4 November 2024

Laura Black
By email: fyi-request-28649-4e2bc744@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Laura

I refer to your request for information dated 4 October 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested information in relation to entry to the University of Otago's Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programme.

Subject to the following general comments, please see below our response to your request:

- The data is correct as at 23 October 2024.

- It is the University's standard practice to not report on information where it relates to fewer than five individuals and we consider that such disclosure could affect an individual's privacy and wellbeing. Where the numbers are very low, there is a risk that the identity of these individuals could be determined or inferred, and that their personal information could be revealed. Accordingly, where there are fewer than five individuals in a particular dataset, we have withheld the actual number or their weighted GPA scores and indicated using "<5" ("fewer than five"). This is pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Act, in order to protect the privacy of natural persons.

- Further information on the BDS programme, including entry requirements, programme content and selection criteria, can be found on the University's website – Dentistry: Guidelines for Admission.

1. What was the rationale behind the decision to remove the UCAT requirement from the admission process for all categories?

The Faculty of Dentistry's decision to remove UCAT as a requirement for entry to the BDS programme from 2025 onwards was based on equity.

2. How does the Dental School now determine which applicants to interview without UCAT as a selection tool?

As noted in the Dentistry: Guidelines for Admission webpage, the Dental Admissions Committee may set a minimum academic requirement for applicants to proceed to the interview stage. This is determined by the Committee on an annual basis, and may differ for equity group applicants. All eligible applicants who meet the standard set each year are invited to interview. Candidates are assessed as suitable for admission based on the interview panel's overall assessment of aptitude for the programme, taking into account motivation, decision-making, and communication skills. Suitable candidates are then put forward for final selection.

3. How many applicants were invited to the 2024 dentistry interviews?

411 applicants were interviewed across all admission categories.

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4. **Of those interviewed, how many people were from each category (HSFY, Graduate, Alternative)?**

    *   261 applicants were interviewed from the HSFY category;
    *   117 applicants were interviewed from the Graduate category;
    *   13 applicants were interviewed from the Alternative category; and
    *   20 international applicants were interviewed.

5. **And of those, how many general category applicants received interviews from each category (HSFY, Graduate, Alternative entry)?**

    *   170 applicants were interviewed from the HSFY general category;
    *   59 applicants were interviewed from the Graduate general category; and
    *   13 applicants were interviewed from the Alternative general category.

6. **How many interviewed applicants were from equity groups (Māori, Pacific, Socioeconomic Equity, Refugee, and Rural) across the different application category (HSFY, Graduate, Alternative entry)?**

    *   91 equity group applicants were interviewed from the HSFY category;
    *   58 equity group applicants were interviewed from the Graduate category; and
    *   0 equity group applicants were interviewed from the Alternative category.

7. **Could you please provide the lowest successful GPA that were selected for interview across the different admission categories (HSFY, Graduate, Alternative entry) for general category applicants?**

    *   The minimum average academic score to receive an interview for entry to the 2025 BDS programme via the HSFY general category was 83.00.

    *   The minimum weighted GPA score to receive an interview for entry to the 2025 BDS programme via the Graduate general category for applicants with fully confirmed academic results was 7.0. The minimum weighted GPA score to receive an interview for entry to the 2025 BDS programme via the Graduate general category for applicants with pending academic results (e.g., Semester 2 2024 results) was 6.5.

    *   The minimum weighted GPA score to receive an interview for entry to the 2025 BDS programme via the Alternative general category was 6.8.

8. **Of those invited to interview, what was the lowest successful GPA for each equity group (Māori, Pacific, Socioeconomic Equity, Refugee, and Rural) across the different categories (HSFY, Graduate, Alternative entry)?**

    *   For equity group applicants in the HSFY category, interviews were not offered to any applicant with a mark less than 60% from Semester 1 2024 exams.

    *   For equity group applicants in the Graduate category with fully confirmed academic results, interviews were not offered to any applicant with a GPA less than 5.0. For applicants with pending academic results (e.g., Semester 2 2024 results), due to the low

number of applicants, no threshold GPA was set.

- There were no equity group applicants in the Alternative category who were offered an interview.

9. **Is there a cap on the number of subcategory candidates (e.g., Māori, Pacific, Rural) who can be admitted or not?**

There is no cap on the number of places available for equity group applicants to the BDS programme. Approximately 70% of places are allocated to the HSFY category in total (equity group <u>and</u> general applicants). Remaining places are allocated to the Graduate and Alternative categories combined (equity group <u>and</u> general applicants).

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

Kelsey Kennard
Policy Analyst
Office of the Registrar and Secretary to the Council