational speciality).
- Become a GP with a special interest in musculoskeletal medicine and adviser with the Accident Compensation Corporation.

## On-campus courses

Although most of the papers for the Musculoskeletal Medicine programmes are distance taught, students are required to attend compulsory on-campus courses held in Christchurch, New Zealand. MSME 701 Clinical Diagnosis is a nine-day on-campus compulsory course for the postgraduate certificate and the postgraduate diploma, normally held in March each year.

MSME 709 Clinical Therapeutics is a compulsory paper for the postgraduate diploma and includes a seven-day on-campus course, normally held in August each year.

The completion of MSME 701 is a prerequisite for enrolling in MSME 709. Students would only be expected to attend a maximum of one on-campus course per year.

These on-campus courses are important because they:

- Provide opportunities for a concentrated period of study away from home and work.
- Provide opportunities for face-to-face training in skills that are difficult to accomplish at a distance.
- Enable students who are often working in isolation to interact with one another and with staff members directly.

## Postgraduate Certificate in Musculoskeletal Medicine (PGCertMSM) (60 points)

### What does it involve?

The Postgraduate Certificate in Musculoskeletal Medicine aims to provide a combination of musculoskeletal theory and principles integrated into clinical practice, for medical practitioners wanting to extend their knowledge and skills at a postgraduate level. Clinicians who complete the programme will have gained a clear understanding of musculoskeletal diagnosis and intervention, an ability to analyse information critically and will have demonstrated how to integrate that information and skill into their practice.

### How long will it take?

The Postgraduate Certificate in Musculoskeletal Medicine can be completed by studying part-time over a one to three year timeframe.

### What papers do I take?

Two compulsory papers (30 points):

MSME 701 Clinical Diagnosis (on-campus block course)  
PAIN 710 Introduction to Pain

Plus two further approved papers from the following:

MSME 702 Musculoskeletal Tissues  
MSME 703 Musculoskeletal Disorders  
MSME 705 Regional Disorders – Spine  
MSME 706 Regional Disorders – Limbs  
MSME 707 Musculoskeletal Management  
MSME 709 Clinical Therapeutics (on-campus block course)  
MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries  
PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management  
PAIN 712 Pain Assessment

Candidates who first complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Musculoskeletal Medicine are able to apply for an exemption of 60 points in the postgraduate diploma, thus completing it with four 15-point papers. Careful selection of papers is required in order to ensure all compulsory papers for the postgraduate diploma are completed.

### STAFF PROFILE



“I have worked for more than 20 years in musculoskeletal medicine and pain medicine both in hospital and private practice. For much of this time, I have been a consultant in pain medicine at the Burwood Pain Management Centre which is a hospital-based interdisciplinary pain clinic. In addition to my musculoskeletal training, I have completed a master’s in pain medicine and trained in interventional pain medicine through the Spine Intervention Society.

“As pain is a complex, biopsychosocial phenomenon, it necessarily involves teamwork for effective management. Working with an interdisciplinary team requires considerable skill, and achieving this is becoming increasingly important for medical professionals.

“My role at Otago has given me an opportunity to be involved in the training of medical practitioners in musculoskeletal and pain medicine, as well as introducing this field to a large group of interested and capable allied health practitioners.”

**Dr John N Robinson**  
Academic Co-ordinator, Musculoskeletal Medicine

## Postgraduate Diploma in Musculoskeletal Medicine (PGDipMSM) (120 points)

### What does it involve?

The diploma combines clinical and academic material from a biopsychosocial perspective, making this course unique. Musculoskeletal medicine aims to integrate the biomedical and psychosocial knowledge and skills pertinent to the treatment of those patients experiencing musculoskeletal pain problems.

### How long will it take?

The Postgraduate Diploma in Musculoskeletal Medicine can be studied part-time over a two to four year timeframe. Extensions of time to complete the course may be granted when there are exceptional circumstances.

