



Graduate Diploma in Social Services (Career Practice) or (Health and Wellbeing Practice)



Domestic fee: \$7,784

International fee: \$24,650

Compulsory student levy >
StudyLink >

*Fees are approximate, subject to change and exchange rates

Location	Dunedin Campus
Duration	One year full-time; three years part-time
Delivery	On campus with fieldwork placements

Credits	120
Level	7
Start	February 2022
Apply	Until start date

Want to add a second specialty to your existing degree or further enhance your professional practice?

The demand for qualified individuals in the community services will remain strong as the world faces a growing and ageing population, and a general increase in social problems.

Our industry-relevant programme will give you the knowledge and training you need to specialise in Career Practice or Health and Wellbeing Practice – broadening your opportunities to work across the social services fields.

Through industry placements, you'll gain valuable real-world experience by working with people in a supervised setting - preparing you for entering the workforce. Plus, you'll build a network of contacts in your specialist area, great for future employment options!

You'll graduate with a high-level of self-awareness and the communication skills to engage a diverse range of people. You'll be able to provide professional practice within the community, demonstrate social responsibility and will meet the standards needed to be eligible for Applicant/Provisional Status with the Professional Association for your chosen specialty.

Career options are diverse and you'll be able to access opportunities within relevant fields both within New Zealand and overseas.

Choosing a specialty

Career Practice

Career opportunities include:

- > Government agencies
- > Youth organisations
- > Disability services
- > Liaison services

- > Schools
- > Human resources.

This specialty is a great choice if you're keen to help people understand what career would suit them best and to support people to realise their full potential through employment.

You'll explore things like career transition (people moving from one job to a very different one), career matching theories (how individuals have skills and attributes that 'match' them to a career) and supporting people with job search strategies. You'll also learn to apply career management theories in your third year as you develop your practice.

With guest speakers and case studies, you'll have plenty of chance to develop your ability to work with a diverse range of people and to understand how best to engage and support them. You'll discover how to use local and national networks, resources and organisations relevant to career practice, and will gain knowledge of the relevant legislation (e.g. Privacy Act, Employment Relations Act).

If you choose our Career Practice specialty, you'll have the chance to work as a Career Guide in the Otago Polytechnic Career Success Centre - set up to provide a career service to all students. You'll offer advice and assistance to students with the full support of our lecturing staff and professional career practitioners. Other placement opportunities include youth related work, community learning centres and volunteer organisations.

Health and Wellbeing Practice

Career opportunities include:

- > Mental Health Assistant
- > Support Work
- > Health Education and Promotion
- > Community Development Work
- > Non-Government Organisations
- > Mental Health/Disability Advocacy.

Organisations are increasingly offering strength-based services to their clients across both the mental health and disability fields. In addition, there has been a growth of generalist support roles in the health and wellbeing areas.

This specialty will ensure you develop a broad scope of practice in line with this contemporary approach to social service support provision, positioning you well to enter the workforce. It's underpinned by mental health and disability theories and models, which includes exploration of community-based approaches.

You'll learn how to use local and national networks, resources and organisations to provide referral pathways and will gain knowledge of the relevant legislation to work with people within health and wellbeing practice (e.g. Privacy Act, Health and Disability Act, Human Rights Act, Mental Health Act, and Children's Act).

You will study

You'll focus on gaining knowledge in your chosen area of specialisation and this will build on the concepts and knowledge you developed during your entry qualification. By undertaking a work placement, you'll gain real-world experience and build a great network of contacts for when you enter the workforce.

Career Practice courses

Course name	Description	Level	Credits
Contemporary Issues in Career Practice	Investigate and develop expertise in significant and challenging areas of contemporary career practice. Broaden your knowledge and helping strategies by examining key issues and their impact on career development.	6	15
Theory for Practice A (Career Practice)	Gain the knowledge and skills required to articulate a theoretical value base for your chosen specialty area, and select and apply models, tools and skills suitable for work in this area in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.	6	15

Integrated Practice A (Career Practice)	Develop the skills, knowledge and experience to become a reflective practitioner who is able to work in a way that is values based, safe, informed and intentional in providing support in your chosen specialty context.	6	15
Working as a Dual Practitioner	Integrate your theory and practice across your two professional domains. The first will be the specialty you have already undertaken and the second is the specialty you're focusing on now in the Graduate Diploma.	7	15
Theory for Practice B (Career Practice)	Further develop your understandings of the underpinning theories, research and models of practice relevant to health and wellbeing practice, career practice and counselling. Build on the skills and strategies which inform your practice and further develop a framework which supports safe professional practice.	7	30
Integrated Practice B (Career Practice)	Engage in further supervised practice with clients within community placements, and participate in individual, small group and peer supervision of your integrated practice. Demonstrate your application of theory into practice and your ability to meet the membership requirements of relevant professional bodies.	7	30

Health and Wellbeing Practice courses

Course name	Description	Level	Credits
Addictions, Substance Use and Co-Existing Problems*	Explore an overview of substance use 'addictions' and co-existing problems and develop useful and culturally appropriate responses for helping people address these problems.	6	15
	OR		
Negotiated Study*	Your chance to carry out research (investigation and evaluation of information) into a topic of interest in the field of social services.	6	15
Theory for Practice A (Health and Wellbeing Practice)	Gain the knowledge and skills required to articulate a theoretical value base for your chosen specialty area, and select and apply models, tools and skills suitable for work in this area in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.	6	15
Integrated Practice A (Health and Wellbeing Practice)	Develop the skills, knowledge and experience to become a reflective practitioner who is able to work in a way that is values based, safe, informed and intentional in providing support in your chosen specialty context.	6	15

