EXCEPTIONAL HEALTH SCIENCE
TEACHING, RESEARCH AND CLINICAL SERVICE
ABOUT US

Established for more than 90 years, the Faculty of Health Sciences has long been regarded as one of most reputable institutions for health sciences education in sub-Saharan Africa.

Today the Faculty is ranked 77th in the world by the Times Higher Education World Subject Rankings, placing it in the top 100 internationally universities for clinical, preclinical and health subjects.

Our reputation is built on being a Faculty of firsts. Wits Medical School took in its first students in 1919 and it was the first in South Africa to train and graduate dentists. The Faculty established amongst the first entities of research in the country in HIV, TB and Malaria. It was the first to offer a Diploma in Nursing (tutors’ diploma, DipN) in 1937.

We value excellence. We attract the best students, each year receiving more than 25 000 applications for our coveted training. Our staff has international reputation. We currently have 84 National Research Foundation rated scientists of which eight are NRF A-rated scientists. Our more than 20 000 graduates are pioneers across the world, helping to improve health care services in diverse and unique ways.

Our responsibility to be relevant and responsive to the health needs of the communities we serve, and those of the country, remains our guiding light. With health sciences deeply embedded in the fabric of social justice in South Africa and on the African continent, our vision is to teach, practice and investigate health sciences to realise a healthy and wealthy society.
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OUR ORGANISATION

The Faculty of Health Sciences is composed of seven schools with a fully comprehensive offering, including:

School of Anatomical Sciences
The school was established as the Department of Anatomy in 1919 and is one of the oldest divisions of the university. The School currently comprises of three academic divisions, namely morphological anatomy, structural biology (histology), and biological anthropology.

School of Clinical Medicine
The school teaches the practice of clinical medicine through the subject areas such as surgery, radiology, emergency medicine, internal medicine and psychiatry.

School of Physiology
The School is the largest entity teaching physiology in South Africa, and probably on the continent. It plays a significant role in the training of physiologists; some of its graduates hold high-profile and prestigious appointments in South Africa and throughout the world.

School of Public Health
This multi-disciplinary school produces skilled public health practitioners appropriately trained to address the range of public health needs and challenges within South African and African settings.

School of Therapeutic Sciences
The school specialises in nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy studies and physiotherapy.

School of Oral Health Sciences
The Faculty of Dentistry was established in 1926 out of the Faculty of Medicine and was later amalgamated with the Faculty of Health Sciences in 1997. The old dental faculty is now the School of Oral Health Science, an equal partner with the other schools in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

School of Pathology
The School of Pathology’s mission is to provide excellence in pathology in the form of service, teaching and research.
The Faculty has an exceptional reputation for training and developing the world’s finest health sciences professionals. A comprehensive Faculty with 5800 students, the Faculty offers undergraduate degrees in dentistry, medicine, medical and health sciences, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and pharmacy. It also offers a graduate entry medical programme, Master’s degrees in science and medicine and a PhD programme.

Offering extensive teaching platforms to its students, the Faculty uses the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital, the Helen Joseph Hospital, and the Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital as its teaching hospitals. Additional 20 hospitals and clinics spread from the border of the Kruger Park, to Krugersdorp and beyond to Mafikeng extend our teaching platform to well over 6000 hospital beds. Added to this is a new Simulation Lab in our Medical School, and other school and unit based training facilities to ensure comprehensive exposure to clinical theory and practice.

The Faculty benefits from a uniquely dedicated academy with an academic equivalent of 500 individuals across Wits, the Province and various research entities. An additional 500 part time staff help to structure and supervise the teaching and learning experience of every student, with the intention of developing the best health science graduates possible.

Left: Professor Christopher Mathew, Distinguished Professor at the Sydney Brenner Institute for Molecular Bioscience
Bottom: (l) Professor Helen Rees, founder and executive director of the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute
(r) Adjunct Professor Ashraf Coovadia, Paediatrics & Child Health (Coronation Hospital), with medical students
The Faculty of Health Sciences is internationally recognised for its cutting edge research, which is conducted through 24 research entities of which four are recognised by the MRC.