### What papers do I take?

Five compulsory papers (75 points):

MSME 701 Clinical Diagnosis (on-campus block course)  
MSME 702 Musculoskeletal Tissues  
MSME 703 Musculoskeletal Disorders  
PAIN 710 Introduction to Pain  
MSME 709 Clinical Therapeutics (on-campus block course)

Plus three further approved papers from the following (45 points):

MSME 705 Regional Disorders – Spine  
MSME 706 Regional Disorders – Limbs  
MSME 707 Musculoskeletal Management  
MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries  
PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management  
PAIN 712 Pain Assessment

### STUDENT PROFILE



“As a GP in regional New Zealand, a large proportion of my work was musculoskeletal medicine. I wanted to improve my skills and knowledge in the management of these patients. I’d been toying with the idea of re-specialising in musculoskeletal medicine, and I felt that through this diploma I would gain a clearer picture of whether I really wanted to pursue another fellowship.

“The programme at the University of Otago offered a qualification from a respected institution with amazing teaching provided by leaders in the field. I have since joined the New Zealand College of Musculoskeletal Medicine and have not looked back.”

**Dr Laura McAulay**  
FRNZCGP (NZ) Registrar NZCMM  
Studying for a Postgraduate Diploma in Musculoskeletal Medicine

# Musculoskeletal Management

## Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences

(PGCertHealSc) endorsed in Musculoskeletal Management (60 points)

Postgraduate qualifications endorsed in Musculoskeletal Management are suitable for health professionals currently working in an area related to musculoskeletal management and can be completed entirely by distance learning.

Candidates for these qualifications must be a graduate or possess an appropriate health professional qualification requiring at least three years' full-time tertiary study, and must have experience of, or be currently working, in the relevant field of healthcare.

### Who is it intended for?

These programmes are for allied health professionals involved in the care, management and rehabilitation of patients with musculoskeletal and pain problems, such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, podiatrists, chiropractors and osteopaths.

### How long will it take?

The postgraduate certificate is usually completed in one to two years of part-time study. The postgraduate diploma may be completed in two years of part-time study. Candidates have four years to complete the requirements of the qualification.

Candidates who first complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences endorsed in Musculoskeletal Management are able to apply for an exemption of 60 points in the postgraduate diploma, thus completing it with four 15-point papers. Careful selection of papers is required in order to ensure all compulsory papers for the postgraduate diploma are completed.

### What papers do I take?

Two compulsory papers (30 points):

PAIN 710 Introduction to Pain  
PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management

Plus two further approved papers from the following (30 points):

MSME 702 Musculoskeletal Tissues  
MSME 703 Musculoskeletal Disorders  
MSME 705 Regional Disorders – Spine  
MSME 706 Regional Disorders – Limbs  
MSME 707 Musculoskeletal Management  
MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries

## Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences

(PGDipHealSc) endorsed in Musculoskeletal Management (120 points)

### What papers do I take?

Three compulsory papers (45 points):

PAIN 710 Introduction to Pain  
PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management  
MSME 707 Musculoskeletal Management

Plus five further approved papers to the value of 75 points.

Some recommended papers are:

MSME 702 Musculoskeletal Tissues (15 points)  
MSME 703 Musculoskeletal Disorders (15 points)  
MSME 705 Regional Disorders – Spine (15 points)  
MSME 706 Regional Disorders – Limbs (15 points)  
MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries (15 points)  
PAIN 712 Pain Assessment (15 points)  
PAIN 713 Pain Neurobiology (15 points)  
PAIN 714 Biomedical Pain Management (15 points)  
PAIN 715 Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Pain (15 points)  
REHB 701 Rehabilitation Principles (30 points)  
SPME 711 Exercise Prescription (30 points)  
PHTY 542 Sports Physiotherapy (30 points)  
HASC 701 Working in Interprofessional Clinical Teams (30 points)

Students hoping to advance to the master's programme are advised to include relevant research methods papers to the value of 30 points in their postgraduate diploma programme. See page 15 for suggested research methods papers.

Students may develop a programme to suit special interests in musculoskeletal health such as women's health.

