



Faculty of Health Sciences

FACULTY FACT SHEET



ON GOOD AUTHORITY



Message from the executive dean, Prof. Awie Kotzé

Our faculty operates across the three campuses of the NWU and is brimming with energy and enthusiasm. Our staff members are looking forward to welcoming you in our midst. If you are interested in shaping healthcare and transforming communities, an inspiring future awaits you in this faculty.

In our faculty, we strive to maintain a culture of care and inclusion, where we consider and respect the needs of others. This becomes visible through our multidisciplinary academic programmes, impactful research, strong community engagement and unique synergy with sport science.

When you graduate from the Faculty of Health Sciences, you will be equipped with workplace-ready knowledge and skills to make a positive difference in society.



THIS IS US

The future of healthcare, today

The Faculty of Health Sciences was established in 1989 and is the youngest faculty in the NWU family. Since its inception, it has grown into one of the largest of its kind in the country. With a distinct focus on holistic, innovative and multidisciplinary teaching, the faculty adheres to the standards set by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and trains health professionals who promote good health, overall well-being and health innovation.

The faculty comprises five academic schools that offer diverse undergraduate programmes, postgraduate study and research in several specialised fields in the health sciences sphere.

Faculty facts

In their 2025 edition of the Global 2000 list, the Center for World University Rankings placed the NWU in the top 4,1% of universities.

- Several members of the faculty are affiliated with acclaimed organisations and associations such as the Academy of Science in South Africa, the National Health Research Ethics Council, the National Health Research Committee, the International Organisation of Women in Science, the International Society of Hypertension, the Africa Nutrition Leadership Programme and the South African Association of Health Educationalists.
- Olympic athlete and gold medallist Caster Semenya is a proud graduate of the faculty.

- Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus was awarded an honorary doctorate in Coaching Science in the faculty in 2024. This award served as recognition for his leadership in the 2019 and 2023 Rugby World Cup victories, promotion of diversity, inclusion and social responsibility in rugby and elevation of South Africa's global standing in sports leadership.
- Academic expertise in the faculty supports the NWU Eagles sports teams in rugby, football, netball and other sports through conditioning, injury prevention and performance analysis.
- Jo-Ané du Plessis (née van Dyk), who won the silver medal in the women's javelin throw at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, is a proud BSc Dietetics graduate.
- Some of the colleagues at Nutrition are the dietitians for elite athletes and sports teams such as the Dragon's cricket team and the Para-Olympic team.
- The Minister of Health has appointed two of the faculty's experts as members of the National Health Research Committee to identify priorities and offer input into health research.
- The World Health Organization appointed a faculty expert as a member of the Africa Regional Curriculum Development Advisory Group, contributing expertise in the education of health professionals and interprofessional training.



Our faculty in numbers

(Staff and student figures as on 1 April 2026)



Undergraduate students:
5 907



Postgraduate students:
982



International students:
157



NRF-rated researchers:
59



Academic staff:
373



Support staff:
522



SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMMES

The faculty consists of five schools:

- School of Human Movement Sciences
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Applied Health Sciences
- School of Psychosocial Health
- School of Nursing

[Click here to see which undergraduate programmes we offer](#)

[Click here for our postgraduate diploma programmes](#)

[Click here for our M and PhD programmes](#)



NWU Desmond Tutu School of Medicine

The Desmond Tutu School of Medicine (opening in 2028) will become the 11th medical school in South Africa and will particularly focus on training doctors for rural and underserved communities in the following distinct areas:

- A six-year undergraduate MBChB degree with an integrated, spiral curriculum, divided into three phases, namely the foundational phase (0 to 18 months), in which students have patient contact from Year 1 in communities and primary healthcare clinics; the intermediate phase (18 to 36 months), with clinical rotations in clinics and a regional hospital; and the clinical phases (36 to 72 months), with clinical rotations in the Klerksdorp/Tshepong Tertiary Hospital Complex, as well as the distributed training platform throughout North West.
- Clinical specialities and subspecialities that align with the capacity of the clinical training platform, including the development of various MMed programmes.
- Medical research and medical education research.
- Special projects.

