



22 January 2024

By email: [fyi-request-25001-f63bd1ad@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-25001-f63bd1ad@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Beth

I refer to your information request dated 3 December 2023 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have enquired as to whether Whitikahu School (763 Whitikahu Road, Whitikahu 3792) is considered rural for the purposes of entry to the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB) programme at the University of Otago in 2021 or 2022 via the New Zealand Rural Origins equity group.

Please note that rural eligibility is not assessed ahead of an application as the eligibility criteria can change year to year. An application is automatically checked by the information entered in eVision (the University's student management system), as it requires the verification of the information provided at the time of application. If an application is found to not be eligible under the Rural equity group, the applicant will be notified, and the application will continue to be processed with this equity group removed.

For applications based on a rural residential address or attendance at a rural school(s) the University classifies rural as per the Geographic Classification for Health (GCH). Applicants will be eligible if the address or school(s) on which the rural equity group application is based on, is classified within Rural 1 – 3. To perform an informal check of the classification of the residential area provided in your application, please use the GCH (Geographic Classification for Health) New Zealand map found [here](#). It is important to note that this should be considered as a guide only and may be subject to change each year.

In order to apply in the New Zealand Rural Origins equity group, candidates 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.

Whitikahu School could be considered Rural or Urban for entry to the 2021 and 2022 MB ChB programmes depending on the years of attendance. If attendance at Whitikahu School was prior to 2016, applicants who met all other admissions criteria would be eligible under the Rural equity group. If attendance was during or after 2016, applicants would not be eligible under the Rural equity group. This may change for entry to the MB ChB programme in future years.

It is important to note that whether a school is classified as Rural or Urban is not the sole factor in determining whether or not a candidate is eligible under the New Zealand Rural Origins equity group. Provided applicants have selected this equity group as part of their application, each applicant's particular circumstances are considered individually with respect to the entry requirements listed in the Medicine: Guidelines for Admission, and a determination made taking all factors into account.

I trust that this information will be helpful. Please note that the information we have provided should be considered as a guide only as it relies on the verification of information provided in eVision at the time of application.

Ngā mihi

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

Kelsey Kennard  
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator  
Office of the Registrar