



***Graduate Diploma of  
Mental Health Sciences  
Infant and Parent Mental Health***

***Master of Health Sciences  
Infant and Parent Mental Health***

***Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences***

## ***Outline***

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These courses are aimed at health care professionals working in the infant mental health field, who wish to develop their understanding and clinical skills in working with infants and parents or who are interested in 'participating in service development, delivery and evaluation. Both courses focus primarily on the baby and the infant/parent relationships and provide training in skilled assessment and intervention with families which can greatly assist the capacity of parents to facilitate their child's development. Infant and Parent Mental Health therefore is able to play a major role in the prevention of serious psychiatric disability.

The courses have been developed out of clinical teaching work of the Infant Mental Health Group at the Royal Children's Hospital and draws on the disciplines of psychiatry, developmental psychology and psychoanalysis for its theoretical basis.

The Diploma provides theoretical and observational foundations for beginning to work with infant mental health problems. The Masters course aims to provide a thorough knowledge of the principles and practice of infant mental health and equip students to directly apply the knowledge and skills gained to intervene effectively with infants and families presenting with infant mental health problems.

## ***Graduate Diploma of Mental Health Sciences***

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The course will involve three seminars conducted one afternoon per week over the academic year with additional time required for field work such that the time required for the course will be at least six hours per week.

### ***Subject Outline***

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#### ***Infant Observation – Practice & Theory***

Students will follow either the development of one infant by, weekly observation during the course of the year, or carry out a series of observations on infants in settings such as day care centres, neonatal nurseries or hospital wards.

Students will develop observation skills which are fundamental to all therapeutic work and will gain an appreciation of their own responses and how to use these in work with infants and their families.

The weekly seminar will develop this understanding and the skills of observing and will provide a forum to discuss the literature on infant observation and the applications of this method.

#### ***Infancy: Infant Parent Relationship and Family and Social Context***

Students will become familiar with the theoretical foundations for understanding all aspects of the infant's development and infant/parent relationships. Theories of child rearing including cultural aspects, how family and social context impinge upon the infant's development, and some common problems of early infancy will be examined.

Methodologies with which infants have been observed and studied will be examined and students will become familiar with key psychoanalytic and psychodynamic concepts and models for understanding the infant and family experience.

Students will be introduced to the techniques used in communicating with and assessing infants and examine some of the therapeutic results of such intervention.

## ***Master of Health Sciences***

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The stream will be offered on a two year part-time basis and will require the completion of seven course work subjects (each of which will have a written assessment of between 1,500 - 3,000 words) and a research project of 12-15,000 words.

The course will be conducted one afternoon per week over the academic year such that the time required for the course will be at least four hours per week.

### ***Course Outline***

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#### **Year 1**

- Clinical Seminar 1
- Psychopathology 1
- Infant Mental ,  
Health Practice 1
- Research Methods

#### **Year 2**

- Clinical Seminar 2
- Psychopathology 2
- Infant Mental  
Health Practice 2
- Research Projects

#### ***Clinical Seminar:***

Students will present their own clinical work in the seminar groups in order to develop appropriate interview, assessment and therapeutic skills, including skills in direct work with infants.

#### ***Psychopathology:***

This subject will focus on the clinical features, aetiology, epidemiology, severity and prognosis of regulatory disorders, psychosomatic illness, attachment and interactional problems, reactive disorders, parental psychopathology and infant mental health problems where infants have medical and surgical illness, developmental disorders or have suffered trauma or neglect and abuse.

#### ***Infant Mental Health Practice:***

This subject focuses on the clinical and theoretical knowledge base for infant mental health practice including principles and practices of assessment and diagnosis, models of infant parent psychotherapy, treatment planning, therapeutic consultations, prevention and early intervention, consultation liaison, social policy and public health implications.

#### ***Research Methods and Project:***

This subject will equip students to utilise and contribute to research in the infant mental health field, identify research needs and formulate research questions, and be able to select research strategies to appropriately answer research questions.

Students will be expected to research and write a research project of 12 - 15,000 words on a topic pertinent to infant mental health practice.

### ***Admission Criteria***

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Students for the Diploma will be selected from applicants with degrees or equivalent training in medicine, psychiatry, psychology, nursing, social work, speech pathology or other related health disciplines. Applicants would normally expect to have at least two years clinical experience, and should be currently working or anticipate working with babies, toddlers and their families.

Students undertaking the Master of Health Sciences (Infant and Parent Mental Health) will normally require an Honours pass in the Graduate Diploma Mental Health Sciences (Infant and Parent Mental Health) or an equivalent

qualification. Students will need to be currently working with infants and their families and have demonstrated an appropriate level of clinical competence and expertise.

## ***Course Fees***

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Course Fees are payable for these courses. Further detailed information about fees and part-fee remission and other bursaries is available on application.

## ***Teaching Faculty***

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The teaching faculty will be drawn from the staff of the Infant Mental Health Group, Royal Children's Hospital and other clinical infant and parent mental health programmes.

Course Coordinator: Associate Professor Campbell Paul

Subject Coordinators: Frances Thomson-Salo  
Dr. Brigid Jordan

## ***Further Information***

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Application form and further information regarding this course is available from:

Assoc Prof Campbell Paul or Dr. Brigid Jordan  
Royal Children's Hospital Mental Health Service  
Flemington Road  
Parkville, Vic 3052

Phone: (03) 9345 5511

Fax: (03) 9345 6002

Email: [campbell.paul@rch.org.au](mailto:campbell.paul@rch.org.au)

or

School of Medicine  
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences  
The University of Melbourne  
Parkville, Vic 3052  
Phone: (03) 9344 5998  
Email: [enquiries@medicine.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:enquiries@medicine.unimelb.edu.au)

Applications forms must be submitted by the last Friday in October. Late applications may be considered if places are available.

*This information in this brochure was correct at the time of printing.  
The University reserves the right to make changes as appropriate.*

*Printed December, 2003*