

Flatting Life at Otago



Contents

A Word from the Vice-Chancellor.....	4
Timeline.....	4
Flatmates.....	4
Budgeting – How much does it all cost?	5
Looking for a flat	5
Healthy Homes Legislation.....	5
Energy / Moisture	6
Types of Tenancy Agreements.....	6
Tenancy Tips.....	6
Landlords & Flat Maintenance.....	6
Domestic Matters	7
Citizenship – Your Responsibility	7
Sophia Charter	7
Sustainability.....	7
Flatting assessment kit from DCC	8
Susty Neighbourhood	8
Resource & Assistance Directory	8
OUSA Student Support Centre.....	8
Conflict Resolution and Mediation Services	9
Student Health Services	9
Health – COVID 19.....	9
Proctors Office & Campus Watch	9
What you need to know when throwing a party.....	9
Security Flat Check.....	10
Looking for safe and accessible fire-arm storage?.....	10
Media Advice	10
Te Whare Tāwharau.....	10
OCASA – Ōtepoti Collective Against Sexual Abuse	10
1737, need to talk?	10
Healthline.....	11
Lifeline Aotearoa.....	11
Queer Support.....	11
Transition to Flatting.....	11
Last word.....	11
Quick Contact Guide	12

A Word from the Vice-Chancellor

During your time living in a Residential College, the experiences you gain put you in a unique position to help guide those who will follow. There will be plenty of the opportunities for you to continue your relationship as a valued member of the College community.

There are many ways in which you can continue to contribute to your College whether through academic guidance, informal mentoring or continued participation in the inter-college sporting and cultural programme.

Already you have invested a great deal during your time at Otago and now, as future graduates, you have a personal interest and responsibility in helping to maintain our University's fine reputation.

The aim of this resource is to make you aware of the many services available to you both on campus and in the community, I encourage you to make use of these to ensure that your flatting experience is a safe and enjoyable one. I wish you every success going forward.



Professor David Murdoch
Vice-Chancellor

Timeline

Whilst you're in the thick of your semester and dealing with paper deadlines or the upcoming social gathering, there may be some discussions about organising your flatting group. You should not rush to sign the first flat you come across, make sure to research prospective properties and flatmates. Choosing the right flat (see page 5) and right flatmates is important for a great flatting experience and getting either choice wrong can cause significant challenges. Take the time to choose your flat mate carefully, remember you may have only known your new friends for a couple of months.

There are a number of flats available in the North Dunedin area and further suburbs. Many flats are usually available for viewing from May or June for the following year. It is important that you view the flat you intend to sign a contract for and understand the terms of the contract- again don't rush. Speak to your prospective landlord /Property Manager and/or OUSA if you have questions about the process and take advice.

Flatmates

Choose your flatmates can be a tricky process, as if you choose the wrong person you may be liable for their rent and damage and may find them difficult to live with. On the one hand you're naturally inclined to flat with your mates but they may not be the best people to live with. If there's something that they do that you find annoying now, it'll be 10 times more annoying when you live in a flat with them!

CRUCIAL QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL FLATMATES	Dryer/Heaters/Long Showers Should flatmates who use more power pay more?	Would You Rather Spend as little as possible on flatting expenses (rent/power/wifi/food) OR Spend more and live more comfortably?	Would You Rather A low-quality flat in close to campus? OR A high-quality flat further away?
Guests & Partners You have a friend stay at your flat for the week. Should they chip in for flat bills?	Would You Rather Turn on the heater? OR Put on an extra layer?	How often should flat cleaning occur?	Guests & Partners If a flatmate's partner stays 4 nights a week should they chip in for power?
Dishes Do them straight away? OR Leave until there's a decent pile?	Are you? A night owl? OR An early riser?	Do you want to... Hang as a flat and do fun activities OR Live more independently of each other	Guests & Partners You spend most of your time at your partner's flat, should you put less in the flat account for bills?
Chore Roster Big yes! OR Just clean when it gets messy?	How often do you want to host drinks at your flat?	Rooms & Rent Should those in the biggest/smallest rooms pay more/less than the others?	Would You Rather Flat cooking? OR Do your own cooking?

Budgeting – How much does it all cost?