### STUDENT PROFILE



"I chose to study for an MHealSc to upskill as a physiotherapist. The variety of postgraduate papers on offer at Otago has allowed me to build a course that works for me and meant that I could do a rehabilitation paper that meets ACC requirements for vocational work, as well as pain papers and sports medicine papers. The flexibility of Otago's postgraduate study is great. I can study in my own time and it's easy to fit evening lectures around work and other commitments."

**Kimberley Bond**  
Physiotherapist  
Studying for a Master of Health Sciences  
in Musculoskeletal Management

## Master of Health Sciences

(MHealSc) endorsed in Musculoskeletal Management (240 points)

The Master of Health Sciences degree allows study at a postgraduate level across a range of health disciplines, and research experience in the student's area of specialisation. There are two options available to those undertaking a Master of Health Sciences endorsed in Musculoskeletal Management; the coursework pathway or a research pathway (thesis).

Normally before embarking upon study within the Master of Health Sciences programme, candidates are first required to complete a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences (PGDipHealSc) and achieve an overall B grade average.

Admission to the master's programme also requires candidates to have completed 30 points of research methods papers with a grade (or average grade if more than one paper is used to complete the 30 points) of B+ or better.

### Research pathway

Completion of the PGDipHealSc (MSMT) (120 points)  
Plus a thesis (120 points)

A thesis is ideally driven by intellectual curiosity about a particular problem, issues or state of affairs. The time commitment for a thesis is 12 months of full-time study or the part-time equivalent.

Most students who are working full-time choose to undertake this research over two years.

Students are supervised by active researchers within the Department.

### Coursework pathway

Completion of the PGDipHealSc (MSMT) (120 points)  
Plus approved papers to the value of 60 points.

Some recommended papers are:

MSME 702 Musculoskeletal Tissues (15 points)  
MSME 703 Musculoskeletal Disorders (15 points)  
MSME 705 Regional Disorders – Spine (15 points)  
MSME 706 Regional Disorders – Limbs (15 points)  
MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries (15 points)  
PAIN 712 Pain Assessment (15 points)  
PAIN 713 Pain Neurobiology (15 points)  
PAIN 714 Biomedical Pain Management (15 points)  
PAIN 715 Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Pain (15 points)  
REHB 701 Rehabilitation Principles (30 points)  
SPME 711 Exercise Prescription (30 points)  
PHTY 542 Sports Physio (30 points)  
HASC 701 Working in Interprofessional Clinical Teams (30 points)

Plus a supervised dissertation (60 points) consisting of a systematic review of literature.

# Pain and Pain Management

## Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences

(PGCertHealSc) endorsed in Pain and Pain Management (60 points)

## Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences

(PGDipHealSc) endorsed in Pain and Pain Management (120 points)

The endorsement in Pain and Pain Management is open to medical practitioners and allied health care professionals. It can be studied part-time and is entirely distance-taught.

It is designed to present an understanding of the importance of pain to the individual and to society, and how best to optimise its management. It provides candidates with the necessary skills to better understand and manage pain problems that pertain to their particular discipline within healthcare. At master's level, it provides a knowledge and understanding of research methodology and its practical application.

### Who is it intended for?

Allied health and medical professionals involved in the care, rehabilitation and management of people experiencing pain problems. Psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, podiatrists, chiropractors and osteopaths would find these distance taught papers to be of particular interest.

### How long will it take?

The postgraduate certificate would normally be completed in one to two years of part-time study although it may be completed in one year.

The postgraduate diploma may be completed in two years of part-time study but most students who are working full-time will take two 15-point papers each year. Candidates have four years to complete the requirements of the qualification.

Those candidates who first complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences endorsed in Pain and Pain Management are able to apply for an exemption of 60 points in the postgraduate diploma, thus completing it with four 15-point papers. Careful selection of papers is required in order to ensure all compulsory papers for the postgraduate diploma are completed.

Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences (PGCertHealSc) endorsed in Pain and Pain Management (60 points)

Two compulsory papers (30 points):

PAIN 710 Introduction to Pain  
PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management

Plus two further approved papers to the value of 30 points.

