

ALEXANDER HICKS

BACHELOR OF MEDICAL IMAGING

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Senior School Subjects

- Year 10: Pre-Methods Mathematics, Our Physical and Material World
- Year 11: English, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematical Methods, History, Religion and Society.
- Year 12: English, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematical Methods, Psychology.

Why did you choose these subjects? While carefully selecting my subjects back in the early days of Year 10 I wasn't ultimately sure about where I wanted to go with my life, so I stuck to what I was purely passionate about. Science. From those earlier choices through my Year 12 experience, science was my guiding force and brought me to Medical Imaging, what I study today. The choice to take History in Year 11 was brought from a desperate curiousness of modern history, especially in that of the many wars of the time and the technology that was developed rapidly as a result.

What resources did you use to choose subjects? I crafted my subject choices from a wide range of sources. However, the major sources of inspiration for my choices came from three people. Kevin Tyndall, my LM while I attended Catholic College Wodonga deserves credit for his support in helping me choose most of the sciences that I pursued. Secondly, it's difficult to choose Year 11 and 12 classes without knowledge of what interests you in the wide world of jobs. Sandie McKoy, the careers advisor at CCW was instrumental in creating the connections to contacts at Deakin University and directing me toward Medical Imaging. My mother, Kim, was the greatest source of support in my choice of a medical career. After hearing about her stories of amazing theatre cases and abstract surgeries, I knew that something in the field of Allied Health was something I wanted to study.

Which subjects have helped you most with understanding your course content at university and how? Methods, Chemistry and Physics have been excellent tools in the calculations for the physics of an X-Ray tube. The basic anatomy I learned from Psychology was excellent for my learning of the anatomy within the skull. The only decision I do regret was not taking Biology. The knowledge of cellular mechanics is taught in full in the first few months of Medical Imaging, however prior knowledge makes the harder details easier to learn.

Why did you choose to study Medical Imaging? Medical Imaging really was a complex choice for a course. My love for the imaging grew from when my youngest brother Paul had fractured his right arm in a fall back when we were much younger. Looking at the images then, I was infatuated with the complex nature of positioning and clinical judgement required to take the wide variety of X-Ray images, CT scans and other types of images (Of which there are plenty of modalities).

I took plenty of science-based classes in my year 12 journey, namely; Core English, Mathematical Methods, Chemistry, Physics and Psychology. I had always had my eye on a science based career as many of my friends and family knew. The list of reasons to choose and pursue what I have chosen are nearly infinite, but it ultimately comes down to dedication and a range of amazing teachers, friends and family who have provided me with everything I needed to succeed!

What is a day in the life of a student radiographer like? Most days come with at least one hour of anatomy study and another hour of clinical study revision. I have three main contact days that totals no more than 16 hours per week. Monday's are the most intense day of each week with 2x2 hour lectures for both Anatomy and Clinical Studies. In the first semester of the course, there is also an extra 1 hour lecture for Radiation Physics. Included with the 7 hours of lectures, you also take part of a Problem Based Learning scenario (One hour) where a legitimate clinical case is presented to the group. Your task each week with a new case is to go through it, observe the images and assess the clinical judgement decisions made by the student radiographer in the case. These cases are designed to push students to make effective clinical decisions with plentiful considerations. It is expected that a Medical Imaging studies for a minimum of 20 hours a week.

What is your course like? The course is phenomenal! The technologies in the clinical practice laboratories are state of the art! Deakin has provided a place where I can use the newest of Digital Imaging technology where I can expose a patient to X-Rays and have the image appear on my screen in less than a second. Or we can use the older Computed Imaging technology that would be employed by regional imaging centres where the imaging is slower and requires a longer processing time. Meanwhile in the anatomical practice laboratories we can work with the hundreds of different anatomical models, including the cadaveric specimens to understand and comprehend the complexities of every part of the human body. As I approach the end of the first year, I have learned the gross anatomy and how to perform correct X-Ray imaging of nearly every aspect of the human body! By the end of the second year I am expected to be able to name every fold of the brain, while being able to look at a diseased brain and can identify the impairment that would be caused. For example, looking at a brain that has frontotemporal dementia and being able to identify what aspects of the individual would be impaired.

What are some of the highlights of your course so far? This list is extensive, as everyone who has attended university will know. But to bring my favourite moments into perspective. Leaving home and truly discovering my independence was one of the most enlightening and fulfilling tasks I have ever performed. Living in the student residences among a vast range of people with different ambitions and dreams that are brimming with diversity and new experiences was challenging and enjoyable. Using the faith that I have discovered within myself from Catholic College Wodonga, I have been a very active member of the Red Frogs Deakin University Team. The spiritual inclusion that this has brought me has really redefined my values and created friendships I never expected to have. But ultimately, the best highlights are the same, coming home again. Returning to CCW and coming to see family and old friends really provides me with a sense of euphoria and love for what brought me up to what I have achieved to this day. Being able to respect and thank every person who has shaped me into who I am now. No singular award or gratification could ever come close to the love and support for everyone who has helped me get to where I am today.

What is the best piece of advice you've received about following your career goals? Before I began university, my mother told me something I would never forget. "This place is what YOU make of it, for every mistake YOU make, YOU are paying for it for a decent part of your life. Thus, you go hard because there is no two ways about this. This is your life now, it's up to you to pursue what you love. Family has guided you this far, now it's on you to take that and go even further."

Once you complete your degree, what would be your dream job in Medical Imaging? Once I finish Medical Imaging at Deakin, I am determined to learn as much as I can about each modality of imaging. I want to take that information and apply it at every workplace I encounter. Medical Imaging techniques and technologies evolve every day, to only way for me to truly be successful at what I do is to always continue to learn and adapt my technique. That alone is what draws me so heavily to Medical Imaging, my love of always learning something new and being able to apply it to make a patient's day infinitely better is what I strive for with every image.

Course information: Bachelor of Medical Imaging, Deakin University, <http://bit.ly/2bH6CTJ>