



NEWS RELEASE

UP sends out nearly 300 newly qualified doctors to make a transformative impact in healthcare and the lives of communities



Students pledge to uphold their professional responsibilities in their service to the community.

Making an impact within the South African health system, characterised by systemic challenges such as staff shortages, disparities in skill sets between rural and urban areas, and widespread inefficiencies leading to suboptimal care levels and patient management issues, is both a calling and a passionate endeavour to change people's lives.

This mindset and attitude was exemplified by nearly 300 students from the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria (UP) who recently pledged their commitment during a joint Declaration Ceremony for the School of Medicine held at the Aula on the Hatfield Campus.

“You are not just becoming doctors; you are becoming guardians of health, advocates for those in need, and beacons of hope for those facing the darkness of illness,” said the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor Tiaan de Jager, looking at the newly qualified medical doctors accompanied by a crowd of proud parents, guardians, friends and members of the academic fraternity.

“In choosing the path of medicine, you have chosen a noble calling,” Prof De Jager said. “It is a calling that requires not only intellect and skill but also empathy, compassion and a profound understanding of the human condition. So, graduandi, what you have learned while studying here at UP puts you at the forefront of your discipline and at the frontiers of practice. Your skills are increasingly, and critically, needed in our own society and across the continent. Please make a difference.”

A declaration ceremony is an opportunity for final-year students to celebrate the successful completion of their degrees and achievement of distinctions, ahead of the formal graduation ceremony. During the ceremony, they pledge to uphold their professional responsibilities in their service to the community, and each student who has achieved the degree with distinction or merit is acknowledged, and students are awarded prizes in various subjects.

“As we gather here today for our Declaration Ceremony, let us remember the immense responsibility that comes with it,” Walther Ross, student representative and recipient of a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery degree, said. “We are not only graduates of a prestigious institution but future leaders, caretakers and advocates for the well-being of others. Education from UP has quipped us with the knowledge and skills to make a profound impact on the world, and I have every confidence that we will do so with passion and excellence.”

On 1 December 2023, newly minted dentists and oral hygienists made a solemn commitment to uphold the principles of their profession, pledging to practice with honesty and integrity. Professor Londiwe Shangase, Chairperson of the School of Dentistry, led the ceremony.

On 9 December 2023, newly qualified doctors, under the guidance of Professor Priya Soma-Pillay, Chair of the School of Medicine, took the stage to sign their declaration certificates and receive their completed degree certificates.

On 11 December 2023, emerging healthcare professionals from the School of Healthcare Sciences took their solemn oath, marking a significant step in their journey. Having successfully completed community service and examinations, these dedicated individuals are set to graduate in April 2024. The array of degrees attained encompass a Bachelor of Dietetics, Bachelor of Nursing Science, Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, Bachelor of Physiotherapy and Bachelor of Radiography. Each programme's head of department led their respective groups in the oath-taking ceremony.

A group of newly qualified clinical associates (Bachelor of Clinical Medical Practice) pledged their commitment on the same day (11 December 2023) under the guidance of Prof Soma-Pillay of the School of Medicine. This joint declaration marked the initiation of their professional careers, as they vowed to uphold the principles and ethical values integral to their roles.

Degrees earned include Bachelor of Clinical Medical Practice (BCMP), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BChD), Bachelor of Oral Hygiene (BOH), Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB), Bachelor of Dietetics, Bachelor of Nursing Science, Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, Bachelor of Physiotherapy and Bachelor of Radiography (Diagnostics).

The future of healthcare is bright with these dedicated professionals ready to make a positive impact.

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2023 QS World University Rankings by Subject ranked UP first in South Africa in Accounting and Finance, Law, Economics and Econometrics, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Mathematics, and Veterinary Science.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za
