



3 September 2021

By email: [fyi-request-16262-865e0a77@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-16262-865e0a77@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Jane

We refer to your request under the Official Information Act (Act) dated 1 August 2021 in relation to entry into the Medicine (MB ChB) programme for Health Sciences First Year (HSFY) via the New Zealand Rural Origins sub-category.

We set out our responses to each of your questions below.

### **1. Why a map has been chosen for what is a rural area?**

For applications based on a rural residential address or attendance at a rural school(s), the definition of what constitutes 'rural' is reviewed and set by the Medical Admissions Committee. The previous definition, using Geocoding from the New Zealand government, was changed this year by the Medical Admissions Committee and is now based on the very extensive research performed by Associate Professor Gary Nixon and his team into the definition of rurality.

The University now classifies rural as per the Geographic Classification for Health (GCH). Applicants are eligible if the address or school(s) on which the rural sub-category application is based on, is classified within Rural 1-3.

The GCH has been designed as a 'fit-for-purpose' rural-urban geographic classification that can be used to accurately monitor rural-urban variations in health outcomes. The GCH therefore classifies all areas of New Zealand as rural or urban according to their proximity to larger urban areas with respect to health. The approach used has been specifically chosen to:

- Be clear and transparent
- Be based on a framework
- Use high quality data
- Be robust, but also easily maintained over time
- Produce results that are valid on the ground

The GCH consistently classifies all areas of New Zealand as either rural or urban based on population and drive time to urban centres. However, it is important to note that the map should be considered as a guide only. All applications are assessed, and if it is found that an application is not eligible under the rural category the applicant will be notified, and the application will be processed under the general category.

**2. What is the lowest GPA for entry into medicine via the general category (HSFY) via the rural pathway?**

As per the programme requirements for the HSFY category, to be considered for admission to the MB ChB programme under the HSFY category an applicant must pass all of the papers prescribed for the University of Otago Health Sciences First Year course, normally with a minimum mark of 70% in each paper. Please note that this the minimum requirement, and the actual results required are likely to be higher than this. Please also note that for HSFY, academic scores are used instead of GPA scores.

However, in case it is helpful, we set out below the minimum academic scores to be admitted into the 2017 – 2021 MB ChB programmes for HSFY via the Rural sub-category.

	<b>Minimum academic score for entry to the MB ChB programme for HSFY</b>				
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>New Zealand Rural Origins sub-category</b>	76.96	76.34	75.91	87.71	87.86

**3. Are people ever considered for rural category if their hometown is semi urban but is urban all around with a small practice in need for doctors?**

No. If you are considered urban then you are not eligible to apply via the New Zealand Rural Origins sub-category.

**4. What is the median GPA for entry into medicine via the HSFY category under the rural category?**

Please find below the median academic scores to be admitted into the 2017 – 2021 MB ChB programmes for HSFY via the Rural sub-category. As mentioned above, please note that GPA scores are not used for HSFY.

	<b>Median academic score for entry to the MB ChB programme for HSFY</b>				
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>New Zealand Rural Origins sub-category</b>	81.58	80.00	80.59	92.29	95.22

**5. Would I be considered for the rural category if I had spent my primary school years (over 4) in a rural area? And currently have moved back to a rural area?**

Yes. In order to apply in the New Zealand Rural Origins sub-category, candidates for admission must:

- Have undertaken a minimum of four years of their pre-tertiary education at a school in a rural area of New Zealand; **or**
- Have resided in a rural area of New Zealand for a minimum of four consecutive years following the completion of their secondary education; **or**
- Have undertaken a combination of pre-tertiary education at a school in a rural area of New Zealand and residence in a rural area of New Zealand, for a minimum of four consecutive years.

We trust that this information will be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelsey Kennard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kelsey Kennard  
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator  
Office of the Registrar