

# 2025/2026 GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

List of Saturday Sessions – TENTATIVE SCHEDULE - updated as of 15-Jan-25

SATURDAY LESSONS	TENTATIVE DATES	VENUE / TIME
<b>COURSE 1: VM5101 - Introduction to Palliative Care</b>		
Session 1.1	16 August 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 1.2	23 August 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 1.3	30 August 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	6 September 2025	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
<b>COURSE 2: VM5102 - Symptom Management in Palliative Care I</b>		
Session 2.1	13 September 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 2.2	20 September 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 2.3	27 September 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	4 October 2025	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
<b>COURSE 3: VM5103 - Symptom Management in Palliative Care II</b>		
Session 3.1	11 October 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 3.2	25 October 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 3.3	1 November 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	8 November 2025	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
<b>COURSE 4: VM5104 - Psychiatry, Psychosocial Care &amp; Spiritual Issues in Palliative Care</b>		
Session 4.1	15 November 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 4.2	22 November 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 4.3	29 November 2025	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	6 December 2025	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
<b>COURSE 5: VM5105 - Communication and Ethical Issues</b>		
Session 5.1	17 January 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 5.2	24 January 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 5.3	31 January 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	14 February 2026	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
<b>Case Report Submission (10% Grading)</b>		
Deadline: By end of Course 5, 14 February 2026, 2359 hrs		
<b>COURSE 6: VM5106 - Practices of Palliative Medicine</b>		
Session 6.1	28 February 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 6.2	7 March 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 6.3	14 March 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	28 March 2026	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
<b>FINAL EXAMINATION (OSCE)</b>		
Late April/Early May 2026 (TBA, full day commitment)		

**Please note that DGMS reserves the right to make changes to the programme schedule and/or delivery mode. Classes will be mostly online with select classes taking place in-person at NUS campus.**

## \*Attendance Requirements

- Candidates are required to achieve a minimum of **75%** attendance rate for the Saturday sessions (i.e. 14 out of 18 sessions). Candidates are allowed to miss up to 1 Saturday session per course and up to a maximal of 4 Saturday sessions in the whole programme.
- All End-of-Course Examinations, Case Report, Clinical Attachments, and the Final Examination (OSCE) are **compulsory**.

## Programme Curriculum

### Course 1

#### VM5101: Introduction to Palliative Care

This course is designed to introduce participants to the scope and principles of palliative care, and the general principles in the management of advanced cancers and the advanced non-cancer diseases.

By the end of the course, the participants should be able to:

- a) Understand what palliative care entails.
- b) Be familiar with the current principles of cancer treatment.
- c) Be familiar with non-cancer progressive diseases and their management principles.

Session	Date/Time	Syllabus	Venue
1.1	16 Aug 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>1. Course Overview</b> <b>2. Introduction to Palliative Care I</b> - History of Palliative Care - Principles of Palliative Care - Scopes of Palliative Care Services <b>3. Introduction to Palliative Care II</b> - Dying in Singapore - Current Framework of Palliative Care Services in Singapore - National Strategy for Palliative Care Report 2011 - Role of Family Physicians in Palliative Care in Singapore <b>4. Predicting Survival in Patients with Advanced Diseases (prognostication)</b>	TBA
1.2	23 Aug 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>5. Palliative Care in Non-Malignant Conditions I</b> - Disease trajectories and role of palliative care in non-malignant conditions - Palliative care in end-stage lung diseases - Palliative care in end-stage heart diseases - Palliative care in end-stage renal failure <b>6. Palliative Care in Non-Malignant Conditions II</b> - Palliative in non-malignant neurological disorder - Patient with Advanced Dementia	TBA
1.3	30 Aug 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>7. Disease-Modifying Management in Advanced Cancer I</b> - Epidemiology and Current Management of Major Malignancies - Medical Treatment of Cancer (chemotherapy) in Palliative Care - Co-management of patients <b>8. Disease-Modifying Management in Advanced Cancer II</b> - The role of radiotherapy in palliative care - The role of general surgery in palliative care - The role of interventional radiology in palliative care	TBA
	6 Sept 2025 8:00am – 6:00pm	<b>End of Course Assessment</b>	Examssoft

## Course 2

### VM5102: Symptom Management in Palliative Care I

This course covers principles of management of common symptoms encountered in palliative care, namely pain, cachexia, fatigue, gastrointestinal and respiratory symptoms. It also covers issues of hydration and nutrition in palliative care.

