



Award of PhD Scholarships

1. The criteria, quantitative and qualitative, used to assess PhD scholarship applications

The [Regulations and Notes for University of Otago Postgraduate Research Scholarships](#) set out the following “Academic Criteria and Eligibility Requirements”:

Doctoral and Masters’ scholarships will be awarded on the basis of:

a) The applicant’s academic record:

- In the case of an applicant for a doctoral scholarship who has completed a Master’s degree by papers and thesis (at least 0.75 EFTS), the grades of all relevant advanced level papers counting towards the award of the degree and the thesis will be taken into account. An explanation of the time taken for completion of the thesis may be requested and considered by the Scholarships and Prizes Committee if the thesis has taken more than 2 EFTS (2 fulltime years) to complete.
- In the case of an applicant for a scholarship without a Master’s degree including a thesis, the grades of all relevant advanced level papers counting towards the award of the applicant’s most relevant degree will be taken into account.
- In the case of applicants whose prior qualifications have been awarded by other universities, the University shall calculate a GPA score using what it considers to be the most relevant² papers and grades provided on the applicant’s academic transcripts.
- Certificate of Proficiency and Pass/Fail papers will not be taken into account in the calculation.

b) The applicant’s potential for, or record of, research.

c) The advice, recommendation and/or ranking of the relevant Head of Department.

The University of Otago has a “guaranteed scholarship” scheme for applicants with a Honours or Master’s Research degree from a New Zealand university intending to enter the PhD programme - note: this does not include professional doctorates. This scheme is advertised on our website as available to students with GPA 8 or higher. Additional information can be found here: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/scholarships/phd/index.html>

The University’s Scholarships and Prizes Committee has set the current internal criteria for award of guaranteed scholarships at a GPA of 7.3 or higher for a domestic Honours or Master’s Research degree with at least an A minus grade on the research dissertation or thesis component. The degree must have been completed in a timely fashion.

2. GPA methodology used for calculating GPA in assessments of PhD scholarships including what previous courses are assessed (I.e. most recent for instance Masters or Honours, or a combination

The grades for the GPA calculation are as follows:

A+	9
A	8
A-	7
B+	6
B	5
B-	4
C+	3
C	2
C-	1

The *Regulations and Notes for University of Otago Postgraduate Research Scholarships* also state:

For purposes of evaluating the academic record of an applicant, “relevant papers” shall be defined as: courses/subjects/papers at advanced levels (i.e. the 300 and 400 levels) that are closely related to the field of major study as determined by the respective HoD(s).

The assessed qualification is the one used for admission into the Doctoral programme, usually the highest, most recent qualification. Where an applicant has more than one qualification of the same level that are relevant to their proposed doctoral research, more than one transcript may be assessed for scholarship purposes.

Domestic applicants: applicants with a New Zealand Honours degree will have GPA assessed on the Honours year papers, i.e. 400 level papers. New Zealand qualified applicants with a Master’s Research qualification may be assessed on the thesis by itself or the thesis and Masters’ papers’ component, whichever calculation gives the highest GPA. New Zealand qualified applicants will have grades using the 9 point GPA scale on their transcripts. GPA will be based on the weighted average of grades alongside their point or credit value.

International applicants: the transcript for the programme providing entry into the Doctoral programme will be assessed and a GPA conversion undertaken. Otago uses a variety of resources to convert international grading systems, first to USA grades and then to an equivalent New Zealand GPA. Resources available include Duke Credentials, ScholaroPro, WES, NARIC (for programme equivalence) as well as the websites of specific overseas tertiary institutions where they use non-standard grading scales and advice from overseas institutions.

3. Broken down by the past 3 calendar years, the average GPA of successful offers for the Otago PhD scholarship, further broken down by university Division

Average GPA for offered PhD Scholarships*:

	2017	2018	2019
Commerce	7.816	8.058	8.077
Health Sciences	8.098	8.095	8.049
Humanities	8.09	8.095	8.025
Sciences	8.105	8.144	8.033
All Divisions	8.027	8.098	8.046

Note: 2019 data is to 31 October 2019.

*Excluding Strategic Pro-Vice-Chancellor awards.