



13 February 2024

By email: fyi-request-25389-1ac3e224@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe David

I refer to your information request dated 9 January 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested information in relation to the Prince of Wales Prize, Premier Prize, and Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarships awarded by the University of Otago since 2018.

Please see below our response to your request.

1. Whether the Prince of Wales Prize has been awarded in each of the years since 2018, and if so, the names of the recipients, as well as those who received the Premier Prize.

The Prince of Wales Prize has been awarded each year since 2018, and is awarded to the most outstanding student completing an undergraduate or honours degree. Normally, there is one Premier Prize recipient per academic division (Commerce, Health Sciences, Humanities, Sciences), and one overall recipient of the Prince of Wales Prize.

The names of the Prince of Wales and Premier Prize recipients are publicly available and as follows:

- **2018**
 - Prince of Wales Prize: Ashleigh Shipton
 - Premier Prize, Commerce: Scott Herbert
 - Premier Prize, Health Sciences: Ashleigh Shipton
 - Premier Prize, Humanities: Tom Rawcliffe
 - Premier Prize, Sciences: Emma Barnes
- **2019**
 - Prince of Wales Prize: Vanessa Oatley & Jennifer Palmer (shared)
 - Premier Prize, Commerce: Rachel Malden
 - Premier Prize, Health Sciences: Hayley Stent
 - Premier Prize, Humanities: Vanessa Oatley
 - Premier Prize, Sciences: Jennifer Palmer
- **2020**
 - Prince of Wales Prize: Lachlan McLean
 - Premier Prize, Commerce: Lachlan McLean
 - Premier Prize, Health Sciences: David Wang
 - Premier Prize, Humanities: Nerys Udy
 - Premier Prize, Sciences: Nina Batucan

- **2021**
 - Prince of Wales Prize: Pei Yu Chew
 - Premier Prize, Commerce: Vera Goesmann
 - Premier Prize, Health Sciences: Pei Yu Chew
 - Premier Prize, Humanities: Wenura Ranaweera
 - Premier Prize, Sciences: Louis Davis
- **2022**
 - Prince of Wales Prize: Alexander Van Der Weerden
 - Premier Prize, Commerce: Dyani Shepherd-Oates
 - Premier Prize, Health Sciences: Jacob Ward
 - Premier Prize, Humanities: Bailey Cavanagh-Welch
 - Premier Prize, Sciences: Alexander Van Der Weerden
- **2023**
 - Prince of Wales Prize: Isaac Heron
 - Premier Prize, Commerce: Ethan Gray
 - Premier Prize, Health Sciences: Elizabeth Stevenson, Amy Krammer
 - Premier Prize, Humanities: Isaac Heron
 - Premier Prize, Sciences: Mia Boothroyd

We note that this information, including awards for other years, is publicly available through the University's Hocken Library, or via news and media releases:

- [Hocken Library](#)
- <https://www.otago.ac.nz/biochemistry/news/archive/2020/biochemistry-student-wins-university-of-otagos-top-undergraduate-prize>
- <https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/recognising-exceptional-undergraduates2>
- <https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/newsroom/lachie-mclean-on-responsible-investing-and-financial-greenwashing>
- <https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/newsroom/prestigious-undergraduate-prize-awarded-to-medical-student>

2. The number of Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarships awarded, and the grade cutoffs for each year.

Having given careful attention to public interest considerations in accordance with section 9(1) of the Act, we have decided to decline providing you with the number Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarships awarded each year since 2018, 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 number of undergraduate entrance scholarships the University awards is also commercially sensitive, and we therefore also withhold this information pursuant to section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act.

The University 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 scholarships 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.

However, we note the following in terms of your request:

- Awards decisions on undergraduate entrance scholarships are made in September/October in the year prior to commencing study at the University. So as far as students in Year 13 when they are applying are concerned, this is before their NCEA results (or equivalent under other systems such as Cambridge or IB) for that year are complete.
- Awards are therefore generally made on the basis of NCEA credits achieved in Year 12 at NCEA Level 2 and – where they may have been completed in Year 12 – NCEA Level 3.
- While academic achievement is the primary factor taken account of in awarding our Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarships, account is also taken of demonstrated leadership potential, sporting and/or cultural involvement, and contribution to the community.
- Students are expected to have achieved NCEA Level 2 endorsed with Excellence, or equivalent, to be *considered* for an Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship, and have shown involvement in activities at school, in the community, and/or in sport and cultural pursuits.
- Because other factors are taken into account, and because the academic calibre of the applying cohort as measured by NCEA grades varies from year to year, there are no hard cut-offs in terms of NCEA credits for the awarding of an Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship.
- Consideration is also taken to recognise that some students will not have the opportunity to undertake as many credits as other students, due to resources within their school or if the school limits the number of credits they will allow a student to complete.
- Typically, students receiving an Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship will be within the top 5% of the scholarship recipients.

I trust that this information will be helpful.

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.

Ngā mihi



Kelsey Kennard
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator
Office of the Registrar