Some recommended papers are:

PAIN 712 Pain Assessment  
PAIN 713 Pain Neurobiology  
PAIN 714 Biomedical Pain Management  
PAIN 715 Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Pain  
MSME 707 Musculoskeletal Management  
MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries

Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences (PGDipHealSc) endorsed in Pain and Pain Management (120 points)

Five compulsory papers (90 points):

MSME 710 Introduction to Pain  
PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management  
PAIN 712 Pain Assessment  
PAIN 713 Neurobiology of Pain  
PAIN 714 Biomedical Pain Management  
PAIN 715 Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Pain

Plus further approved papers to the value of 30 points.

Some recommended papers are:

MSME 702 Musculoskeletal Tissues (15 points)  
MSME 703 Musculoskeletal Disorders (15 points)  
MSME 705 Regional Disorders – Spine (15 points)  
MSME 706 Regional Disorders – Limbs (15 points)  
MSME 707 Musculoskeletal Management (15 points)  
MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries (15 points)  
REHB 701 Rehabilitation Principles (30 points)  
SPME 711 Exercise Prescription (30 points)  
PHTY 542 Sports Physio (30 points)  
HASC 701 Working in Interprofessional Clinical Teams (30 points)

Students hoping to advance to the master's programme are advised to include relevant research methods papers to the value of 30 points in their postgraduate diploma programme. See page 15 for suggested approved Research Methods papers.



## Master of Health Sciences

Endorsed in Pain and Pain Management (240 points)

The Master of Health Sciences degree allows study at a postgraduate level across a range of health disciplines, and research experience in the student's area of specialisation. There are two options available for the endorsement Pain and Pain Management, the coursework pathway or a research pathway (thesis).

Before embarking upon a Master of Health Sciences, candidates are first required to complete a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences (PGDipHealSc) and achieve with grades averaging B or better. Admission also requires candidates to have completed 30 points of research methods papers at NZQF Level 8 with a grade (or average grade if more than one paper is used to complete the 30 points) of B+ or better.

### Research pathway

Completion of the PGDipHealSc (PAIN) (120 points)  
Plus a thesis (120 points):

A thesis is ideally driven by intellectual curiosity about a particular problem, issues or state of affairs. The time commitment for a thesis is 12 months of full-time study or the part-time equivalent. Most students working full-time choose to undertake their thesis over two years of part-time study.

### Coursework pathway

Completion of the PGDipHealSc (PAIN) (120 points).  
Plus approved papers to the value of 60 points.

Some recommended papers are:

MSME 703 Musculoskeletal Disorders (15 points)  
MSME 705 Regional Disorders – Spine (15 points)  
MSME 706 Regional Disorders – Limbs (15 points)  
MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries (15 points)  
REHB 701 Rehabilitation Principles (30 points)  
SPME 711 Exercise Prescription (30 points)  
PHTY 542 Sports Physio (30 points)  
HASC 701 Working in Interprofessional Clinical Teams (30 points)

Plus a dissertation\* (60 points) consisting of a systematic review of literature.

Those students who have been admitted to the Master of Health Sciences endorsed in Pain and Pain Management via the coursework pathway prior to 2018 have the option of completing a research project (30 points) plus 90 points of approved papers. This pathway requires completion of a NZQF level 9 research methods paper to the value of 30 points.

## Research methods papers

### GRADUATE PROFILE



“Through my studies I gained a deeper understanding of all aspects of pain and pain management. The interdisciplinary approach of the programme was incredible for cross pollination of ideas, and the tutors all brought a wealth of knowledge from their own experiences. The course was clinically relevant and useful in my daily practice, and it challenged my thinking about wider medical practice and research. The staff are so enthusiastic that I am currently exploring master's research ideas, and intend to continue my studies next year.”

**Dr Lizi Edmonds**  
Specialist Anaesthetist  
Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences  
in Pain and Pain Management

\* Both the dissertations and thesis are supported by supervision from active researchers within the department.

Admission to the master's programme requires candidates to have completed 30 points of research methods papers at NZQF Level 8 with a grade (or average grade if more than one paper is used to complete the 30 points) of B+ or better.

Students hoping to progress to the master's are advised to take the research methods paper/s as part of their postgraduate diploma.

