



10 November 2022

By Email Only: fyi-request-20902-9930a8fe@requests.fyi.org.nz

To whom it may concern

OFFICIAL INFORMATION REQUEST IN RELATION TO RECENT DATA BREACH

I refer to your official information request 18 October 2022 in relation to the recent privacy breach, which took place at University of Otago during the period 23 August to 5 October 2022.

Deletion of Personal Information

You have asked how the University has confirmed that the students who accessed personal information have deleted it.

Our IT team has been able to identify all of the documents that were accessed, who accessed them and when. Since shutting down access, IT have completed an audit of the files to ensure they were deleted in the few cases they were downloaded, and that access has been provided only to those who should have it.

Non-Disclosure Agreement

The students who accessed personal information as a result of this breach are aware that they have signed a non-disclosure agreement.

Support for Students

The University has offered the following support to students affected by the breach:

- [OUSA Student Support](#), which can provide confidential information and advice.
- The [Student Health Mental Health and Well-being](#) team, which can provide wellbeing support.
- [Student Services](#) can also be contacted for information about further support.

We do acknowledge that some of the information that has been accessed is sensitive. However, we have concluded as a result of our investigation that this data breach is unlikely to cause harm to the affected students:

- Only 23 students accessed personal information as a result of this breach.
- We have interviewed each of the students concerned and are satisfied that they have not accessed this information with malicious intent. Rather, most of the students who located this information did so accidentally, often searching for their own name in their own files, but having this data served to them as a result of the error. A couple

of students associated with Critic Magazine did intentionally look at some additional files at the beginning of October, but this was solely for the purpose of reporting on the breach.

- These students have all agreed, both verbally and in writing, to delete the information (if applicable) and that they will not divulge any of this personal information.
- Most of the personal information in question was contained in Excel spreadsheets containing thousands of other students' data. In these instances, there is a very low likelihood that any one individual's personal information has been specifically identified by any of the recipients.
- The individuals who accessed this information on behalf of Critic did so in order to report on the breach; informed us of the error promptly; and have signed non-disclosure agreements.
- Further, we are working with the vendor of the new system to ensure that this does not happen again.

Students are also welcome to contact me in my capacity as the University's Privacy Officer if they have any additional questions or concerns, or need further support (registrar@otago.ac.nz).

Student can also contact the Privacy Commissioner if they have remaining concerns.

Ngā mihi



Mayhaka Mendis
Acting Registrar

Office of the Registrar