This is always a bit tricky when you're starting out in your first flat, and can seem a bit daunting at the beginning as you work through the costs for groceries, electricity, internet, mobile phone, personal insurance, transport (have you seen petrol prices recently?!) and entertainment (you've got to have some fun as well). But if you take the time to sit down with your prospective flatmates and work through it step by step the hurdles become less and less.

When looking at electricity and internet companies, don't just automatically pick the same as your family home – electricity costs vary across the country (and across different companies) – check out switchme.co.nz to see what company will be best for you. You can always ask the current tenants of the flat how much they're paying and what company they're with when you're at a flat viewing to give you an idea.

If you are joining a pre-existing flat group, it is likely that these costs will already be set and you should enquire about this before agreeing to join. Although weekly rental rates can vary, a reasonable average is \$160 per week. Click [here](#) for an online budgeting tool to work out how far your money will go.

Student Allowance amount?

Student Loan Living Costs amount?

Income from Part-Time Work?



Looking for a flat

It's incredibly important to take the time to carefully look around prospective flats properly. Remember, whilst you might be flat-hunting in the warmer months, you will be living in your eventual flat in the coldest, wettest days & nights of the Dunedin winter. Sleeping, eating, socialising and studying in a damp, cold, noisy flat does not lead to academic success. The following are some important points to consider when searching for a flat:

NOISE	STRUCTURE	WARMTH	SPACE
How soundproof is the flat? Consider outside noise and between bedrooms/the lounge - not everyone wants to hear you practice your DJ set all night.	Structural Integrity Does it look like a strong gust of wind will knock the place over? If so it's probably not the best place to live.	How will you keep warm? Heatpumps in proximity to the living room (and sometimes bedrooms) are the most cost-efficient way to heat a flat, but you may want a bedroom heater too! Blankets and wooly jumpers do the trick too!	Bedrooms How big of a room do you need to fit all your belongings? Does your bedroom have enough power points for all your gadgets?
How close are the neighbours? If the flats are close together (or on top of each other) you'll hear each other all the time - they may call noise control on you (or maybe you'll end up calling noise control on them)	Insulation Ask for the insulation report	Sunlight Are there any trees or structures blocking sunlight? If the flat is dark it will always feel cold.	Bathrooms Is the only toilet in the bathroom? Will this disrupt morning routines? Watch out for slime/mould in the corners of bathroom walls.
Is there anything noisy nearby? In theory it may be handy to be close to Fatty Lane or a liquor store, but are you going to be happy with that level of noise at exam time?	Seals Do all the windows and doors close and seal properly? A cold draught coming through your window on a cold winters night is nobody's friend!	Weird Smells & Peeling Paint? If the flat has a weird smell it may be damp, this can cause inhabitants to get sick and stay sicker for longer. Peeling paint on ceilings and walls is also another sign of damp.	Food Storage Is there enough room in the pantry, fridge and freezer for everyone's food? If you are cooking independently this space is crucial!
	Holes Are there any holes in the walls, ceiling, floors or doors? If so you can always ask the landlord to fix these before you move in (put these sorts of requests in writing		Parking Do you need off-street parking? There are limited parks on campus

Healthy Homes Legislation

Landlords are required to comply with the Healthy Homes standards which are a minimum standard for heating, insulation, ventilation, moisture and drainage, and draught stopping. Ensure your prospective property meets these standards by talking to the landlord. More information can be found www.tenancy.govt.nz/healthy-homes/

Energy / Moisture

- Individual heater can add many dollars to the power bill. Instead it is often much cheaper to heat the main living area with a heatpump or fire (though not many flats in the student quarter have working fireplaces anymore) for all to enjoy.
- If your flat does decide to use individual heaters make sure they have been tested and certified and keep all clothing and furniture at least 1.5m away from it.
- Discuss with your flatmates to put the same amount into the flat account for power each week – your flat account will look juicy in the summer months, but that extra cash will come in handy for those winter power bills. \$15-20 a week each should keep you super well covered for those potentially high winter bills.
- If you plan on drying your clothes on a clothes airer instead of in the dryer make sure to open the windows at the same time so that you don't just add moisture to the room and create another issue.
- If you have condensation on your windows/walls always wipe it down with a towel to stop the moisture building up.
- Ventilation is key in reducing moisture, even opening your windows for an hour in the morning (even when its freezing outside) will help reduce the moisture in the flat and keep your flat feeling warmer overall.
- Draught stoppers and window insulation film are easy and inexpensive ways to reduce heat loss. Check out [GenLess](#) for more info on window insulation film and other ways to reduce energy use.