However, they can also be taken as one-off paper/s which the university refers to as a Postgraduate Certificate of Proficiency.

Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their thesis topic ideas with a potential supervisor from within the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Musculoskeletal Medicine before undertaking the research methods paper/s, to allow for development of the proposal as part of the research methods course.

### Research methods paper options

Examples of approved research methods papers are:

**PUBH 723 Survey Methods (15 points)**  
On-campus, taught in Christchurch.

**PUBH 724 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (15 points)**  
On-campus, taught in Christchurch.

**PUBH 711 Principles of Epidemiology (15 points)**  
On-campus, taught in Christchurch.

**PUBH 725 Applied Biostatistics 1: Fundamentals (15 points)**  
Distance-taught.

**NURS 415 Research Methods: Nursing (30 points)**  
Taught in on-campus blocks in Christchurch.

**PSME 406 Research Methods: Mental Health (30 points)**  
Taught in on-campus blocks in Christchurch.

**HASC 417 Health Sciences Research Methods (30 points)**  
Requires attendance at three residential workshops in Wellington.

**GENA 821 Research Methods in Primary Health Care**

### GRADUATE PROFILE



“As a physiotherapist based in Perth, Western Australia, I felt stuck in my profession. I had completed a previous master's qualification here in Western Australia but felt I lacked the confidence to manage patients with huge amounts of disability.

“I researched several postgraduate courses in pain management and came across Otago's Master of Health Sciences in Pain and Pain Management. Over the past few years enrolled in this course I have been exposed to many superb individuals, lecturers and fellow students. I have learned some amazing skills and knowledge, which has grown my confidence and led me to become a lot less stuck.

“This course was very flexible with all content being online and was an amazing learning experience. I now plan on continuing from my postgraduate diploma with the Master of Health Sciences qualification in the very near future.”

**Troy Gardiner**  
Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist  
Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences in  
Pain and Pain Management

# Paper details

## MSME 701 Clinical Diagnosis (15 points)

Normally offered in semester 1 each year

Consists of a nine-day on-campus course in Christchurch, New Zealand. Usually held in March each year. This paper is restricted to registered medical practitioners and is a prerequisite for paper MSME 709.

This paper focuses on clinical diagnosis and evaluation of patients with musculoskeletal pain and dysfunction. Emphasis is on learning musculoskeletal clinical examination and diagnostic skills, with an evidence-based approach to the use of manual skills and clinical tests.

## MSME 702 Musculoskeletal Tissues (15 points)

Offered semester 1 alternate years

An evaluation of the normal and abnormal structure and function of neuromusculoskeletal tissues. It includes the anatomy, histology, physiology and pathology of these tissues.

## MSME 703 Musculoskeletal Disorders (15 points)

Offered semester 2 alternate years

This paper covers clinical evaluation, assessment and management of a wide range of musculoskeletal disorders. It focuses on a clinical approach to musculoskeletal problems as they present in primary care.

## MSME 705 Regional Disorders – Spine (15 points)

Offered semester 1 alternate years

This paper focuses on the structure, function and assessment, as well as the dysfunction, disorders and diseases of the vertebral column and associated tissues.

## MSME 706 Regional Disorders – Limbs (15 points)

Offered semester 2 alternate years

This paper focuses on the structure, function, disorders and diseases of the limbs. It includes an overview of anatomy, biomechanics, pathology, clinical assessment and treatment options.

## MSME 707 Musculoskeletal Management (15 points)

Offered semester 1 alternate years

The paper provides a macro to micro view of musculoskeletal pain management. Students will discuss problems involved in defining, identifying and managing musculoskeletal pain and disability, using low back pain as the index condition.

## MSME 709 Clinical Therapeutics (15 points)

Normally offered in semester 2 each year

Consists of a seven-day on-campus course in Christchurch, New Zealand. Usually held in August each year. This paper is restricted to registered medical practitioners and the completion of paper MSME 701 is a prerequisite.

This paper is designed to follow on from paper MSME 701, and aims to teach postgraduate medical students specific practical clinical skills in the treatment of musculoskeletal disorders, including the assessment of efficacy according to the current evidence-based principles.

