

21 February 2025

Joseph Kalan

By email: [fyi-request-29596-a127acb8@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-29596-a127acb8@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Joseph

I refer to your request dated 18 December 2024 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested information in relation to the University of Otago's Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programmes via the Alternative category.

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

- It is the University's standard practice to not report on information where it relates to small numbers of individuals, and we consider that such disclosure could affect an individual's privacy and wellbeing. Where the numbers are 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 aggregated data where possible. In the occasions where this is not possible, we have indicated using "<5" ("fewer than five") and withheld ("W/H") any associated information. This is pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Act, in order to protect the privacy of natural persons.
- The data we have provided is correct as at 20 February 2025.
- A significant amount of information you have requested can also be viewed in the Guidelines for Admission for each programme. We would recommend that you also consult these webpages in addition to our response to your request:
  - [Dentistry: Guidelines for Admission](#)
  - [Medicine: Guidelines for Admission](#)

### **1. What constitutes "health-related professional experience in a relevant field" to meet the entry standards?**

The purpose of the Alternative category is to attract a range of academically suitable applicants with broad life experiences, skills and perspectives to the University's Health Sciences Professional Programmes. For both Dentistry and Medicine, the health-related professional experience in a relevant field must be to a standard acceptable to the Admissions Committees.

For Dentistry, the Dental Admissions Committee would consider applications from those with an NZQCF Level 6 or higher qualification in a health-professional area. Applicants are recommended to have not less than five years' experience in their chosen profession and be able to show evidence of the ability to study at a university level.

For Medicine, applicants seeking admission with health-related professional experience will be required to demonstrate academic and/or professional experience in the relevant field. Allied health professionals are recommended to have not less than five years' experience in their chosen profession(s), and preferably at least two years in New Zealand. The allied health professions which are considered under the health-related professional experience in a relevant field criterion, are those that are currently regulated under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, and Social Workers who are regulated under the Social Workers Registration Act 2019.

It is important to note that health-related professional experience is not the only determining factor of receiving an offer to the MB ChB and BDS programmes via the Alternative category. A wide range of other factors are considered – e.g., academic achievement, statement of interest, and performance in an interview are also considered as part of the application process.

## **2. Which factors are assessed when evaluating candidates?**

This information is all available in the Guidelines for Admission for each programme (refer under the "Selection criteria" heading). Alternative category applicants submit a CV, an academic record, and a personal statement. Applicants are then put forward for interview, with those confirmed as suitable for admission receiving offers to enter the programme.

In addition to the above, applicants wishing to be considered under one of the University's equity groups (i.e., Māori, Pacific, Rural, Refugee) also need to fulfil the requirements stipulated for each equity group. We note that applicants applying for these programmes via the Alternative category are not able to apply via the Socioeconomic equity group.

## **3. Where applicable, what was the minimum and average GPA of SUCCESSFUL applicants?**

The University does not keep records of this as GPA is not a requisite factor for applicants under the Alternative category receiving offers to enter the programme. Accordingly, 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.

## **4. Number of applicants and number of successful applicants**

Subject to the following comment, please see the below table which shows the number of applicants, and the number of applicants to receive offers, to the 2020 – 2024 MB ChB and BDS programme via the Alternative general category:

- In accordance with section 15(1) of the Act, we have decided to **grant** your request for the 2025 information for this question. However, we are still compiling this information and will contact you again to provide it without undue delay. As waitlists are still in operation, this data will not be confirmed until the beginning of March, when final class lists are confirmed (the waitlist remains in operation until then).

	MB ChB, Alternative general category		BDS, Alternative general category	
	Number of applications	Number of offers	Number of applications	Number of offers
<b>2020</b>	110	13	22	6
<b>2021</b>	104	10	22	
<b>2022</b>	102	12	28	5
<b>2023</b>	105	14	21	5
<b>2024</b>	94	17	42	6

**5. For Medicine, is UCAT required?**

Applicants to the MB ChB programme via the Alternative category are not required to sit the UCAT.

**6. The number of waitlist offers ACCEPTED and the number of waitlist applicants to receive an offer (for this, please provide the information for graduate general pathway entry for 2020 – 2025)**

In accordance with section 15(1) of the Act, we have decided to **grant** this part of your request (subject to any privacy considerations as mentioned at the beginning of our response). However, we are still compiling this information and will contact you again to provide it without undue delay. As noted in our response to question 4, the 2025 information will not be confirmed until the beginning of March, as waitlists are still in operation for the BDS and MB ChB programmes.

We note that there may be occasions where no offers were made from the waitlist. Any data related to those years will be indicated as “N/A” (“not applicable”).

**7. For the references, are there guidelines as to who can be the referees?**

The Guidelines for Admission for both programmes state that referees should be both professional and character. There are no further guidelines – it is up to applicants who would be best to provide such references.

I trust that this information will be helpful. In the above cases, we consider that good reasons exist for withholding information, and these are not outweighed by other considerations which would make it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

We will be back in touch soon with regards to our responses to questions 4 and 6. 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