Types of Tenancy Agreements

Joint Tenancy is when you have signed one contract with other tenants. You will all be responsible for any rent owed or damage. This is the most common type of tenancy for Dunedin flats.

Individual Tenancy is when you are only liable for your own rent, damage and cleaning but the landlord may fill the rest of the property with tenants of their choosing – this is what most Studio Rooms use/

Periodic Lease is not for a specific term. It continues until either the landlord or the tenant gives the correct notice to end it. The tenants must give at least 28 days' written notice to end the tenancy whereas the landlord is required to give either 63 or 90 days' written notice if the reason for doing so permits them to give the notice. The landlord may choose to raise the rent after twelve months.

Fixed Term Lease finishes on a specific date. Once the term ends, the tenancy will become

periodic, if you don't want this to happen you will need to give notice in writing at least 28 days before the term ends. There is no provision for either the landlord or the tenant to give notice to cancel early. This type of lease is the most common for students and gives security of tenure for the period of the lease. A fixed term lease also provides a commitment that the rent will not be increased unless an option to increase is included in the lease upon signing.

Once signed, the terms and conditions of this lease cannot be arbitrarily changed. If you want further info about tenancy types and your rights as a tenant check out [Tenancy Services](#).

Tenancy Tips

Signing Tenancy Agreements Make sure all flatmates are present at the signing of the Tenancy Agreement, otherwise they may not share liability for any outstanding damage or costs (which will cost you money!)	Fixed Term Lease These cannot be ended early (unless all tenants and the landlord agree). If you sign a flat from 1st Jan - 31st Dec you have to pay rent for that entire period, whether you are living in the flat or not.	Prior to Signing Make sure you have enough flatmates to fill every room and that the landlord has provides a property inspection report and a complete list of existing chattels (ie fridge/washing machine etc)	Payments in Advance Your landlord can ask for up to 4 weeks rent as bond (lodged with Tenancy Services) and no more than 2 weeks rent in advance. Letting fees are not permitted to be charged by a landlord or property manager.
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Landlords & Flat Maintenance

The following are some points to consider in order to keep things between your flat and the landlord

- Do they live locally and what is the best way to contact them (or the property manager)?
- Have a flatmate who is the key point of contact between the flat and the landlord, this person is the one who will liaise with both the landlord & tradespeople if repairs need to happen.
- Landlords are legally required to supply smoke alarms for the flat. Do not take these down even if you are a professional toast burner, they can save your life. Remember to check the batteries regularly (the start and end of each semester is a good rule of thumb)
- Lock your doors and windows. Most burglaries that occur in the student area are opportunists who are just looking for an unlocked door. Remember that your insurance may not cover you if you leave your doors/windows unlocked. Your bedroom door may also lock, and you should keep it locked when you're not in it.
- Communication is everything. If you have issues with the property let your landlord know, they can usually provide solutions to common problems.
- Landlords have to give at least 48 hours' notice before an inspection and no more than 14 days prior to their visit. They cannot do more than one inspection every 4 weeks (most landlords will only do one every 3-6 months). Inspections can take place between 8am and 7pm.

Domestic Matters

Making sure you have the right kind of insurance for both your personal effects and liability for when things go wrong outside of your control can be explored by contacting any of the insurance companies. Some now have renters insurance that is specific to flatting.



Citizenship – Your Responsibility

It's important to remember that both on and off campus, you are a member of the University community and as such, are responsible for how students are seen in the wider community. Ultimately it is in your best interests to help protect and build the reputation of the University, as this will be reflected in your graduate status throughout your career.

Get to know your neighbours and look out for each other (it's also a great way to make friends). Flatting is a crucial part of the Otago experience and when you leave and meet other alumni later in life you will all talk about your flatting experience (good and bad).

Residential Colleges always keen to develop their alumni relationships and to bring in previous students to join in with Inter College sports, events and activities, or to take on mentoring or tutoring roles at the College.



Most importantly, take the time to become familiar with what's expected of you through the University Code of Student Conduct.

A copy of this is available: otago.ac.nz/proctor/codeofconduct

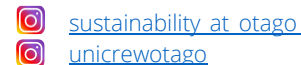
Sophia Charter

Following the tragic death of student Sophia Crestani in 2019, Sophia's family and the stakeholders of North Dunedin came together and renewed the resolution to support students to ensure a safer environment. There are many activities through the year that link to the Sofia Charter.