By the end of the course, the participants should be able to:

- a) Acquire basic competence in approach, evaluation of and management of major symptoms and syndromes encountered in palliative care. These include pain, nausea and vomiting, intestinal obstruction, constipation, diarrhoea, ascites, dyspnoea, cough, swallowing impairment, anorexia-cachexia syndrome and fatigue.
- b) Be familiar with issues of hydration and nutrition in advanced illness.

Session	Date/Time	Syllabus	Venue
2.1	13 Sept 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>1. The Management of Cancer Pain I</b> - Physiology of cancer pain - Assessment of cancer pain - Principles of management of cancer pain - WHO 3-Step Ladder - Drugs – Paracetamol, NSAIDs, Codeine, Tramadol <b>2. The Management of Cancer Pain II</b> - Drugs – Opioids and side effects - Drugs – Morphine, Fentanyl, OxyCodone, Hydromorphone <b>3. The Management of Cancer Pain III</b> - Management of neuropathic pain in cancer - Drugs – Gabapentin, Pregabalin, sodium valproate, TCA, LignoPad <b>4. The Management of Cancer Pain IV</b> - Difficult cancer pain - Opioid Rotation - Use of Ketamine - Methadone - Spinal Analgesia	TBA
2.2	20 Sept 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>5. The Management of Gastrointestinal Symptoms</b> - Palliation of nausea & vomiting - Management of malignant intestinal obstruction <b>6. Anorexia, Cachexia and Fatigue in Advanced Cancer</b> - Management of Anorexia-cachexia syndrome - Management of Fatigue <b>7. Hydration and Nutrition in Advanced Cancer</b> <b>8. Nutrition of Patients with Impaired Swallowing</b> - Simple bed-side swallowing assessment - Caution feeding in patient with mild swallowing impairment	TBA
2.3	27 Sept 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>9. The management of Gastrointestinal Symptoms in Palliative Care II</b> - Management of constipation & diarrhoea - Management of jaundice, hepatic encephalopathy, hiccup - Management of ascites <b>10. The Management of Respiratory Symptoms in Palliative Care</b> - The management of dyspnoea - The management of cough and haemoptysis	TBA
	4 Oct 2025 8:00am – 6:00pm	<b>End of Course Assessment</b>	Examssoft

### Course 3

#### VM5103: Symptom Management in Palliative Care II

This course covers management of common emergencies in palliative medicine. These include metabolic (e.g.: hypercalcaemia), neurological (e.g.: cord compression, delirium and brain metastasis) and other conditions like bleeding and fractures. Management of common infections and nursing issues (wound and tubes management) will also be included in this course.

By the end of the course, the participants should be able to :

- a) Diagnose and manage common palliative medicine emergencies like hypercalcaemia and cord compression.
- b) Advise and manage common nursing issues in palliative medicine like pressure sore dressing and common tube/stoma problems.

Session	Date/Time	Syllabus	Venue
3.1	11 Oct 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>1. Emergency in Palliative Care I</b> - Management of spinal cord compression <b>2. Emergency in Palliative Care II</b> - Metabolic emergencies in palliative care - Management of hypercalcaemia <b>3. Other Emergencies in Palliative Care</b> - e.g Management of bleeding in advanced cancer	TBA
3.2	25 Oct 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>4. Neurological Complications in Palliative Care</b> - Management of brain metastases including management of seizure - The management of delirium in palliative care <b>5. Urological Complications in Palliative Care</b> - Management of common urinary symptoms in palliative care - Care of indwelling urinary catheter - Care of percutaneous nephrostomy tube <b>6. Management of Common Infections in Palliative Care</b>	TBA
3.3	1 Nov 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>7. (i) Nursing Care in Palliative Care I</b> - Perineum care/Bowel care - Transfer and turning of patient on the bed - Care of the paraplegic/bed-ridden - Oral care and management of dry mouth <b>(ii) Nursing Care in Palliative Care II</b> - Wound care, skin care and prevention of pressure ulcers - Common dressings <b>(iii) Nursing Care in Palliative Care III</b> - Management of tubes, stoma care and fistulae	TBA
	8 Nov 2025 8:00am – 6:00pm	<b>End of Course Assessment</b>	Examssoft

## Course 4

### VM5104: Psychiatry, Psychological Care & Spiritual Issues in Palliative Care

This course covers common psychosocial and spiritual issues in palliative care. Assessment and management of Anxiety and Depression as well as managing patients asking for hastened death will be included. There will be a section on grief and bereavement and caring for caregivers, including healthcare workers. Sexuality and body image and its impact on patients' psychosocial well-being will be covered in the course.

