

Te Whatu Ora Canterbury West Coast Scholarships in Oral Health

Established in 2025 by the University of Otago, in partnership with Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora Waitaha Canterbury and Te Tai o Poutini West Coast District. This scholarship is intended to support up to seven students each year enrolled in the Bachelor of Oral Health programme who are willing to work on a full-time basis as Registered Oral Health Therapists in the Community Dental Service in the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast Districts on completion of their degree. While academic achievement is important, the scholarship also has an equity focus, and students with strong personal links to the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast regions in particular are encouraged to apply. The scholarship thus aims to support and develop a dental health workforce both representative of and committed to the population that it serves.

Eligibility

Applicants must be:

- a New Zealand or Australian citizen, or New Zealand Residence Class Visa Holder
- enrolled full-time (120 points) in any year of study towards the Bachelor of Oral Health degree at the University of Otago, or may be enrolled part-time in Year 1 or 2 of the degree if granted recognition of prior learning for any Year 1 or 2 papers
- willing to enter an employment contract with Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) as an Oral Health Therapist on completion of their degree, in the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast Districts, as directed by the Community Dental Service.

In alignment with the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022, which aims to improve health outcomes and achieve health equity, applications for this scholarship are encouraged from candidates from ethnic groups underrepresented in the oral health workforce in the Canterbury, South Canterbury and West Coast Districts. Applications are also encouraged from candidates who come from, or have a significant personal connection to, any of these three regions.

Application Process

Every application for this scholarship must be submitted to Student Administration (Scholarships) at the University of Otago by the relevant closing date.

Applications are submitted via the University of Otago online scholarship application portal. Applicants will be required to upload:

- a completed application form
- a short CV (no more than two pages)
- a brief personal statement outlining:
 - why completing the Bachelor of Oral Health degree is important to them and their future career ambitions
 - the applicant's intention to contribute to dental health practice in the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast Districts
 - any personal or family links to the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast regions
 - any other information that may be of relevance to the Selection Panel.
- an academic transcript for any tertiary study completed at another institution.

Applicants will also be required to nominate one referee, who may not be an immediate member of their family, willing to provide a suitable written character reference.

Selection Process

The Selection Panel will consist of the following (or their nominees):

- the Service Manager, Community Dental Service Canterbury
- the Coordinator, Community Dental Service West Coast
- the Oral Health Programme Convenor, University of Otago
- the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor Māori for Health Sciences, University of Otago
- the Manager, Postgraduate Scholarships, Prizes and Awards, University of Otago.

The following factors shall be considered when selecting recipients for this award:

- the applicant's academic performance (to date) in the Bachelor of Oral Health degree
- the applicant's willingness to commit to employment as a registered Oral Health Therapist with Health New Zealand in the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast Districts on completion of their Bachelor of Oral Health degree
- whether, based on the latest available workforce and demographic data provided by the Community Dental Service, the applicant belongs to an ethnic group underrepresented in the oral health therapist workforce compared to the ethnicity mix in the general population in the Canterbury, South Canterbury and West Coast Districts
- whether the applicant originates from or has strong personal links to the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast regions
- the character reference supporting the application, and
- all other documentation provided by the applicant.

The Selection Panel may require an interview with short-listed applicants for the scholarship.

If the Selection Panel considers there are no applicants of sufficient merit in any year, the scholarship may not be awarded.

Financial

- Up to seven (7) scholarships will be available annually.
- Each scholarship will have a maximum value of \$25,000.
- Each scholarship will be paid in four separate instalments, as follows:
 - i. A first instalment of \$5,000, funded by Health New Zealand and paid to the recipient by the University of Otago after successful completion of Year 1 of the Bachelor of Oral Health programme, being all courses up to and including semester two of the degree (including recognition of prior learning). The first instalment may be adjusted on a *pro rata* basis where recognition of prior learning is applied.
 - ii. A second instalment of \$5,000, funded by Health New Zealand and paid to the recipient by the University of Otago after successful completion of Year 2 of the Bachelor of Oral Health programme, being all courses up to and including semester four of the degree (including recognition of prior learning). The second instalment may be adjusted on a *pro rata* basis where recognition of prior learning is applied.
 - iii. A third instalment of \$7,500, funded and paid to the recipient by Health New Zealand on their commencement of employment as an Oral Health Therapist with Health New Zealand in the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast Districts.
 - iv. A fourth and final instalment of \$7,500, funded and paid to the recipient by Health New Zealand on their completion of 24 months' employment as an Oral Health Therapist with Health New Zealand in the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast Districts.
- Students applying successfully for the scholarship in Year 2 or 3 of their degree may still be paid the full value of the award, provided all other eligibility and tenure conditions are met.

Students applying in Year 2 will have the first two instalments split evenly between Years 2 and 3. Those applying in Year 3 will receive the instalments in a single lump sum (in Year 3).

- The total number and value of scholarships available each year will be determined by the Selection Panel.

Tenure

- The scholarship must be held with full-time tenure, except to the extent that a recipient has been granted recognition of prior learning.
- The tenure of the scholarship will normally be:
 - i. for two years while enrolled full-time in the Bachelor of Oral Health programme, and
 - ii. for 24 months while employed as an Oral Health Therapist with Health New Zealand in the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast Districts after graduation.
- Shorter tenure may result from applications submitted in Years 2 or 3 of the degree, but will not decrease the total value of funds payable under the terms of the scholarship.
- The recipient must be enrolled continuously in their programme of study until completion of their degree. Suspension requests must be made in writing to the Stewardship Officer, Development and Alumni Relations for a decision by the Selection Panel, and will be approved only for compelling medical or personal circumstances.
- Except in cases where there are compelling medical reasons or adverse personal circumstances beyond a student's control, uptake of the scholarship cannot be deferred.
- The scholarship may not be held in conjunction with any other scholarship, award or prize exceeding a total value of \$25,000, except at the discretion of the Selection Panel. The Selection Panel may also, at its discretion, award a partial scholarship where an applicant has been successful with other scholarship applications.

Other Requirements

- Award of the scholarship is dependent on the recipient being admitted to the University of Otago.
- In accepting the scholarship, the recipient will be deemed to have read, understood, and accepted the conditions of the scholarship.
- The University of Otago and Health New Zealand reserve the right to use the names, photographs, and details of successful applicants for advertising and publicity. The award holders must agree to be reasonably available to participate in interviews and promotional activities if requested by the University of Otago or Health New Zealand.
- The award of the scholarship is an incentive for the recipient to apply for and accept (where offered) full-time employment as an Oral Health Therapist with Health New Zealand in the Canterbury, South Canterbury or West Coast Districts as directed by the Community Dental Service immediately following completion of their Bachelor of Oral Health qualification. Employment will be expected to commence no later than two months after completion of their qualification.
- The University of Otago in consultation with the Donor may terminate any scholarship awarded and require repayment by the recipient of any funds paid out if, during the tenure of the scholarship, a recipient is not in compliance with the conditions of the scholarship or has not maintained satisfactory academic standing (by passing all courses), or brings the University or Donor into disrepute.