Two to look out for are the *North Dunedin Clean-up day* and *Drop for Good*. *The North Dunedin Clean-up Day* focusses on the student streets right next to campus and gets everyone out with bags and brooms to show their commitment to creating a good place to live.

Drop for Good is at the start and end of each year. At the start of the year you can go along to the event and get all the furniture, crockery, and flat stuff that you need for the year without it costing you a fortune. At the end of the year when you have to clear out your flat and get your deposits back, pick-ups and trailers are available so that all of the good stuff can come back to drop for good, be stored over the summer, and then used again in flats the next year. This keep literally tonnes of waste out of landfill and a load more cash in your wallet!

The great thing about the Sophia Charter activities is that it is a co-lab with students, the University, OUSA, DCC and all the other partners working together for a better environment in the student neighbourhoods. The best way to keep track of what is happening is to get onto these socials and have a chat with Campus Watch when you see out and about.



A copy of the Sophia Charter is available [here](#)

Sustainability

As students, we have a huge amount of collective power, after all, demand drives change. By being aware of the consequences of our actions, making a conscious effort to adopt more sustainable habits, and working together for broader change, we can overcome the environmental challenges the planet is currently facing.

These tips and alternative ways of doing things will help you to live more sustainably. Not all of them will apply to you, but where they do, give them a go. You'll find they are really simple and will help you continue to live as you want to live, but cheaper, better and more sustainably.

[Tētēkura/Student Leads Sustainability Office](#) (click the link for more info!)



Flatting assessment kit from DCC

Energy costs money and produces emissions. Not using energy creates an unhealthy flat. If you want to work out how to use less energy and keep your flat healthy DCC have a Home Energy audit Kit that you can borrow.

To learn more click here -> <https://www.dunedinlibraries.govt.nz/collections/home-energy-audit-toolkit-heat-kit>

Susty Neighbourhood

He Kāika Toitū, He Kāika ora is our Uni Flats Sustainability Neighbourhood.

If you're looking for flat mates that care about the planet, want to grow some food, or even get involved with some bees this could be an ideal place for you. It's been set up as a living lab, which means what we learn in the neighbourhood can feedback into research and help us find ways to make all flatting more sustainable.



Find out more on our website

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/sustainability/anywhere/students/otago739093.html>

Resource & Assistance Directory

During the year things might get tough and you may find that you need some support from others. Typical issues that arise include needing advice about University policies, your health, questions about gender or sexuality, landlord issues, finance problems, to name a few.

The following pages contain some University and local support

OUSA Student Support Centre

OUSA Student Support is here to help you through anything life can throw at you. If you have any concerns or questions related to academics, flatting, finances, wellbeing, or safety, or just need a general chat with someone who gets it, the professional team at Student Support are here and ready to help.



We are Otago's resident experts on everything related to flatting and tenancy. Flatting can be pretty daunting at times. We are here to help with anything from your landlord and tenancy issues, right through to flat issues like mould and moisture, cooking and cleaning, and even bothersome flatmates!

Also check out ousasupporthub.org.nz for all the info, tips tricks, and life hacks you need for university life and flatting or get in touch with us.

OUSA Student Support Centre | 5 Ethel Benjamin Place | Dunedin
0800 12 10 23 | help@ousa.org.nz | ousasupporthub.org.nz



Conflict Resolution and Mediation Services

As individual schedules get busier and the weather gets colder, flat tensions can start to build and are worth addressing sooner rather than later. This service is a low-level and informal way of resolving problems and addressing concerns, available to all members of the University community.

In addition, the service's website provides a number of useful suggestions to help mitigate any instances of conflict you may be experiencing within your flat.

University Mediator | 143 Union Street East | Dunedin
(03) 479 5679 | mediation@otago.ac.nz | otago.ac.nz/mediation

Student Health Services

Student Health is an invaluable and comprehensive range of primary health care services available to the University's student population. Areas include medical, nursing, mental health and wellbeing, psychiatry, health education and specialty clinics.



