

## Studying in Australia at the University of Sydney: Bachelor of Applied Science (Medical Radiation Sciences) Diagnostic Radiography

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The University of Sydney offers a range of undergraduate courses in the area of health sciences, including the Bachelor of Applied Science (MRS) Diagnostic Radiography. The degree prepares students for clinical practice as diagnostic radiographers, working in places such as emergency wards or private clinics. According to a medical practitioner's request, radiographers aim to work closely with radiologists to produce images with an accurate diagnosis.



In the first year of study, students will undertake 8 courses in total, most of which are foundational subjects. The academic year is divided into two semesters, and in each semester students study 4 courses. Semester 1 begins in early March, and the first year courses studied include: anatomy, human cell biology, medical radiation physics and preparation for radiographic practice. There is a one week midsemester holiday during each semester, (mid April in semester 1 and mid September in semester 2). There is also a period of one week each semester where no classes are held, called STUVAC (study vacation) and this occurs before the end of semester exams. In year 1, there is about 16~18 contact hours per week, when students attend lec-

tures, practical classes and tutorials. In semester 2, the courses undertaken include: introductory behavioural health sciences, anatomy, health physics and radiation biology, and radiographic practice. In this semester, students gain much more knowledge about patient positioning and the way an image is taken.



This degree is also heavily focused on practical skills and learning which occurs during the compulsory clinical education placements. During year 1, there is a one week clinical placement in the inter-semester holiday, which is aimed at allowing students to develop a familiarity with the real professional environment. Each student is allocated to a hospital or private practice where they may gain some work experience and mainly observe the use of various equipment such as mobile x-ray machines, MRI and CT scanners.

In the second year, the courses studied in semester 1 include: research methods, radiographic physics and radiographic practice. Due to the large amount of clinical placements in this year, there are less contact hours during each semester. There are 3 six week blocks of clinical placement, which take place during the holidays. Students may

be allocated to a different hospital or private practice for each block, and one block must be completed outside of Sydney. These clinical placements are an excellent opportunity for learning practical skills, and students are expected to take responsibility for their education by communicating their learning needs to the supervisor to ensure any learning objectives are achieved. Assessment usually takes the form of a student evaluation by the supervisor, and the completion of learning objectives. Assignments may take the form of case studies, essays, and verbal presentations. The courses studied in semester 2 include: integrated diagnosis and treatment, and radiographic practice.

Clinical education becomes less of a focus in the third year of study. Semester 1 subjects include: research in medical radiation sciences, radiographic practice, and introductory sonography. There is a final 6 week clinical placement in the inter-semester holiday. In semester 2, the courses studied include: digital imaging, ethics and law, radiographic physics and medical radiation theory applications.

On completing the degree, graduates will need to apply for a position in a hospital or private practice where the

main selection criteria is performance in an interview. An application must also be made to the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia. Students can begin working immediately in the year after graduation—commencing their Professional Development Year (PDY) and at the end of this year, graduates will be considered as fully qualified radiographers.

