



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FACULTY OF MEDICINE, DENTISTRY AND HEALTH SCIENCES

# Careers in Population Health

SCHOOL OF POPULATION HEALTH

Where can I go?  
Meet some of our graduates



**Wish you could make a real difference in creating a healthier future? Want to make your mark in the health sector? Want to be highly valued by your employer and improve the health of whole communities?**

The Population Health major in the UWA Bachelor of Science program will give you a strong foundation in health science with skills in scientific investigation, critical thinking and problem solving. Knowledge and skills in population health, leadership, research, health promotion, epidemiology and disease prevention are coupled with personal and professional development.

After completing a Population Health major you'll not only have knowledge in an important and growing field, you'll also have gained other skills. The practical skills you will learn and the experiences you'll have can be applied to all areas of life. These broader skills are not only invaluable to those who choose a career in Population Health, but are transferrable, offering value to a wide range of professions.

Anyone with an interest in helping society to be healthy and happy can find their career niche in Population Health - and it's a great basis for further study in Medicine, Dentistry, Podiatry, Social Work and more.

## **Career prospects in Population Health**

Population Health gives you great career opportunities in interesting fields like health promotion, epidemiology and disease control, health consulting, health policy, health informatics, clinical trials research, health advocacy, health administration, cancer research and many others.

Employers include private companies and government organisations, hospitals, universities and other research agencies, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, Cancer Council and other not-for-profit agencies.

## **Meet some of our graduates!**

### **Kate Ryan Graduated 2011**

**Senior Project Officer for the Executive, South Metropolitan Health Service, Dept of Health (WA Health)  
Now Medicine student at Notre Dame University**

In her job role, Kate planned and conducted projects while reporting directly to the Co-Directors of each sector, working on a wide range of projects including the National Elective Surgery Targets, which aimed to increase clinical engagement of areas such as automated reporting.

She says "it takes balance to achieve success in public health, and success stems from efforts made in university". Kate loved completing her degree and says that the best experiences that the degree offered her were her practicum at the Health Department in Child and Community Adolescent Health: this allowed Kate to practise all the knowledge and skills she had learnt over her degree and appreciate how they all come together.

She is now studying medicine and feels that her degree gave her an excellent background to succeed in her future plans.



### **Alena Dass Graduated 2012**

**Research Assistant, Autism Team,  
Telethon Kids Institute**

Alena is currently working as an assessor on the Toby Trial, looking at the therapy outcomes of an app (application) developed by speech pathologists, psychologists and computer scientists to help children with autism. Alena works with children 2-4 years old and observes their interaction with the app. Alena's efforts to get the Toby Trial running have seen her work turn into important benefits and progress for kids with autism, as well as providing relief and support for their parents.

"The study hopes to determine if the app is teaching children with autism early learning skills and to gain an understanding of how to teach and interact with the children."

Alena's role means she is constantly working with people and her work is mostly hands-on and practical. Skills and strengths she has found important include time management, effective communication and interpersonal skills, sensitivity, initiative and teamwork.



**Karla Lister  
Graduated 2005**

**Manager, Screening Policy Section,  
Office of Population Health Genomics,  
WA Health**

In her current role, Karla is working toward Australia's first national policy regarding newborn screening in the Office of Population Health Genomics, a section committed to the translation of genomics knowledge into health benefits. She is passionate about detecting disease early to prevent its progression.

Karla's key responsibilities involve strategic leadership, guiding her team members to achieve goals, policy development and meeting with stakeholders. She says that the most important skills from her undergraduate degree, which she uses on a daily basis, are her interpersonal communication skills, project management, time management, priority setting, risk management and focus.



**Michael Clark  
Graduated 2012**

**Budget Analyst, Child and Adolescent  
Health Services (CAHS)**

As a budget analyst within CAHS, Michael works in a role providing analytical, management and consultancy services, as well as serving as an intermediary between the Department of Health and the business managers and

Directors for each of the three arms of CAHS.

His role is to provide management accounting services such as generating budgetary and financial reports, estimating future financial needs, as well as analysing and critiquing past budgets by monitoring spending within CAHS.

Michael did a double degree (Bachelor of Economics and Bachelor of Health Science) because he was interested in the field of health economics. He sees this as an emerging field with significant growth potential in the future. Michael's fields of study at university were influenced by his vision for his future career.

**Kirsten Rosato  
Graduated 2009**

**Project Officer, Clinical Planning and  
Reform, Princess Margaret Hospital**

Kirsten completed a double degree (Bachelor of Health Science and Bachelor of Commerce). Directly following her graduation, she joined the RoadWise Program as a project officer as part of WALGA (Western Australian Local Government Association). She developed the Program communications including newsletters and media releases as well as tools and resources to assist local governments across the state to implement road safety initiatives.