Some of the issues Student Health can help you with include:

- Illness Management
- Injury Management
- Minor Surgery
- Sexual Health / Contraception
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Travel Medicine
- Sports Medicine
- IUD Placement

Student Health | Cnr Walsh & Albany Streets | Dunedin Freephone:
0800 479 821 | otago.ac.nz/studenthealth

Health – COVID 19

With the global COVID-19 pandemic continuing it is important that you and your flat mates prepare to be healthy and safe during this time. If you have cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms you should get a test. There is a Community Testing Centre at 5 Malcolm Street, North Dunedin open 7 days 11am -7pm. You can drive through and walk in, there is no appointment needed. More information can be found here <https://wellsouth.nz/community/covid-19/>

The COVID-19 website details information about how to prepare and stay safe as well as giving links to further information. [covid19.govt.nz/prepare-and-stay-safe/be-prepared-for-covid-19/](https://www.covid19.govt.nz/prepare-and-stay-safe/be-prepared-for-covid-19/)

You can also visit the University of Otago website COVID-19 page to get information related to studying and being on campus <https://www.otago.ac.nz/coronavirus/index.html>

Proctors Office & Campus Watch

The Proctor and Deputy Proctor have direct management control of the Campus Watch teams which provide a 24/7 presence on the Campus and surrounding streets, making ours one of the safest University Campuses in the country.

Campus Watch is a diverse group of people readily available to offer assistance and advice when or wherever it is required. They act as a 'walking information booth', helping to steer students in the right direction on any number of flatting related issues including budgeting, rubbish procedures, health problems, tensions with neighbours. The role of Campus Watch is mainly pastoral - meaning they are there to help and support our students.

What you need to know when throwing a party

Get in touch with Campus Watch to find out what your responsibilities are in this regard. Taking proactive steps can help you to avoid unwanted visits from the Noise Control or the Police – a useful list of things to check is provided on the [Proctor's Office website](#)

Some key things to remember:

- Keep track of who's attending your party - you're responsible for their behaviour while they're at your place and will be left dealing with any potential damage they cause!
- It is your responsibility to ensure that any glass is kept onsite and properly recycled.
- Look after any of your friends or guests who over-indulge in alcohol.
- Local thieves like to party too! The more people you invite, the easier it becomes for unwanted guests to slip in unnoticed.
- As a hosting flat, it is also your responsibility to ensure the safe behaviour of your guests, which includes making sure no one has roof access. Don't put yourself, your flatmates and guests in danger by allowing high-risk activities at your place.
- Good One Party Register is an initiative to ensure people have great parties where everyone feels and stays safe. You can register your party and can access help if you need it. Visit goodone.org.nz

Security Flat Check

If you are leaving your flat unattended over the December/January period or during semester breaks, Campus Watch is available to check in and to help ensure that the flat's contents remain safe and secure. Complete the online registration form from the Proctor's Office website a week before your departure.

Looking for safe and accessible fire-arm storage?

Campus Watch can provide Police approved "A" Category firearm storage. Students are required to produce their firearms license when dropping off or uplifting their firearms.

Proctor's Office/Campus Watch | St David Complex
University Campus | Dunedin
24 hour Control Room: 0800 479 5000
proctor@otago.ac.nz | otago.ac.nz/proctor
campus.watch@otago.ac.nz



Media Advice

Every now and again you may be approached by representatives from the media who will ask you to contribute to stories that they are working on. If you are willing to take part in their story, then it is your prerogative to do so.

However, if you're unsure of what to do, and think you might need practical advice then please call the Communications.

Meanwhile, here are some basic pointers:

- Ask the reporter for their full name and the name of the news organisation they are working for.
- Ask them what their story is about.
- Remember that you do not have to answer questions if you do not wish to.
- Answering by email is one way to help ensure that stories are more accurate than an off-the-cuff conversation.
- If a reporter comes to your front door, which is your private property, and you do not wish to speak to them you can politely ask them to leave.
- If they do not leave and you feel intimidated please call Campus Watch on 0800 479 5000 (or x5000 from a University phone).

University Communication Office
(03) 479 5730 | mc@otago.ac.nz



Te Whare Tāwharau

They are a place of shelter to reduce the impact of sexual violence within our campus communities.

The Centre is one unified space that provides sexual violence related support within the campus community. They support students who are dealing with incidents of sexual violence that are recent or historical.

Hours:

During semester: 10am–4pm Monday–Friday
Summer School and outside semester: 11am–2pm Monday–Friday

5 Leith Bank | Dunedin | Text 0212783795 | 0800479379
| tewharetawharau@otago.ac.nz | otago.ac.nz/te-whare-tawharau



OCASA – Ōtepoti Collective Against Sexual Abuse

OCASA is a non-profit, community agency run by a number of dedicated paid staff and volunteers – who support all survivors of sexual violence to progress towards healing.

