



23 September 2022

By email: fyi-request-20313-4988841a@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear S Clarke

I refer to your information request dated 22 August 2022 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have requested information in relation to entry to the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB ChB) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programmes via the Graduate Māori and Graduate Indigenous Pacific Equity Groups.

Please see our responses to each of your questions below. We note that we provide extensive information on our Māori and Pacific strategies and policies on our website, including the [Māori Strategic Framework 2022](#); the [Pacific Strategic Framework 2022](#); and [Te Kauae Parāoa: Division of Health Sciences Policy on Admissions](#). These documents clarify that working towards a more culturally competent and equitable health workforce that mirrors New Zealand society is a major priority for both the University of Otago and the Division of Health Sciences.

Entry requirements (academic grades) for BDS and MB ChB from HSFY for graduate students

In order to be considered for admission to the BDS programme via the Graduate category, applicants must have completed, normally in the minimum academic time and within three years of the date of application, the requirements of a degree awarded by a University in New Zealand. Applicants must also have a current UCAT result and have achieved a score in all five of the UCAT sections at a threshold level determined annually by the Dental Admissions Committee, to proceed to interview. Further information on the entry requirements for the BDS programme via the Graduate category, including how a score for candidates is calculated, please refer to the [Guidelines for Admission](#) and [Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery \(BDS\)](#).

In order to be considered for admission to the MB ChB programme via the Graduate category, applicants must have completed, normally in the minimum academic time and within three years of the date of application, the requirements of a degree awarded by a University in New Zealand. Applicants must also have a current UCAT result and achieved a score in all five of the UCAT sections at a threshold level determined annually by the Medical Admission Committee. Further information on the entry requirements for the MB ChB programme via the Graduate category, including how a score for candidates is calculated, please refer to the [Guidelines for Admission](#) and [Regulations for the Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery \(MB ChB\)](#).

We note that applicants applying for admission to the BDS and MB ChB programmes via the Graduate category are not required to have taken Health Sciences First Year (HSFY) papers as part of their qualifying degree for admission under the Graduate category. BDS applicants must have the equivalent of the HSFY papers when they apply. However, graduates cannot enter the MB ChB programme without these. This means that if an applicant reaches the required standard with their GPA without the HSFY papers they will receive a provisional offer which requires them to then sit

and complete successfully, to the minimum standard required, any missing HSFY papers. If they meet this requirement, the offer then converts to a full, unconditional offer.

Lowest academic grades of Māori and Pacific students who were accepted for BDS and MB ChB in the last 3 years

In your request, you have asked for the threshold entry requirements for BDS and MB ChB for the Māori and Pacific Equity Groups “from 2021, 2020 and 2019 for graduate students”. However, you have also asked for this same data from “the last 3 years.” We interpret “the last 3 years” to include the data we have available in relation to 2022. For this reason, we have included the relevant data from 2019 to 2022, in order to ensure we have responded to your request in full.

| Programme | Category | Equity Group | Minimum GPAs to Receive Unconditional Offers | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| MB ChB | Graduate | Māori | 4.42 | 4.92 | 5.00 | 4.51 |
| | | Indigenous Pacific | 4.74 | 4.89 | <5 students | 4.83 |
| BDS | Graduate | Māori | 4.95 | <5 students | <5 students | 4.99 |
| | | Indigenous Pacific | 4.97 | <5 students | 5.05 | <5 students |

We note that where there were below five successful applicants in a group, we have not disclosed the relevant GPA as there is a risk the individuals concerned could be identifiable.

There were a number of students who were considered under both categories together however, again, there were fewer than five students in this group so the relevant GPA cannot be disclosed.

Number of Māori and Pacific students who got into BDS and MB ChB in the last 3 years

Please see the below table which shows the number of applicants to receive unconditional offers to enter the 2019 – 2022 BDS and MB ChB programmes via the Graduate Māori and Graduate Indigenous Pacific Equity Groups. In each instance, offers were typically made the preceding year for study in the following year e.g., 20 offers were made in 2018 in the MB ChB Māori Graduate category, for study in 2019.

| Programme | Category | Equity Group | Number of Applicants to Receive Unconditional Offers | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| MB ChB | Graduate | Māori | 20 | 8 | 9 | 20 |
| | | Indigenous Pacific | 9 | 6 | <5 students | 6 |
| BDS | Graduate | Māori | 5 | <5 students | <5 students | 7 |
| | | Indigenous Pacific | 5 | <5 students | 5 | <5 students |

Is there a set number of Māori and Pacific students, and set academic grade threshold for BDS and MB ChB entry?

There is no fixed number of positions available for applicants to the MB ChB or BDS programmes via the Graduate Māori or Graduate Indigenous Pacific Equity Groups. The exact number of applicants admitted to the MB ChB or BDS programmes via the Graduate Māori or Graduate Indigenous Pacific Equity Groups is cohort dependent and varies each year.

Regarding whether there is a set GPA score threshold for BDS and MB ChB entry - we would not normally make an offer to applicants with a GPA below 5.00 in an Equity Group unless other circumstances needed to be taken into consideration, in which case an application is made for a variation to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor. As noted above, further information on the entry requirements for the MB ChB and BDS programmes via the Graduate Māori or Graduate Indigenous Pacific Equity Groups are publicly available online:

- MB ChB: [Guidelines for Admission](#)
- BDS: [Guidelines for Admission](#)

Were there any changes made due to COVID-19? (e.g. decreasing/increasing the acceptance rate of Māori and Pacific students for BDS and MB ChB)

There were no changes made to acceptance rates or entry requirements for applicants via the Graduate Māori or Graduate Indigenous Pacific Equity Groups for the BDS and MB ChB programme as a result of COVID-19.

However, we note that for all students, the University of Otago has accounted for disruptions created by COVID-19 by introducing grade increases for papers and/or assessments completed under lockdown. These include:

- 5 mark increase to final grades for papers completed in Semester 1 2020;
- Final grades of 47, 48 or 49 bumped up to 50 (pass) for papers completed in Semester 2 2020;
- 5 mark increase to students in full year papers to each of their assessments completed in Semester 1 2020; and
- 5 mark increase to eligible internal assessments completed or submitted between 18 August 2021 and 27 August 2021.

We note that these grade increases will have only been applied to Graduate category applicants who studied at the University of Otago. Graduate category applicants from other universities may or may not have had grade increases for papers and/or assessments completed under COVID-19 conditions.

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.

Yours sincerely



Kelsey Kennard
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator
Office of the Registrar