In 2012, Kirsten took up a new position of Project Officer for Clinical Planning and Reform within the Child and Adolescent Health Service based at Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH). Her role includes monitoring and reporting on PMH's performance against the National Emergency Access Target – 90% of emergency department presentations are admitted, discharged or transferred within four hours. She also leads the clinical service redesign program involving redesigning hospital processes to improve efficiency and the experience for patients and their families. Kirsten says that many of the skills she gained in her degree have been vital to her work, including presenting, data analysis, facilitation and project management, and

that the practical component gave her experience that made her stand out from the crowd – as well as being great for networking.



**Melissa Burford  
Graduated 2010**

"I studied Population Health and Commerce at UWA and had a lot of great opportunities during my degree - I investigated rural and Indigenous health issues in Cue, volunteered at a maternal and child health organisation in India and worked on malaria projects in Switzerland."

After graduation, Melissa moved to Canberra to join the public service where she supported the introduction of Gardasil® for boys and assisted with developing the My Aged Care website. Melissa also became involved with the YWCA of Canberra where she served as a Director of the Board and received small grants to run two social initiatives.

Melissa took a career break at the beginning of this year and joined the YWCA Delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York. This was a great opportunity to advocate for sexual and reproductive health rights and young women's leadership while gaining an understanding of the UN system. She has spent the last few months in Peru learning Spanish and volunteering in medical clinics.

"I'm so glad I chose this course because of the interesting and varied experiences it has given me and I eagerly look forward to seeing where it takes me next!"

## Postgraduate study

A UWA BSc (Population Health major) leads to a great, satisfying career in the health sector. It also paves the way for further study in many fields, should you wish to follow postgraduate study. Some of our graduates currently studying or having done further study at this or other universities include:



### **Ania Stasinska**

**Graduated 2004**

**Master of Public Health - Research (2014)**

"I wanted to develop my research and analytical skills. I had the opportunity to pursue my interests in environmental epidemiology and maternal and child health as part of the Australian Maternal Exposure to Toxic Substances Study."

### **Alexa Wilkins**

**Graduated 2006.**

**Master of International Health (MIH) (current)**

"After graduating and working for a couple of years in Perth I travelled and lived in remote Central Australia and overseas; these experiences strengthened my interest in international health, particularly in developing countries. So when I returned to Perth I decided to undertake the MIH as it would offer me skills, knowledge and practical experience to work in international public health roles."

### **Sarah McKerracher**

**Graduated 2007**

**Master of Business Administration (current)**

"I had a desire to learn and understand the business world, in particular economic contexts relevant to the health sector, public/social policy, and broader life contexts (I didn't study commerce as an undergrad). I also wanted to challenge myself more than work was doing, and identified a capacity and will to learn. Career advancement and change opportunities through networking, content and skill development were key."

### **Dan Paech**

**Graduated 2008**

**Master of Public Health (MPH) (current)**

"I decided to undertake the health economics postgraduate course to progress within my current career path, and formalise what I had learnt through on-the-job training. I am currently studying my MPH as I am interested in working in global health and this will open up new job opportunities in Europe that would not be available to me otherwise."



### **Renae Fernandez**

**Graduated 2008**

**PhD candidate (current)**

"I chose to enrol in an MPH as I was not really sure what I wanted to do after completing my undergraduate studies and I had an interest in population health research. I decided to do my PhD because after working for a while as a research assistant, it became clear that career advancement in research and academia would require a PhD qualification."

### **Livia Haddow**

**Graduated 2008**

**Graduate Certificate in Biostatistics (2014)**

"I decided to start postgraduate studies as I wanted to gain a better understanding of the statistics I was using every day. The Graduate Certificate has certainly broadened my knowledge of the field and given me an appreciation of how much more there is to learn!"

### **Caris Jalla**

**Graduated 2008**

**Master of Philosophy (Health Sciences) (current)**

"My manager encouraged me to consider a Masters by Research. After exploring the options, I found that part-time postgraduate study and part-time work would be a positive challenge and an opportunity to further my career. It also complements the current project I am working on and the two provide a symbiotic outcome. For Postgraduate by Research - select a topic which you are passionate about."

### **Jessie Poon**

**Graduated 2010**

**Juris Doctor (current)**

"I initially contemplated postgraduate studies in law as an intellectual pursuit, though I was unsure at the time whether a second degree immediately post Health Science was the right choice for me. I joined the Department of Health WA and spent two years exploring potential pathways and realised that there were a number of career opportunities that would allow me to combine my skills as a health and legal professional. The steady increase in workforce qualification levels also convinced me that a postgraduate degree was the way to go."

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