All OCASA members are trained to work in the sexual violence sector. Our Collective consists of many committed and valued staff members and volunteers encompassing a variety of vital roles and functions.

OCASA | Dunbar House | 21 Dunbar Street | Dunedin
(03) 479 1592 | support@ocasa.org.nz | ocasa.org.nz

1737, need to talk?

1737 is a free call or text service 24 hours a day where you can speak or text with a trained counsellor. This service is free. If you or someone you know is feeling anxious, a bit down, overwhelmed, out of sorts or just needs someone to talk to you can call or text 1737.



OCASA
Ōtepoti Collective Against Sexual Abuse

Healthline

Healthline is a free service, staffed by experienced registered nurses and available to help 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Healthline nurses are specialists in assessing and advising over the phone and can help if you're:

- Feeling unwell - but are not sure whether you need to see a doctor.
- Needing some urgent advice about a friend who might be sick.
- Have a general enquiry regarding health and wellbeing.

If you need to speak to someone in your own language, Healthline can usually arrange this using an interpreting service.

Available 24/7 | 0800 611 116

Lifeline Aotearoa

The transition into flatting can sometimes be stressful and whether you're having trouble overcoming problems with a flatmate, coping with a heavy workload or financial pressure, or would just like to talk to someone, Lifeline is available.

Lifeline Aotearoa offers free, confidential support 24/7 from volunteers who have undergone world class counselling training and supervision, providing a caring and professional service to a wide range of people in need.

24/7 Helpline: 0800 543 354



Queer Support

OUSA Queer Support understands that it can be daunting to be confronted with labels such as gay, lesbian, bi, trans and 'queer' and offers a comprehensive support network for students finding out about and coming to terms with gender and sexual identity.

Dedicated to making the University of Otago one of the most inclusive tertiary institutions in New Zealand, Queer Support's resources include peer support, advocacy, discussion groups, a comprehensive library and confidential one on one appointments with the Queer Support Coordinator.

OUSA Queer Support | 5 Ethel Benjamin Place | Dunedin
(03) 479 5445 | help@ousa.org.nz | ousa.org.nz/support/queer-support

Transition to Flatting

The transition from the comfort of a College or home to flatting is exciting but can also be a source of apprehension. As such it is important that you feel informed and supported in order to make this transition as rewarding as possible.

If you have anything you are still unsure about write out a list and go talk to your Residential College staff or check out OUSA Student Support Centre (5 Ethel Benjamin Place) or call them on 0800 12 10 23 to ask any questions about flatting. The Quick Contact Guide on the following page also lists a range of contacts you may need while flatting or you may want to reach out to before you sign on a flat!

Last word...

As you depart your residential college experience, remember that you are still an alumnus of your college and should continue to represent its values around good citizenship, academic excellence and fair play.

You will always be part of the history of your college and we know from talking to former residents just how special these experiences have been, and that the friends made, seem to last a lifetime.

Dunedin is a true University city full of vibrant people like you, adding to and evolving that wonderful culture.

Make the best of your time, be good neighbours, look out for each other and be caring flatmates.
All the very best in the next stage of your Otago experience! Flatting!

James Lindsay
Director | Campus and Collegiate Life Services



Quick Contact Guide

OUSA Student Support Centre	0800 12 10 23
University Accommodation Centre	03 479 5100
Campus Watch / Proctor's Office	0800 479 5000
University Communications Office	03 479 5730
University Mediator	03 479 5679
Student Health	0800 479 821
Māori Centre Te Huka Mātauraka	03 479 8490
Pacific Islands Centre	03 479 8278
Healthline	0800 611 116
OSCASA	03 474 1592
Lifeline Aotearoa	0800 543 354
OUSA Queer Support	03 479 5445
Community Law Centre	03 474 1922
Ask Otago	0800 80 80 98
Tenancy Services New Zealand	tenancy.govt.nz
Need to Talk? 1737 (call or text)	1737

For further information contact: Campus and College
Life Services Divisional Office

University of Otago

PO Box 56

Dunedin 9054

Tel 64 3 479 4069

Email_campus.collegiatelife@otago.ac.nz