## MSME 710 Recreational and Sports Injuries (15 points)

Offered semester 1 alternate years

This paper focuses on the evaluation and management of musculoskeletal injuries and disorders associated with recreational and sporting pursuits. This includes the epidemiology, biomechanics and classification of sports injuries, and the principles of injury assessment, treatment and rehabilitation.

## PAIN 710 Introduction to Pain (15 points)

Offered semester 1 each year

An overview of the current understanding of pain as a multidimensional phenomenon, including pain concepts and history, the neuropathophysiology of peripheral and central pain mechanisms, pain measurement, and the psychological, social and economic aspects of both acute and chronic pain.

## PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management (15 points)

Offered semester 2 each year

This paper focuses on current understanding of the best-practice principles for the management and treatment of all forms of musculoskeletal pain, including modern multidimensional pain management.

## PAIN 712 Pain Assessment (15 points)

Offered semester 2 alternate years

The aim of this paper is for students to gain an appreciation of pain assessment methods and the necessary skills required to clinically assess patients with pain.

## PAIN 713 Pain Neurobiology (15 points)

Offered semester 1 alternate years

The aim of this paper is for students to learn the current understanding of the neuropathophysiology of pain, including the concepts of transduction and transmission, nerve physiology, pain modulation, central nervous system changes in pain states, and chronic regional and neuropathic pain states.

PAIN 710 Introduction to Pain is a prerequisite for this paper.

## PAIN 714 Biomedical Pain Management (15 points)

Offered semester 1 alternate years

The aim of this paper is for students to gain a thorough working knowledge of the structure, function, pharmacology and rational use of local anaesthetics; non steroidal anti-inflammatory agents, and primary and secondary analgesics; the pharmacological management of chronic regional and neuropathic pain states; the use of acupuncture and TENS; interventional pain diagnostics and therapy; and the use of surgical and neuromodulatory techniques in refractory and central pain states.

PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management is a prerequisite for this paper.

## PAIN 715 Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Pain (15 points)

Offered semester 2 alternate years

This paper extends concepts introduced in MSME 704 Introduction to Pain and MSME 708 Introduction to Pain Management. Students will participate in both self-directed and class activities designed to help them question their own assumptions about pain. The course includes topics such as changing attitudes towards pain relief; subcultures where pain is sought; gender and pain; and psychological concepts such as acceptance, catastrophising and coping in the context of goal pursuit.

PAIN 710 Introduction to Pain and PAIN 711 Introduction to Pain Management are prerequisites for this paper.

## STUDENT PROFILE



“This programme is designed for people currently working in a health field and so I can take what I learn and apply it the very next day in my clinic. Academic staff have a great mix of both clinical and research experience, so it makes it easier for students to translate new knowledge to clinical practice.

“My goal is to influence the massage therapy curriculum in New Zealand, to ensure that all new massage students are taught more thorough, up-to-date theories of pain science and how massage therapy can help people experiencing pain.

“My research will hopefully contribute to the small, but growing body of evidence here and internationally relating to massage therapy for pain management.”

### Rachel Ah Kit

Massage Therapist and Clinic Director  
Studying for a Master of Health Sciences  
in Pain and Pain Management

# Applying for entry

Early application is essential! Applications after these dates may mean enrolment will not be completed in time for entry to that semester.

Apply before 10 December for a semester 1 start.

Apply before 10 June for a semester 2 start.

Applications are completed online by following the "APPLY NOW" link on the webpage for the qualification you wish to take.

Returning students can apply for a new programme via their eVision student portal at [evision.otago.ac.nz](http://evision.otago.ac.nz)

All candidates need to:

- Apply online for and be admitted to a programme (qualification). The approval for this process is via an admissions committee.
- (Once you have been admitted to a programme) select papers for the current year via your eVision student portal.
- Be course approved for each paper you choose to enrol in.
- Complete the online declaration for each year of study via your eVision student portal.
- Pay fees – invoices are accessed from the student's eVision portal as they are not posted out.