School of Human Movement Sciences

Sports coaching and human movement science is an integrated discipline aimed at applying the most recent scientific knowledge to empower athletes to access their full performance potential. This qualification equips the student with a sound understanding of the anatomical principles and structures of the human body, and the programme is offered on the Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses.

Recreation science covers the study of leisure performance of individuals and communities to identify needs and create opportunities for

participation in recreation as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Biokinetics is a profession that strives to improve physical functioning and healthcare through exercise. As a profession, biokinetics is concerned with promoting good health, maintaining physical abilities and enabling final-phase rehabilitation activities.

Kinderkinetics is the profession that attempts to optimise the neuro-motor development of young children (0 to 13 years) through scientifically based physical activity. Kinderkinetics is a full-time postgraduate area of specialisation, based on a selection process, with the training focusing on in-depth knowledge of the developing child's growth, perceptual-motor and physical development, the enhancement and correction thereof, with the optimal well-being of the child as end goal.

The **Diploma in Coaching Science** aims to provide a vocational and practice-orientated career path in the science of the coaching of different sports. With rugby and soccer as the main subject fields,



this qualification equips the student with detailed knowledge and understanding of the coaching process and methodology, as well as the rules of specific sports disciplines.

School of Pharmacy

A young, qualified pharmacist contributes significantly to public health and has a wide choice of career possibilities in various sectors, depending on their own preference.

School of Applied Health Sciences

Physiology and biochemistry study the functioning of the human body, and the chemical processes involved.

The combination of **physiology and psychology** provides students with a holistic understanding of human development, the functions of the brain and body, and the interaction between body, mind, emotions and behaviour.

Occupational hygiene is the discipline of anticipating, recognising, evaluating and controlling health risks in the working environment. The objective is to protect workers' health and well-being while safeguarding the community against general health risks.

Dietitians use their skills and knowledge of nutrition to modify the diets of individuals and groups to treat medical conditions or educate the general public on healthy eating habits to prevent lifestyle diseases such as obesity, hypertension and diabetes.

Consumer scientists promote consumer well-being by creating sustainable associations between consumers and their unique environments. They do this by monitoring and analysing consumer trends and behaviours that are then used in designing, manufacturing and selling various consumer products.

School of Psychosocial Health

Social work is a helping profession that aims to meet the basic and complex needs of all people, with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty. Social work students are trained to enhance the well-being of individuals, families and communities by advocating for social justice, providing counselling and connecting people with resources and interventions that contribute to the socio-economic development of South African society.

Psychology is the study of human functioning and how it is affected by biological aspects and the environment. It examines cognitive, emotional and motivational processes, normal human and personality development, psychological pathology and optimum human functioning.

School of Nursing

Nursing is a healthcare profession that combines compassion, science and care to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities. This profession is essential in the promotion of health, the prevention and treatment of diseases and conditions, supporting recovery from illness, and dignified palliative care for terminally ill patients.



RESEARCH

Research chair

- DSI/NRF Albertina Sisulu Research Chair in Nursing Science (SARCHI)

Research entities

- Centre of Excellence for Nutrition (CEN)
- Centre of Excellence for Pharmaceutical Sciences (PharmacEn)
- Centre of Excellence: Hypertension in Africa Research Team (HART)
- Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR)
- Community Psychosocial Research (Compres)
- Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation (PhASRec)
- Quality in Nursing and Midwifery (NuMiQ)
- Lifestyle Diseases
- Medicine Usage in South Africa (MUSA)
- Occupational Hygiene and Health Research Initiative (OHHRI)

Hosted entities, platforms and institutes

- DSI/NWU Preclinical Drug Development Platform (PCDDP)
- Medical Research Council Extramural Unit for Hypertension and Cardiovascular Disease

Specialised centres

- Centre for Health and Human Performance (CHHP)
- Centre for Health Professions Education (CHPE)
- Centre for Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Service (CPBS)



APPLICATIONS

Admission requirements

The Faculty of Health Sciences has 11 different sets of admission requirements for various diploma and degree courses. [Click here](#) to download detailed information.

How do I apply?

Please refer to our [website](#) for online applications.

Money matters

For a wide range of bursaries and financial support, please contact 018 299 2672 or visit our [website](#).

We want to hear from you

For more information, email healthsciences@nwu.ac.za or visit our [webpage](#).

