New engaging and flexible postgraduate vocational courses

By Annette Katelaris

Sydney Medical School has a growing number of targeted vocational degrees and short courses tailored to the needs of health professionals, based on their specialty and stage of career.

Sydney Medical School is committed to providing high quality, evidence based education for medical practitioners and allied health professionals throughout their careers. We have the most extensive array of credentialed postgraduate courses in the country and our successful degrees in surgery, paediatrics, ophthalmology, pain medicine and HIV, STIs and Sexual Health continue to flourish. This year, we have launched some new highly desirable vocational degrees and short courses.

The new master degrees are in critical care (emergency medicine, anaesthetics, intensive care), metabolic health and psychiatry. These courses are available as graduate certificates, graduate diplomas and master degrees and many units of study are listed across different courses.

The new degrees have been specifically designed to meet the educational and vocational needs and preferences of students. All the units of study will be delivered through a combination of online and face-to-face teaching to allow students the flexibility to balance study with work and other commitments.

The online course content is supplemented with a combination of online discussion, webinar tutorials and intensive face-to-face sessions including simulations, mock vivas and workshops.

The core unit in the new master programs, Introduction to Clinical Epidemiology, provides our students with the knowledge required to understand and engage with clinical research and academic literature. We aim to produce graduates who are not only content experts in their area of interest but who also have highly developed critical thinking skills and a breadth of knowledge and understanding that will equip them for the challenges of clinical practice. There is an Advanced Master option for high performing students to undertake a supervised independent research project.

We are confident that these degrees will signal to employers that a candidate with this credential is committed to their chosen field and has the knowledge and skills that will enhance their clinical practice and their effectiveness in the workplace. In an increasingly competitive environment, this degree will provide a point of difference.

CRITICAL CARE

The critical care degree is unique in Australasia. It is designed and delivered by leading clinicians and academics from our Medical School and teaching hospitals in consultation with the Australian College Emergency Medicine, College of Intensive Care Medicine and the Australian New Zealand College Anaesthetics. The basic science units have been designed to assist candidates to successfully complete College primary examinations. There are options available to help the clinician broaden their skill base – such as units of study in retrieval medicine and pain management. Other units of study are aimed at diversifying skills and building competencies in non-technical skills such as communication, leadership and clinical teaching. For advanced trainees, completion of the degree will help fulfil requirements of the Colleges such as compulsory training in research skills.

“Students will develop knowledge and skills to make them critical and independent thinkers, able to lead their specialty in clinical practice, quality research and education. More than just a small step in specialty training, graduates will have taken a giant leap in shaping their future and that of their specialty.”

CRITICAL CARE COURSE COORDINATOR DR ROD BISHOP MBBS MPH (Hons) FACEM, Director of Nepean Hospital Emergency Department

DEGREES HAVE AN ARTICULATED STRUCTURE

- **GRADUATE CERTIFICATE**
  - 24 credit points
- **GRADUATE DIPLOMA**
  - 36 credit points
- **MASTER**
  - 48 credit points
- **ADVANCED MASTER**
  - 12 credit points
METABOLIC HEALTH

Our new course in metabolic health meets a growing need for clinical expertise in this area, given the increasing prevalence of diabetes and heart disease and the related complexity of therapy options. This degree focuses on evidence-based practical management of the all too common conditions of diabetes and pre-diabetes, obesity and metabolic cardiovascular disease.

Professor Stephen Twigg, Head of Department of Endocrinology at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, is course coordinator. Many of our academic and clinical leaders in metabolic health are contributing to this engaging course, which is largely case based with online tutorials and opportunities for extensive discussion and analysis. It is of broad appeal to medical practitioners working in primary care or hospitals (eg RMOs, BPTs), including those planning to specialise in endocrinology, as well as nurses, pharmacists and other allied health professionals interested in this field.

PSYCHIATRY

The new coursework in psychiatry is tailor-made for psychiatry trainees and has been accredited and approved by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists as meeting the requirements of their Formal Education Course for trainees. The course is aligned with the new competency – based fellowship program of the College.

The course is also of interest to psychiatrists who are keen to refresh their knowledge. It can be completed as an enrolled student or as a short course student (who is not required to complete the assessment tasks).

Associate Professor Louise Nash leads a teaching team from one of Australia’s prominent neuropsychiatric institutes, the Brain and Mind Research Institute together with experts from our Discipline of Psychiatry. This degree is taught face to face in small groups, facilitated by experts and supported by online technology for those unable to attend in person.

What’s new in 2016?

NEUROPHYSIOLOGY

Next year, we will be delivering coursework in neurophysiology monitoring, which will be tailored to anaesthetists and trainees as well as clinical scientists. This is the first time that formal postgraduate teaching in this field will be delivered and reflects the increasing importance of these clinical tools in patient care. Dr Adam Hastings, an anaesthetist with a strong interest in neurophysiological monitoring, is leading a diverse team of anaesthetists, neurologists and clinical scientists to develop the coursework.

BREAST SURGERY

For the first time in Australasia, and in collaboration with Breast Surgeons of Australia and New Zealand Inc, we are launching a vocational degree in breast oncology and oncoplastic surgery led by Clinical Associate Professors Andrew Spillane and Sanjay Warrier. This course is designed for those who are training or who have completed training in breast surgery and will provide a unique opportunity to develop knowledge in breast oncology and breast surgical and oncoplastic techniques.

SHORT COURSES

Medicine is a rapidly changing field and it is difficult for clinicians to keep up with their own area of interest, let alone other subspecialties. Our short courses provide a program of high quality continuing education to help you keep abreast with changes in practice and deepen your medical knowledge.

Some of these courses are drawn from our master courses and it is possible to undertake either a whole unit of study, or a component of some units of study as a short course. Courses are being delivered and developed throughout the year. Visit our web site to find out what is offered in our current program and to subscribe to our newsletter (sydney.edu.au/medicine).