



26 March 2024

By email: [fyi-request-25322-49fe47c8@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-25322-49fe47c8@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe

I refer to your information request dated 17 February 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested information in relation to the discontinuation of the Bachelor of Applied Science (BAppSc) programme.

Please see below our response to your request.

- 1. All communications between staff, committees, boards, groups and councils regarding the deletion of the Bachelor of Applied Science. Communications includes agendas, minutes and supplementary notes.**

The University has noted the very broad nature of this aspect of your request, and the potential in that context for there to have been a large amount of information within the scope of the request created throughout the University through communications between staff members. That information could not be made available without substantial collation and research (i.e., it is not practically manageable for us to contact every staff member and ask them to search their records), and therefore we decline this part of your request pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act.

The University recognises as key information within scope of your request, which it is appropriate and reasonable for it to collate, information held by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Sciences), and relevant meeting material/documents created throughout the process of consulting and deciding on the discontinuation of the BAppSc programme.

Please see attached the information we hold that was practically manageable to collate and within scope of your request, subject to the points noted below. For practical ease, we have separated the documentation out into different categories.

#### Memorandum dated 7 November 2022

The first document is a memorandum dated 7 November 2022 from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Sciences) to stakeholders of the BAppSc – namely:

- University Pro-Vice-Chancellors;
- Academic Committees and Services;
- Staff who taught towards BAppSc subjects;
- Student representatives (OUSA, Pacific Islands Students' Association, Te Rōpū Māori); and
- Heads of Department within the Division of Sciences.

The Division of Sciences wanted to consult widely to ensure any decision was informed with as much information and feedback as possible – staff were encouraged to distribute a copy of the memorandum as appropriate. Email feedback was sought, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Sciences)

received five pieces of email feedback in favour of the discontinuation by the deadline of 1 December 2022. Having collated and considered the feedback material, we have concluded that the appropriate way in which to make the information available to you is by providing you a summary in accordance with section 16(1)(e) of the Act. We are satisfied that supplying the documents to you would prejudice the interests of our staff protected by section 9(2)(a) of the Act (privacy of natural persons) and 9(2)(g)(i) (effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions between members of staff). Accordingly, in the interests of transparency, we are able to provide the following summary of the feedback received:

- It is difficult for students to understand what a BAppSc is and how to structure their programme of study. If students decide to change their programme part way through the degree, it can be very difficult for students to fit into the standard 3-year degree programme.
- Discontinuation of the BAppSc would simplify pathways and subject choices available to students.
- Discontinuation of the BAppSc would enable students to have greater flexibility to include different subjects that would complement their degrees.
- The majority of the feedback received wanted to ensure that subjects taught as part of the BAppSc programme could be retained as programme majors or minors for the Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts programmes, where appropriate depending on the subject.
- Many of the subjects offered by the BAppSc complement each other and can be relevant to a wide range of careers.
- A suggestion was made that BAppSc subject majors that move to other degree programmes should be able to retain the requirement of students undertaking an approved minor, should they want to.

#### Documentation from Meetings

The proposal regarding the discontinuation of the BAppSc went through the Sciences Standing Committee, Sciences Divisional Academic Board, Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUGS), Senate, and University Council.

#### *Sciences Standing Committee and Sciences Divisional Academic Board:*

Please see attached:

- The relevant parts of the agenda for the 13 March 2023 meeting of the Sciences Divisional Academic Board, at which the BAppSc deletion proposal was considered for deletion. The agenda also includes the minutes for the proposal's consideration at the Sciences Academic Board on 13 February 2023, and the Sciences Standing Committee on 24 February 2024. These documents are also attached.
  - We note that we have redacted or withheld material that is not related to the deletion of the BAppSc programme and is therefore out of scope of your request.

#### *Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUGS):*

Please see attached:

- The relevant parts from the minutes for the 5 April 2023 meeting of BUGS, where the deletion of the BAppSc and any consequential changes were recommended to be approved.
  - We note that we have redacted or withheld material that is not related to the deletion of the BAppSc programme and is therefore out of scope of your request.

*Senate:*

Please see attached:

- The relevant parts from the minutes for the 26 April 2023 meeting of the University Senate, where the deletion of the BAppSc was recommended for approval.
  - We note that we have redacted or withheld material that is not related to the deletion of the BAppSc programme and is therefore out of scope of your request.