Working as a Dual Practitioner	Integrate your theory and practice across your two professional domains. The first will be the specialty you have already undertaken and the second is the specialty you're focusing on now in the Graduate Diploma.	7	15
Theory for Practice B (Health and Wellbeing Practice)	Further develop your understandings of the underpinning theories, research and models of practice relevant to health and wellbeing practice, career practice and counselling. Build on the skills and strategies which inform your practice and further develop a framework which supports safe professional practice.	7	30
Integrated Practice B (Health and Wellbeing Practice)	Engage in further supervised practice with clients within community placements, and participate in individual, small group and peer supervision of your integrated practice. Demonstrate your application of theory into practice and your ability to meet the membership requirements of relevant professional bodies.	7	30

*If you have previously completed the *Addictions, Substance Use and Co-Existing Problems* course (or an equivalent), you'll complete the Level 6, 15-credit *Negotiated Study* course instead.

Entry requirements

You must have:

- > the Bachelor of Social Services or the Bachelor of Social Services (endorsed in Counselling or Career Practice), OR
- > an equivalent qualification, OR
- > be able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind.
- > If English is not your first language, you must provide:
 - > New Zealand University Entrance OR
 - > Overall Academic IELTS 6.5 with no individual band score lower than 6.5 (achieved in one test completed in the last two years), OR
 - > Acceptable alternative evidence of the required IELTS (see here for NZQA proficiency table and here for list of recognised proficiency tests).

If you need to improve your English Language skills, we offer a wide range of English programmes.

Being ready for study

If you have had experiences of trauma or abuse, mental health challenges or life events causing emotional harm, you may experience some emotional risk during this programme.

Otago Polytechnic have services available to support you in this situation. We'd recommend that you ensure you're ready for studying at this time and that you have your personal support network in place before beginning this programme.

Covid-19 vaccine

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it's highly recommended that you are vaccinated against Covid-19 if you want to apply for this programme.

All social services sector organisations engaging workers have obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to take all reasonable steps to eliminate, or otherwise control, the risk of Covid-19 transmission in the workplace.

The New Zealand Government has mandated the vaccine for frontline health care workers. Many of the social services providers we work with are requiring their staff, including any students on placement, to be vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination.

As more providers follow suit, if you are:

- > unvaccinated, or
- > choose not to disclose whether or not you are vaccinated, or
- > choose not to provide evidence if asked about your vaccination status

this will have an impact on placements that you can be allocated to and will have an impact on successful completion of the programme.

Completing your application

You can enter information and upload documents directly into the application form. You may wish to prepare some of the required documentation beforehand.

To begin your application, click the Apply button at the top of this page.

You will need to provide:

1. Academic records
2. A written statement (up to 600 words). In this, you'll need to briefly describe your reasons for wanting to work with people in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. You may wish to consider the following:
 - > your values
 - > previous experience of working with people, and
 - > life experience.
3. Your Curriculum Vitae
4. A mental health and substance history status.
5. Police vetting and declaration of any criminal convictions. (Applicants who have lived in countries other than New Zealand need to provide a Police Clearance from each country). Please note that some types of criminal conviction may limit the ability to secure placements for you and therefore will impact on your ability to complete the programme.
6. Contact details for two referees
7. Certified copies of proof of identity
8. Proof of residency (where appropriate).

During your programme

As you'll see above, during the application process you need to provide a mental health and substance history status, and declare any criminal convictions. During the time you are studying with us, it's also vital that:

- > you continue to let us know about any changes to your mental health status or substance status (if you don't do this, we may need to withdraw you from the programme), and
- > you declare any new or pending convictions (a conviction or failure to declare a conviction may result in you being withdrawn from the programme).

Selection process

Applications will be assessed when they're received, and you will be invited to attend an interview. Selection will be made on the basis of the applicant being able to demonstrate a reasonable likelihood of success in the programme.

If the number of applicants who meet the entry criteria exceed the number of places, we'll create a waitlist based on the date order of applications.

Your workload

This is a taught, in person programme and distance or online study options aren't available.

If you're learning with us full-time, you'll need to spend an average of 37.5 hours studying per week.

Part-time study options may be available. This is decided on a case-by-case basis. If you do study part-time, you can expect to spend an average of 18 hours studying per week and this may increase if it includes placement hours.

Further study options

You could increase your career prospects with postgraduate study at Waikato, Massey or Auckland universities.

Additional costs

Work placements form part of this programme and you'll need to budget for these. You'll be expected to pay for your travel expenses to and from your placement and any meals/accommodation.

Student loans and allowances

Student loans and allowances are for domestic students only. For information about student loans and allowances please visit the Studylink website. It is important to apply for your student loan/allowance at the same time as you apply for this programme, due to the length of time Studylink take to process.

Loan/allowance applications can be cancelled at any time if you decide to withdraw your programme application or if it is unsuccessful.

Disclaimer

While every effort is made to ensure that this sheet is accurate, Otago Polytechnic reserves the right to amend, alter or withdraw any of the contained information. The fees shown in this document are indicative ONLY. Both domestic and international fees are subject to change and are dependent on the development and implementation of Government policies. Please note that additional fees may from time to time be required for external examination, NZQA fees and/or additional material fees.

International **+64 3 477 3014**
New Zealand **0800 762 786**
Email **info@op.ac.nz**

Dunedin Campus
Forth Street, Dunedin
Private Bag 1910
New Zealand 9054

Central Otago Campus
Corner Erris & Ray Streets
PO Box 16, Cromwell
New Zealand 9342

Auckland Campus
Level 2, 350 Queen Street
PO Box 5268, Auckland
New Zealand 1141