

HAYLEY MAGGS

BIOMEDICINE/MEDICAL RADIATION SCIENCE

MONASH UNIVERSITY



Senior School Subjects

- Year 11: Literature, Biology Units 3 + 4 Early Advancement, Chemistry, Mathematical Methods, Religion
- Year 12: Literature, Mathematical Methods, Physics, Chemistry.

Why did you choose these subjects? I always enjoyed science and learning about how/why things work the way they do. I also knew I wanted to do something in health so I chose subjects that would 'cover all bases' when it came to applying to university.

What resources did you use to choose subjects? I basically chose what I liked doing and what I was good at. I did talk to teachers (especially when deciding to advance Biology) to make sure I would be up for the challenge. My parents also encouraged me to do what I liked.

What was your course like? Most people think that in doing Radiation Therapy, I have something to do with chemotherapy or radiography. Radiation therapy utilises high energy X-rays to target cancer cells, while sparing healthy tissue. It is a highly technical profession, requiring excellent problem solving skills. It combines a technical background with patient care, which is something that I love and is very rewarding. I have lost count of the number of boxes of chocolates I have received from patients, even as a student!

There are two areas of radiation therapy- planning and treatment. Planning is the more technical side of the job where you are required to analyse the patients scans to decide the best method of attack. It is basically a problem-solving task requiring you to determine the best way to get the radiation in while saving all the healthy tissue and organs. Treatment is more patient focused and you get to play with multi-million dollar machines.

I found my undergraduate degree really interesting and exciting. I was given the opportunity to learn from highly experienced and well regarded scientists, both during lectures and even working alongside some of them in the Lab. University is definitely very different from high school and you have a lot more freedom to discover what interests you and to try lots of different things. The workload was challenging but not unmanageable, you are really pushed to do your best.

Monash was good for finding out what really interests you. They require you to undertake subjects from all the different streams of science to help you work out what you enjoy most. My Masters degree was a whole other level of challenging. This was an accelerated degree (basically squashing 4 years of study into 2) and required you to study and work full time as an intern. However I found that I really loved the work I was doing and that pushed me to work harder and smarter allowing me to graduate with a distinction average and a full time job at the end in a very competitive market.

What did you love about your courses? I really liked the flexibility of my Science degree. I wasn't really 100% sure of what I wanted to do after high school, but knew I wanted something to do in health. So I was able to work out which things I liked learning about and doing, and tailor my degree to that. I also really enjoyed the hands on labs, they were always fun and were sometimes challenging (especially dissecting animals!). My Masters degree was great as it got you out into the work place from day one so you really found out quickly if you were going to like to job or not and also gave you a true representation of what that career would really be like day to day.

How did the subjects at school prepare you for your course? I found the subjects at school gave me a really good foundation to build upon. They also ensured that I knew what I was getting in to when it came to choosing subjects for university. I already had some idea of what I liked and it definitely helped me narrow down my choices

Course information: Best pathway - Bachelor of Health Sciences (Radiation Sciences), Monash University, <http://bit.ly/29RdjS2>