These entities research across a wide range of health sciences disciplines including HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, health policy, and drug delivery, among others. The Faculty invested R1.5 million in research in 2016.

The Faculty has the 84 National Research Foundation (NRF) rated scientists in the Faculty, eight are A rated and 30 are B rated. In addition, eight of our researchers hold Department of Science and Technology (DST)/ NRF South African Research Initiative Chairs (SARChI) in their specific areas. The Faculty is home to the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Tuberculosis Research.

Our researchers publish in excess of 1000 papers annually and we are one of only two Health Sciences faculties in Africa to have been published extensively in high impact journals.

**RESEARCH INTENSIVE**

**Finding new treatments**

Our researchers have brought their considerable knowledge and experience to bear on the challenges of cancer, genetics, endocrinology and inherited high cholesterol to find new treatments, new drugs and new understanding.

Professor Frederick Raal, Director of the Carbohydrate and Lipid Metabolism Research Unit won the 2016 South African Medical Research Council Scientific Merit Award gold for his impact on health sciences in South Africa. He has dedicated his life to the study of familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH), inherited high cholesterol which affects hundreds of thousands of people in South Africa. Prof. Raal’s research into FH led the US Food and Drug Administration to approve medication in July 2015. Prof. Raal’s research has taken a virtually untreatable condition to one that can now be managed.

**Population health surveillance**

Exceptional work by the MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit (Agincourt) in the School of Public Health has brought new insight to population health, migration and poverty enabling hundreds of studies to be conducted, many of which have helped inform health policy in South Africa.

The Unit has built a Health and Socio-Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS), located in Mpumalanga close to the Mozambique border, monitoring a rural population of approximately 200 000 people. Research data from this HDSS provides the foundation data for the Medical Research Council (MRC), and University of the Witwatersrand, the International Network for the Demographic Evaluation of Populations and Their Health (INDEPTH).

Most recently the research unit was named as a research infrastructure partner to the Department of Science and Technology, receiving a grant of R99 million over a three year period, to build a national research infrastructure and improve the science-based information systems for South Africa.

**Tackling infectious disease**

Establishing the first centres of research in the country in HIV, TB and Malaria, the Faculty has gained a significant reputation for its impact in the infectious diseases. Our researchers have made a major contributor to SA’s HIV and TB research, so much so that they have helped change the course of these diseases in South Africa.

Professor Helen Rees, founder and executive director of the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute – the University’s largest research entity, is an internationally renowned expert in HIV prevention, reproductive health and vaccines. The Institute is a World Health Organization and UNAIDS Collaborating Centre in reproductive health and HIV respectively, and a South African Medical Research Council Collaborating Centre in HIV and TB. The research conducted there and its global reputation has attracted significant financial and intellectual investment in this field, including phenomenal investment in postgraduate and postdoctoral research. In 2001 Prof. Rees was awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) for her contribution to global health. She currently leads the development of Wits University’s flagship Centre for Vaccinology together with Professor Shabir Madhi and other senior Wits University scientists.
Wits Health Consortium

Wits Health Consortium was formed in 1998 to harness and stimulate the commercial potential within Faculty, and in particular to capitalise on clinical research. The flexible manner in which WHC is structured encourages academics to operate their entities along entrepreneurial lines with strong investigator ownership.

In addition to significant revenues generated to run trials, WHC has also been the fertile breeding ground for many initiatives. The most notable being the formation of the Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre which was incubated within WHC and eventually established as its own entity.

Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre

The Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre was established in 2002 and is the only private academic hospital in South Africa. The hospital was established to create a facility to train and retain specialists and sub-specialists in South Africa for South Africa. Not only does this 200 bed hospital run at maximum capacity operationally, it has established itself as a referral centre for complex surgery in the fields of Hepatobiliary, colorectal surgery, Oncology, and vascular surgery in particular. The first private Liver Transplant Unit was established in 2004, which hosts the largest Solid Organ Transplant Programme in the country.

TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE

The Faculty is a leader in developing platforms for enhanced research and training. Our platforms extend knowledge and exposure and ultimately provide our students and researchers with a competitive edge. The flagship examples are:
INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

To be relevant and responsive to the health needs of the communities we serve we have driven innovation and collaboration across the healthcare sector.

We have devised new approaches to the curriculum and partnered with government to bring these to life. Our Graduate Entry Medical Programme (GEMP), allows suitably qualified candidates the opportunity to complete their undergraduate medical studies in a period of only four years after which they enter their internship and government mandated community service period. Our Bachelor of Health Science degree, introduced in 2005 is enabling access to a range of health related fields beyond medicine.

Through our Rural Health Unit, Department of Family Medicine, in association with the National Department of Health and North West and Gauteng Department of Health, we have rolled out the Bachelor of Clinical Medical Practice (BCMP), a three year programme for the qualification of Clinical Associate.

To ensure we give our students the best hands on clinical exposure, we partnered with the Gauteng Department of Health, to employ over 800 medical and dental consultants who are responsible for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research supervision.

To help to grow and develop Faculty members as educators, we established the Centre for Health Science Education. It’s enabled us to develop teaching expertise among faculty, enhancing our lecturers’ capabilities to leverage the best from their students.

Our industry partnerships extend across 750 formal associations in the healthcare sector. We are deeply committed to help grow South African and African academic institutions.

In subject areas like research informatics we led the hosting and support the Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap) system for Africa. Enabling researchers and administrators to easily create their own web-based data capture tools and make data driven research possible. Collaborating with the likes of Vanderbilt University, IBM, Right-to-Care and the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) we intend to build capacity leadership in these areas.

In clinical informatics we have developed electronic patient information systems being used by the Department of Surgery at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic, Helen Joseph and Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospitals, as well as by the Departments of Orthopaedic Surgery and Ophthalmology at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital today.

In clinical governance we intend to fill a critical gap in sound clinical governance in healthcare systems. We introduced the Clinical Governance Initiative in 2015 based on an interdisciplinary approach, which actively seeks to bring together the relevant expertise, skills and experience to build an African platform for the research and teaching of clinical governance.

And in our multi-disciplinary 21st Century Research Institute – the Sydney Brenner Institute for Molecular Bioscience – we envisage to becoming a leader in biomedical research on the African continent. The research institute provides a platform for relevant research into non-communicable diseases and is building capacity through access to state-of-the-art technical platforms.
We have a strong public health care focus and work in partnership with the national and provincial healthcare departments and ministries. Through our partnership with the Gauteng Health Department, we employ over 800 medical and dental consultants who are involved in teaching undergraduates and postgraduates, and in the research programmes. Approximately 500 students graduate in these professions each year.

We collaborate with the communities in which we practice, looking to find ways to extend and expand health care services to communities across South Africa. Through the Rural Health Unit, Department of Family Medicine, in association with the National Department of Health and North West and Gauteng Department of Health, we have rolled out the Bachelor of Clinical Medical Practice (BCMP), a three year programme for the qualification of Clinical Associate. Teaching occurs mainly at district hospitals, by family practitioners who integrate theory and practice to ensure students acquire the necessary hands-on skills they need to perform clinical procedures.

Our industry partnerships extend across 750 formal associations in the healthcare sector. We are deeply committed to help grow South African and African academic institutions.

In South Africa and the on the African continent in particular, the health sciences are deeply embedded in the fabric of social justice. With every effort we make to contribute to a healthy society we believe ultimately we contribute to wellbeing of a nation and humanity.

Acknowledging our role in the training of health professionals, in furthering knowledge through research, and being relevant and responsive to the health needs of the communities we serve we have built strong collaborations with industry and government.

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