*Council:*

Please see attached:

- A memorandum dated 16 May 2023 from the Deputy Secretary to the Council to the Secretary to the Senate, which noted approval from the University of Otago Council for the deletion of the BAppSc. This decision was made in the Council meeting dated 9 May 2023. The information contained in the memorandum is identical to the minutes for the Council meeting dated 9 May 2023 when the item was discussed.
  - We note that we have redacted or withheld material that is not related to the deletion of the BAppSc programme and is therefore out of scope of your request.

*Deletion Proposal:*

Please see attached:

- A copy of the deletion proposal for the BAppSc.
  - In consulting with the wider University community on the deletion proposal, 14 pieces of feedback were received. Having reviewed the feedback material, we have concluded that the appropriate way in which to make the information available to you is by providing you a summary of the feedback received in accordance with section 16(1)(e) of the Act. We are satisfied that we have reasonable grounds to withhold the feedback pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Act (in order to protect the privacy of natural persons), and section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act (in order to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expressions of opinions between members of staff). Accordingly, in the interests of transparency, we are able to provide the following summary of the feedback received:
    - The BAppSc is a unique offering at Otago across all levels of study.
    - Programme offerings within the university have shifted significantly over recent years, leading to significant overlap between the Applied Science offerings and other offerings.
    - Ensuring that subjects that were transferred to another degree programme enabled students to have a “home” department.
    - Staff confirming that they were happy for their BAppSc subjects to be transferred to other qualifications such as a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts (where appropriate according to subject) – this item was covered in a number of the pieces of feedback received.
    - Looking forward to hearing how the logistics of subject transfers would work.
    - Transferring BAppSc subjects to other degree programmes would allow for a more straightforward degree programme for students and would allow for

greater flexibility for students who may have entered BAppSc subjects after completing the University's Health Sciences First Year programme.

- Staff confirming whether they would be deleting, amending or keeping their current majors or minors.
- Agreeing with the memorandum dated 7 November 2022 and the need to simplify pathways and subject choices available to students.
- Staff have found that it is hard for students to understand what the BAppSc is and how to structure their programmes.
- Ensuring that students receive comprehensive information and dedicated transition support.
- Students do not understand the difference between Applied Science and Science.
- The second approved subject aspect of the BAppSc degree adds complexity and barriers to students, thus reducing flexibility in their programmes of study.
- While some programmes will be easy to transition away from the BAppSc, some will require significantly more work, both administratively and in terms of rebranding.

**2. The forecasted number of redundancies that the deletion of the Bachelor of Applied Science would cause within departments teaching into this degree.**

**3. The actual number of redundancies that the deletion of the Bachelor of Applied Science cause within departments teaching into this degree.**

There were no forecasted redundancies, nor did any redundancies take place.

**4. The date of the first communications from the University of Otago to staff (academic and professional), regarding the deletion of the Bachelor of Applied Science.**

There was no specific communication that was sent to all University staff (academic and professional). Therefore, we decline this part of your request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act, on the basis that the information requested is not held by the University. However, we note that the memorandum dated 7 November 2022 was sent to all BAppSc stakeholders (as noted earlier in our response), and academic and professional staff serving on BUGS, Senate and the University Council would have received communications on the deletion proposal via relevant agenda and minutes.

**5. The date of the first communications from the University of Otago to students enrolled in the BAppSc, regarding the deletion of the Bachelor of Applied Science.**

Students enrolled in BAppSc were made aware of the discontinuation of the BAppSc on 19 April 2023. They received information regarding the transitional arrangements, options available, and contact details for seeking course advice and/or other support that might be required. We note that all existing students were permitted to complete their chosen degree. Alternatively, subject to meeting the regulations, students could opt to transfer to another qualification if their subject major was continuing.

**6. The date of the first communications from the University of Otago to students enrolled at the University of Otago, but not enrolled in a BAppSc, regarding the deletion of the Bachelor of Applied Science.**

There was no specific communication that was sent to all University students, excluding those enrolled in the BAppSc. Therefore, we decline this part of your request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act, on the basis that the information requested is not held by the University. However, we note that the memorandum dated 7 November 2022 was sent to student representatives (as noted earlier in our response) – these students may or may not have been enrolled in a BAppSc.

**7. The date of the first communications from the University of Otago to prospective students, regarding the deletion of the Bachelor of Applied Science.**

There was no specific communication that was sent to prospective students. Therefore, we decline this part of your request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act, on the basis that the information requested is not held by the University. However, we note that information on the University's website was updated to reflect that no new enrolments would be accepted to the BAppSc from 2024 onwards.

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