

2026/2026 GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

List of Saturday Sessions – TENTATIVE SCHEDULE - updated as of 22-Dec-25

SATURDAY LESSONS	TENTATIVE DATES	VENUE / TIME
COURSE 1: VM5101 - Introduction to Palliative Care		
Session 1.1	15 August 2026	NUS / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 1.2	22 August 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 1.3	29 August 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	5 September 2026	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
COURSE 2: VM5102 - Symptom Management in Palliative Care I		
Session 2.1	12 September 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 2.2	19 September 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 2.3	26 September 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	3 October 2026	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
COURSE 3: VM5103 - Symptom Management in Palliative Care II		
Session 3.1	17 October 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 3.2	24 October 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 3.3	31 October 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	14 November 2026	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
COURSE 4: VM5104 - Psychiatry, Psychosocial Care & Spiritual Issues in Palliative Care		
Session 4.1	21 November 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 4.2	28 November 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 4.3	5 December 2026	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	9 January 2027	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
COURSE 5: VM5105 - Communication and Ethical Issues		
Session 5.1	16 January 2027	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 5.2	23 January 2027	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 5.3	30 January 2027	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	13 February 2027	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
Case Report Submission (10% Grading)		
Deadline: By end of Course 5, 13 February 2027, 2359 hrs		
COURSE 6: VM5106 - Practices of Palliative Medicine		
Session 6.1	20 February 2027	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 6.2	27 February 2027	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Session 6.3	6 March 2027	TBA / 2 – 5.30pm
Course Assessment	20 March 2027	Online via Examsoft / 8am – 6pm
FINAL EXAMINATION (OSCE)		
Late April/Early May 2027 (TBA, full day commitment)		

Please note that DGMS reserves the right to make changes to the programme schedule and/or delivery mode. Classes will predominantly be online with select classes taking place in-person at NUS campus. Confirmation of select onsite lessons to be made known at the start of the intake.

*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	15 Aug 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	1. Course Overview 2. Introduction to Palliative Care I - History of Palliative Care - Principles of Palliative Care - Scopes of Palliative Care Services 3. Introduction to Palliative Care II - 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 4. Predicting Survival in Patients with Advanced Diseases (prognostication)	TBA
1.2	22 Aug 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	5. Management in Advanced Cancer I - The role of Radiotherapy in Palliative Care - The role of Interventional Radiology in Palliative Care 6. Disease-Modifying Management in Advanced Cancer I - Epidemiology and Current Management of Major Malignancies - Medical Treatment of Cancer (chemotherapy) in Palliative Care - Co-management of Patients	TBA
1.3	29 Aug 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	7. Palliative Care in Non-Malignant Conditions I - Palliative care in people with Advanced Dementia 8. Palliative Care in Non-Malignant Conditions II - 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	TBA
	5 Sept 2026 8:00am – 6:00pm	End of Course Assessment	Examsoft

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	12 Sept 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	1. The Management of Gastrointestinal Symptoms I - Palliation of nausea & vomiting - Management of malignant intestinal obstruction 2. Anorexia, Cachexia and Fatigue in Advanced Cancer - Management of Anorexia-cachexia syndrome - Management of Fatigue 3. Hydration and Nutrition in Advanced Cancer	TBA
2.2	19 Sept 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	4. The management of Gastrointestinal Symptoms in Palliative Care II - Management of constipation & diarrhoea - Management of ascites 5. The Management of Respiratory Symptoms in Palliative Care - The management of dyspnoea - The management of cough and haemoptysis	TBA
2.3	26 Sept 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	6. The Management of Cancer Pain I - Physiology of cancer pain - Assessment of cancer pain - Principles of management of cancer pain - WHO 3-Step Ladder - Drugs – Paracetamol, NSAIDs, Codeine, Tramadol 7. The Management of Cancer Pain II - Drugs – Opioids and side effects - Drugs – Morphine, Fentanyl, OxyCodone 8. The Management of Cancer Pain III - Management of neuropathic pain in cancer - Adjuvant drugs	TBA
	3 Oct 2026 8:00am – 6:00pm	End of Course Assessment	Examsoft

