

9 October 2024

By email: fyi-request-28366-cfe141c9@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe G

I refer to your request for information dated 12 September 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested:

1. *The reason why the papers PHSL231 and ANAT242 have been discontinued to make way for NEUR201 and NEUR202, and how this will benefit students.*
2. *The reason that PHSL342 and PHSL343 have been discontinued and how this will benefit students.*
3. *The net number of staffing changes in each of the following departments; Physiology, Anatomy and Neuroscience due to these changes.*
4. *The financial benefits/loss due to these changes.*

Please see below our response to your request.

Background:

The School of Biomedical Sciences (BMS) is in the process of making major changes to its curriculum for 2025 – 2027, to enable a future-focussed world class experience for our learners. These changes to the BMS curriculum have also been in response to a strategic imperative for the university to reduce the number of papers offered and provide better learning experiences.

BMS has used this situation as an opportunity to develop strategic and innovative changes to its papers with the goal of offering an enhanced experience and education for students through:

- Developing new interdisciplinary papers with co-teaching by different departments in the School;
- Development of two new skills papers (in 2026 and 2027) that will support all students in developing skills that meet the University's graduate attributes, and introduce students to science in an Aotearoa New Zealand context;
- Introducing new and integrated content that will prepare students for working on future challenges in science; and
- Reducing content overlap and simplifying degree structures to meet University objectives.

We note that these changes began before a management of change proposal was put forward in June 2024. While the curriculum changes and management of change process are both related to addressing the strategic and financial challenges faced by the University, they are not linked (i.e., the curriculum changes did not influence the management of change, nor did the management of change influence the curriculum changes).

- 1. The reason why the papers PHSL231 and ANAT242 have been discontinued to make way for NEUR201 and NEUR202, and how this will benefit students**
- 2. The reason why the papers PHSL342 and PHSL343 have been discontinued and how this will benefit students**

PHSL231 – Neurophysiology and ANAT242 – Neurobiology have been merged with some additional content from PHAL211 - Introduction to Pharmacology and Toxicology to become two re-coded Neuroscience papers: NEUR201 – Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience and NEUR202 – Systems Neuroscience. The only content that has been removed is that where there was overlap across the papers. The two new NEUR papers will be taught by neuroscientist staff from the Physiology and Anatomy departments, who taught into the original papers with some contribution from department of Pharmacology staff.

PHSL342 – Molecular, Cellular and Integrative Neurophysiology II has been deleted to reduce and streamline offerings by the School of Biomedical Sciences, and it was also determined that the necessary content was already available in other papers, including NEUR303 – Neuroendocrinology, which was not offered in 2024 but will be available again from 2025.

PHSL343 – Cellular and Epithelial Physiology will be merged with ANAT332 – Cell Biology to become BMSC321 – Cell Biology from 2025. The content of these papers currently overlap, which will be removed with the introduction of BMSC321.

These programme changes strongly align with [Pae Tata](#) – the University’s Strategic Plan to 2030, and in particular, the priority to streamline programme architecture at the University. The new programme structures proposed for students studying with the School of Biomedical Sciences will lead to many benefits, including clearer pathways for students, reduced risks of timetable clashes, and opportunities to make enrolment and course selection processes more efficient.

- 3. The net number of staffing changes in each of the following departments; Physiology, Anatomy and Neuroscience due to these changes**

No staffing changes have been made in response to the curriculum changes. We note that the Neuroscience programme does not have its own staff. As an interdisciplinary programme, it is taught by staff from varied departments across the University. Each teaches a separate “neuro” component, resulting in a coherent and integrated subject.

As a result of voluntary redundancy, staff numbers within the Department of Physiology will decrease by 5.76 FTE, which includes one staff member who contributed to the Neuroscience programme. As a result of voluntary redundancy and/or other resignations, staff numbers within the Department of Anatomy will decrease by 3.70 FTE, which includes two neurobiology staff.

- 4. The financial benefits/loss due to these changes**

The University is not predicting any significant loss in EFTS (Equivalent Full-Time Students) due to the changes to the School of Biomedical Sciences curriculum. The School of Biomedical Sciences has saved \$1.4 million in permanent salaries through a management of change process that was not linked to the curriculum changes, and will continue to experience savings in consolidating and teaching fewer courses over the next few years.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelsey Kennard', written in a cursive style.

Kelsey Kennard
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator
Office of the Registrar and Secretary to the Council