



10 July 2023

William James

By email: fyi-request-23111-6e4d23a9@requests.fyi.org.nz

Kia ora William

I refer to your information request dated 12 June 2023 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested:

“- All emails, including attachments, sent or received by relevant university staff, administrators, faculty members, and decision-makers from January 1, 2022, to the present date (or up until the date this request is processed), related to the decision to remove the Bachelor of Commerce with Honours Programme at the University of Otago. This information is related to this page: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/bcomhons.html>.

- All transcripts or minutes of meetings, discussions, or consultations that took place regarding the decision to remove the Bachelor of Commerce with Honours Programme, including but not limited to meetings of university committees, academic boards, faculty councils, or other relevant decision-making bodies. This includes both formal and informal gatherings.

- Any reports, reviews, studies, or analysis conducted or commissioned by the University of Otago in relation to the Bachelor of Commerce with Honours Programme and its potential removal. This includes any assessments of the programme's academic quality, demand, financial viability, or other factors that influenced the decision-making process.

- Any decision papers, memoranda, or other written documentation that outline the rationale, justification, considerations, or discussions leading to the decision to remove the Bachelor of Commerce with Honours Programme. This includes any internal communications or recommendations provided by university officials, working groups, or external consultants involved in the decision-making process.

- Any correspondence, letters, or communications received from students, alumni, faculty, staff, or external stakeholders expressing concerns, feedback, or opposition to the removal of the Bachelor of Commerce with Honours Programme.”

Please see below our response to your requests.

Requests 1-4

We have consulted with the Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Commerce) regarding your request and can advise that no decision has been made to permanently discontinue the Bachelor of Commerce with Honours programme at the University of Otago. We therefore decline your request pursuant to section 18(e) on the basis that the documentation requested does not exist.

With regard to the declaration on the University's Bachelor of Commerce with Honours (BCom(Hons)) webpage which states "No new enrolments will be accepted for the BCom(Hons) for 2024", the Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor (Commerce) has requested a pause in enrolments for 2024 due to low enrolments in the previous years – in 2021, there were 2 enrolments into the BCom(Hons) programme and in 2022 and 2023 there were none. Suspending the BCom(Hons) programme for 2024 will give the Division the opportunity to focus on other Post-graduate programmes and also provide time for there to be discussions about the future of the programme.

In general, in order for a programme of study at the University of Otago to be "removed", a Deletion Proposal would be required to progress through a full academic approvals process (Divisional Board, Board of Undergraduate Studies or Board of Graduate Studies, Senate) as well as being noted by Universities NZ's Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP). A Deletion Proposal requires consultation with student representatives and academic areas prior to submission to the decision-making Boards. We have attached a copy of the Deletion Proposal template for your information.

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As the programme has not been "removed" there has been no correspondence in relation to expressions of concern, feedback, or opposition to the removal of the BCom(Hons) programme. We therefore also decline this part of your request pursuant to section 18(e) on the basis that the documentation requested does not exist.

However, the Commerce Division's Academic Committee and Services Specialist (Commerce Specialist) has had two University staff members contact her since closing 2024 enrolments to query the closure, as follows:

1. A phone conversation and email correspondence with a student adviser from the Student Development team regarding concern that the programme had been deleted, from the perspective that Honours Programmes allow students to retain StudyLink allowances whereas Masters Programmes do not. The Commerce Specialist confirmed that the programme had not been removed/deleted and was also able to provide some enrolment data to indicate the low number of enrolments in the BCom(Honours) programme.
2. Email received from the Director of the Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) Programme asking about the closure as she was meeting a PPE student interested in the Honours Programme. The Commerce Specialist confirmed that the programme had not been removed/deleted and also provided the Director with information on alternative options available to the student.

I trust that this information will be helpful.

If you are not satisfied with our response to your information request, section 28(3) of the Act provides you with the right to ask an Ombudsman to investigate and review this response. However, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss any concerns with you first.

Ngā mihi



Jenny Shaw
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator
Office of the Registrar