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	17 Oct 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	1. Emergency in Palliative Care I - Management of spinal cord compression 2. Emergency in Palliative Care II - Metabolic emergencies in palliative care - Management of hypercalcaemia 3. Other Emergencies in Palliative Care - e.g Management of bleeding in advanced cancer	TBA
3.2	24 Oct 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	4. Neurological Complications in Palliative Care - Management of brain metastases including management of seizure - The management of delirium in palliative care 5. Urological Complications in Palliative Care - Management of common urinary symptoms in palliative care - Care of indwelling urinary catheter - Care of percutaneous nephrostomy tube 6. Management of Common Infections in Palliative Care	TBA
3.3	31 Oct 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	7. (i) Nursing Care in Palliative Care I - 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 (ii) Nursing Care in Palliative Care II - Wound care, skin care and prevention of pressure ulcers - Common dressings (iii) Nursing Care in Palliative Care III - Management of tubes, stoma care and fistulae - Setting up subcutaneous needles - High centa enema - Pre-filled syringes	TBA
	14 Nov 2026 8:00am – 6:00pm	End of Course Assessment	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	21 Nov 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	1. Psychiatry in Palliative Care (I) - Assessment and management of depression - Assessment of suicide and risk management - Dealing with desire for hastened death 2. Psychiatry in Palliative Care (II) - Assessment and management of anxiety and insomnia - Emotional care and support of patient in palliative care	TBA
4.2	28 Nov 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	3. Psychosocial Care of Families and Care-givers in Palliative Care including Grief and Bereavement - Including Grief, Bereavement, and Self-Care	TBA
4.3	5 Dec 2026 2:00pm – 5.30pm	4. Therapeutic Value of the Arts and Humanities in Palliative Care 5. Spiritual Issues in Palliative Care 6. Sexuality and Body Image	TBA
	5 Dec 2026 By 2359 hours	Submission of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Clinical Attachment Reports	Canvas
	9 Jan 2027 8:00am – 6:00pm	End of Course Assessment	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	16 Jan 2027 2:00pm – 5.30pm	1. Communication Workshop I - Breaking bad news 2. Communication Workshop II - Managing collusion	TBA
5.2	23 Jan 2027 2:00pm – 5.30pm	3. Advance Care Planning 4. Conducting a family conference	TBA
5.3	30 Jan 2027 2:00pm – 5.30pm	5. Common Ethical Issues in Palliative Care	TBA
	13 Feb 2027 8:00am – 6:00pm	End of Course Assessment	Examsoft
	13 Feb 2027 By 2359 hours	Submission of Case Report	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	20 Feb 2027 2:00pm – 5.30pm	1. Palliative Care in the Primary Care I - Palliative care at home - Working with hospice home care service - Referring to an inpatient hospice 2. Managing Dying Patients at Home - 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	TBA
6.2	27 Feb 2027 2:00pm – 5.30pm	3. Palliative Care in the Primary Care II - Palliative care in the nursing home - Palliative care in the community hospital 4. Palliative Care in the Secondary and Tertiary Centre - Palliative care in an inpatient hospice - Palliative care in the acute hospital 5. Palliative Care in Special Groups - Palliative care in children (Paediatric)	TBA
6.3	6 Mar 2027 2:00pm – 5.30pm	6. Financing Issues in Palliative Care - The roles of insurance, Medisave, Medishield and Medifund - Models of financing palliative care service delivery 7. Seeing the Big Picture - The role of AIC in palliative care in Singapore 8. Issues related to Controlled Drug Prescribing by Family Physicians	TBA
	20 Mar 2027 8:00am – 6:00pm	End of Course Assessment	Examsoft
	20 Mar 2027 By 2359 hours	Submission of 4th, 5th, and 6th Clinical Attachment Reports and Reading Log	Canvas

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