By the end of the course, the participants should be able to :

- a) Recognise, assess and manage common psychological issues like depression and anxiety in palliative care.
- b) Provide care and support to caregivers.
- c) Identify and refer patients/carers with high suicide and bereavement risks.

Session	Date/Time	Syllabus	Venue
4.1	15 Nov 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>1. Psychiatry in Palliative Care (I)</b> - Assessment and management of depression - Assessment of suicide and risk management - Dealing with desire for hastened death <b>2. Psychiatry in Palliative Care (II)</b> - Assessment and management of anxiety and insomnia - Emotional care and support of patient in palliative care	TBA
4.2	22 Nov 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>3. Psychosocial Care of Families and Care-givers in Palliative Care including Grief and Bereavement</b> <b>4. Self-care of Healthcare Professionals</b> <b>5. Spiritual Issues in Palliative Care</b> <b>6. Sexuality and Body Image</b>	TBA
4.3	29 Nov 2025 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>7. HAPPE Workshop</b>	TBA
	6 Dec 2025 By 2359 hours	<b>Submission of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Clinical Attachment Reports</b>	Canvas
	6 Dec 2025 8:00am – 6:00pm	<b>End of Course Assessment</b>	Examsoft

## Course 5

### VM5105: Communication and Ethical Issues

This course covers communication skills in breaking bad news, managing collusion, conducting a family conference and advance care planning. It also covers major ethical dilemmas encountered in palliative care such as withholding and withdrawing life sustaining treatment. Learning will be achieved through use of role plays and case discussions in this course.

By the end of the course, the participants should be able to :

- a) Describe and practise communication skills in breaking bad news, managing collusion, conducting a family conference and advance care planning.
- b) Describe major ethical issues in palliative care and learn frameworks of approach to ethical dilemmas.

Session	Date/Time	Syllabus	Venue
5.1	17 Jan 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>1. Communication Workshop I</b> - Breaking bad news <b>2. Communication Workshop II</b> - Managing collusion	TBA
5.2	24 Jan 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>3. Advance Care Planning</b> <b>4. Conducting a family conference</b>	TBA
5.3	31 Jan 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>5. Common Ethical Issues in Palliative Care</b>	TBA
	14 Feb 2026 8:00am – 6:00pm	<b>End of Course Assessment</b>	Examsoft
	14 Feb 2026 By 2359 hours	<b>Submission of Case Report</b>	Canvas

## Course 6

### VM5106: Practices of Palliative Medicine

This last course is designed to consolidate the teachings in the last 5 courses into practice, and to see how palliative medicine is practised into various settings in the community and in special groups of patients.

By the end of the course, the participants should be able to :

- a) Understand how palliative medicine can be practised in the clinic setting, at patient's home and in the community institutions.
- b) Be familiar with managing dying at home.
- c) To see how family physicians can play an important role in providing palliative care in the community.

Session	Date/Time	Syllabus	Venue
6.1	28 Feb 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>1. Palliative Care in the Primary Care I</b> - Palliative care in the clinic - Palliative care at home - Working with hospice home care service - Referring to an inpatient hospice <b>2. Managing Dying Patients at Home</b> - Termination/Reconciliation of drugs near end of life - Use of antibiotics near end of life. - Managing common symptoms in last hours. - Equipment rental in the last hours - Preparing the family - Signing of CCOD <b>3. Use of Syringe Pump at Home</b> - Indication - Mixing of drugs	TBA
6.2	7 Mar 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>4. Palliative Care in the Primary Care II</b> - Palliative care in the nursing home - Palliative care in the community hospital - Working with private home care services (medical and nursing) <b>5. Palliative Care in the Secondary and Tertiary Centre</b> - Palliative care in an inpatient hospice - Palliative care in the acute hospital <b>6. Palliative Care in Special Groups</b> - Palliative care in children (Paediatric) - Palliative care in elderly (Geriatric)	TBA
6.3	14 Mar 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	<b>7. Financing Issues in Palliative Care</b> - The roles of insurance, Medisave, Medishield and Medifund - Models of financing palliative care service delivery <b>8. Seeing the Big Picture</b> - The role of AIC in palliative care in Singapore - The role of MOH in palliative care in Singapore <b>9. Common Problems faced by Family Physicians in Providing Palliative Care in Primary Care (e.g. prescribing controlled drugs)</b>	TBA
	28 Mar 2026 8:00am – 6:00pm	<b>End of Course Assessment</b>	Examsoft
	28 Mar 2026 By 2359 hours	<b>Submission of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Clinical Attachment Reports and Reading Log</b>	Canvas

**\*Final Examination in late April or early May 2026, a full day commitment is required.**