## Important information

Prior to going online and applying, we recommend reading the following:

1. **Programme name** – This is the name of the qualification you wish to take, e.g. Postgraduate Diploma in Musculoskeletal Medicine. In the Health Sciences suite of qualifications there are also endorsements, e.g. Musculoskeletal Management or Pain and Pain Management. Please ensure that you have selected the appropriate endorsement.
2. **Papers** – If you are unsure about the pathway/papers you wish to take, please don't hesitate to contact the department to discuss this prior to formally applying.
3. **Documentation requested** – The online application system (eVision) will ask you to upload documents from your computer, so it is a good idea to save any required documents in pdf format before applying. If this is the first time you will be enrolling through

the University of Otago, you are likely to be asked for documents such as birth certificate, passport, marriage certificate and academic transcript/record from any other institutions attended. For postgraduate Health Sciences programmes, you will also be asked for a CV plus a copy of your current practising certificate.

4. **Credit** – If you are seeking approval for credit of postgraduate papers you will need to provide full details of the paper including points value, level, course outline, learning objectives and assessment.
5. **Emails and individual eVision student portal** – Once you have been accepted into a programme, eVision creates an individual portal for each student. The University will email you with a link to the portal if they require further information, documentation, etc., from you. It is important that you respond to any request promptly so that your enrolment is not delayed.
6. **Returning students** – If you are a returning Otago student, you need to know your university user name and password to be able to log in to eVision (the one you have been using for electronic library and Blackboard access). If you have forgotten either your username or password you can phone AskOtago on 0800 80 80 98, or from overseas +64 3 479 7000, for assistance.
7. **Research proposal (Health Sciences students only)** – During the semester before commencing a research project or thesis, candidates must submit a draft research proposal. Contact the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Musculoskeletal Medicine for further information on what is required.
8. **Pick your papers** – Don't forget to complete the "pick your papers" task after you have accepted the offer of a place in the programme, part of the online process.

If you have any problems with the online process or your eVision portal, please phone AskOtago 0800 80 80 98, or from overseas +64 3 479 7000, for assistance.

## English language proficiency

All graduates from a non-New Zealand university for whom English is not their first language are required to provide evidence of adequate proficiency in both spoken and written English.

This evidence will normally be a satisfactory pass in a standard examination in English language proficiency. Applicants must obtain this before they can be considered for entry to the postgraduate programmes outlined in this prospectus.

This process enables applicants to be aware of the level of proficiency needed to do this course, and allows staff to assess the suitability of students to undertake the course. The recommended examination is the academic module of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), for which we require a score of 6.5 in the academic module (with no individual band below 6.0).

For further information on language requirements, check out this website: [otago.ac.nz/international/postgraduate](http://otago.ac.nz/international/postgraduate)

## Fees

Fees must be paid by early February for semester 1 papers, and mid-July for semester 2 papers.

Tuition fees are generally not finalised until November of the year prior to taking effect. Once set, they can be found on the University's tuition fees website [otago.ac.nz/study/fees](http://otago.ac.nz/study/fees).

For fees relating to individual papers refer to this website: [otago.ac.nz/subjects](http://otago.ac.nz/subjects)

Alternatively, please contact

The Revenue Management Office  
University of Otago  
Tel 03 479 9006  
Email [student.finance@otago.ac.nz](mailto:student.finance@otago.ac.nz)

## Graduation

The University holds graduation ceremonies in Dunedin each year in May, August and December. Students who have completed the requirements for a postgraduate diploma or master's degree may attend these ceremonies.

Postgraduate certificates are awarded "in absentia" via these Dunedin graduation ceremonies, i.e. students receiving postgraduate certificates who cannot be presented with the certificate at a Dunedin graduation ceremony.

Information and applications for graduation are sent out to all finalists in early September. All students need to complete an application for the award of their qualification before it can be either presented to them or posted ("in absentia").

For information on the Dunedin graduation ceremonies including dates and how to make an application to graduate:

Email [graduation@otago.ac.nz](mailto:graduation@otago.ac.nz)

[otago.ac.nz/graduation](http://otago.ac.nz/graduation)

