



25 August 2023

By email: fyi-request-23620-f2699d5b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe CA

I refer to your information request dated 28 July 2023 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested information in relation to Entrance Scholarships at the University of Otago. Specifically, you have requested:

“the amount of people who began MB ChB in 2023 via the HSFY pathway that had received a University of Otago Entrance Scholarship. In addition, how many of those people that received a scholarship via the HSFY pathway for MB ChB 2023 had either a “University of Otago Academic Excellence Scholarship” or “University of Otago Dux Scholarship.”

the total amount of Academic Excellence Scholarships and Dux Scholarships given out for undergraduate study beginning in 2023 and how many of each of these scholarships (the Academic Excellence and Dux Scholarship) were given to HSFY 2023 students?”

Please see below our response to your request.

1. Amount of people who began MB ChB in 2023 via the HSFY pathway that had received a University of Otago Entrance Scholarship.

201 students entered the 2023 Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB) programme via the Health Sciences First Year (HSFY) category. Of those students, 154 had received an Entrance Scholarship. Further information on the Undergraduate Entrance Scholarships offered by the University of Otago can be found on the [University website](#).

a. How many of those people that received a scholarship via the HSFY pathway for MB ChB 2023 had either a University of Otago Academic Excellence Scholarship or University of Otago Dux Scholarship?

Having given careful attention to public interest considerations in accordance with section 9(1) of the Act, we have decided to decline providing a further breakdown of the scholarships received by those who entered the 2023 MB ChB programme via the HSFY category (including the University of Otago Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship and University of Otago Dux Scholarship) pursuant to section 9(2)(k) of the Act, on the basis that withholding the information is necessary to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or advantage.

The University is operating in a highly competitive commercial environment with other tertiary institutions in New Zealand to attract and recruit students. The University’s scholarship strategy is a core component of how we do this. We have found that scholarships are often a key factor in determining whether an applicant will decide to enrol at the University or not. Providing this information to you has the potential to reveal information about the University’s scholarship strategy,

thus providing other tertiary institutions with an opportunity to revise their own scholarship strategy to gain market share. This would amount to an improper gain or advantage and would compromise the University's efforts in student recruitment.

2. Total amount of Academic Excellence Scholarships and Dux Scholarships given out for undergraduate study beginning in 2023 and how many of each of these scholarships were given to HSFY 2023 students?

Similar to the above, we decline providing the total number of Academic Excellence and Dux Undergraduate Entrance Scholarships awarded by the University for students commencing their studies in 2023 in order to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or advantage. The provision of this information could also provide other tertiary institutions with an opportunity to revise their own scholarship strategy to gain market share. This would amount to an improper gain or advantage and would compromise the University's efforts in student recruitment.

In the above cases, we consider that good reasons exist for withholding information, and this is not outweighed by other considerations which would make it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available. 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.

Yours sincerely



Kelsey Kennard
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator
Office of the Registrar