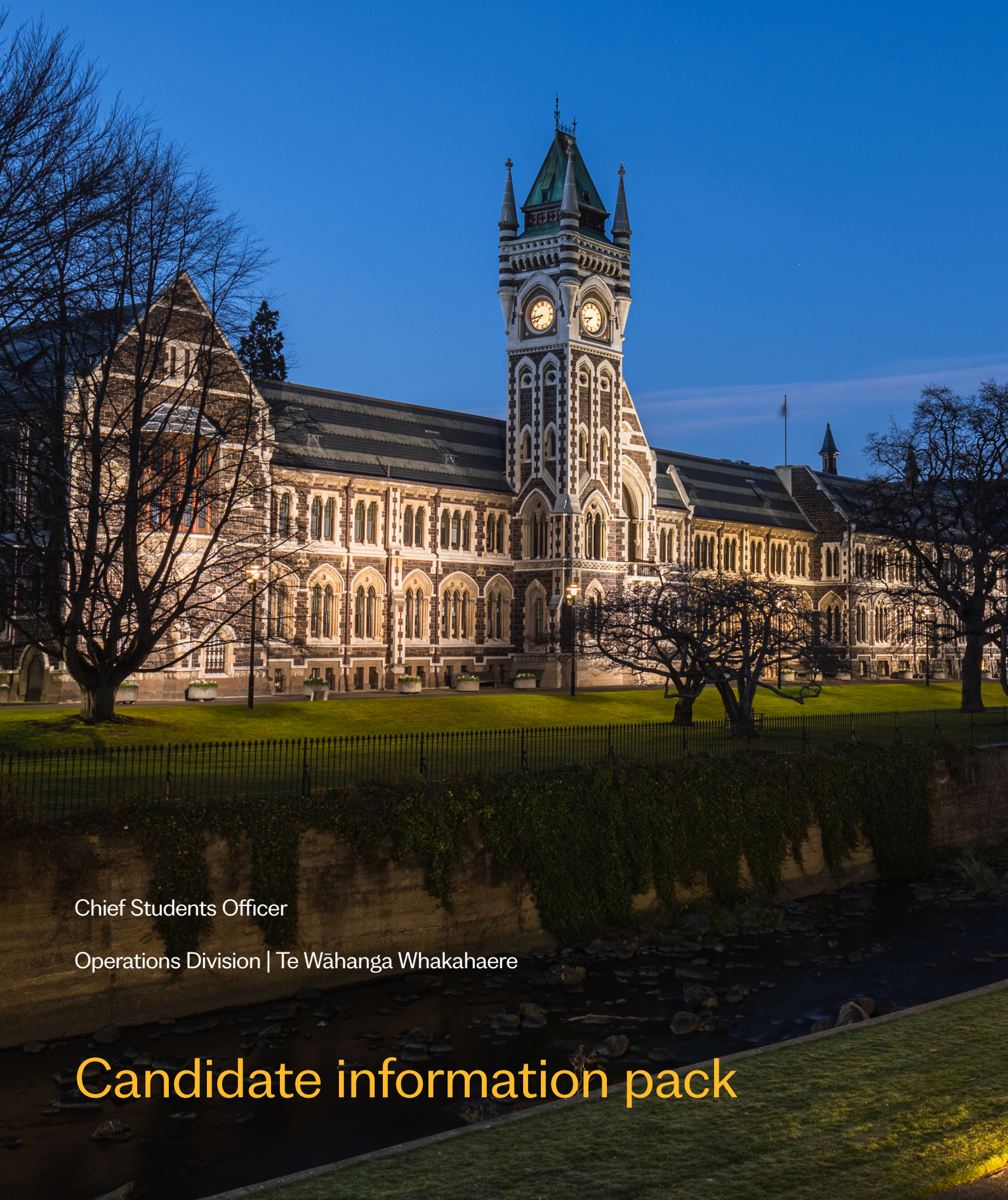




University
of Otago
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA



Chief Students Officer

Operations Division | Te Wāhanga Whakahaere

Candidate information pack



E kā mana, e kā reo, e kā mauka whakahī, e kā awaawa,
e kā pātaka o kā taoka tuku iho, tēnā koutou.

Nāia te reo rāhiri o Tahu Potiki e karaka atu ana ki a koutou katoa.

To all authorities, to all languages, to all mountains
that stand with pride, to all rivers, and the guardians
of treasures everlasting, welcome.

This is the admirable and proud voice of Tahu Potiki
that welcomes you all.





Welcome from the Vice-Chancellor

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your interest in this position at the University of Otago.

I am privileged to be the Vice-Chancellor of this outstanding University. We are committed to becoming a Te Tiriti-led university and to developing our partnership with mana whenua through the development and implementation of Te Kaha Uia Te Kaha, the Mana-to-Mana Agreement.

Founded in 1869 by Scottish settlers with a commitment to the value of education for people of diverse backgrounds, the University of Otago has developed into an institution distinguished by its excellent teaching and research. The University has combined the traditions of this proud history with modern scholarship and has earned an international reputation for academic excellence.

Otago is consistently ranked among New Zealand's leading universities internationally and has been awarded five stars plus – the highest rating possible – by the QS Stars international quality evaluation system, in recognition not only of our teaching and research, but also of innovation, inclusiveness, internationalisation, the high standard of our facilities, and the employability of our graduates.

Our cultural location in the southern Pacific has also become an important component of our institutional identity, and we have developed deep and enduring links with Pacific communities, both within New Zealand and across the wider Pacific region. The University is strongly committed to ongoing engagement with Pacific communities. Our Pacific Strategic Framework formalises this commitment and articulates the University's goals to improve academic and development outcomes for Pacific students and staff.

The University of Otago has become an enduring educational, cultural and economic force in Dunedin and in New Zealand as a whole. We take seriously our role as critic and conscience of society, and we attract students from throughout New Zealand and around the world, providing them with a world-class education and encouraging them to be the best they can be.

At Otago you have the opportunity to be part of a highly connected community of world class academic staff, outstanding, highly skilled professional staff and a vibrant student body. This will be an exciting and rewarding role and I welcome your application.

Hon Grant Robertson

About the role

Mō te tūnga

The University of Otago | Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's leading universities, with a distinctive residential character and a strong commitment to student success, wellbeing and belonging.

We are seeking an outstanding senior leader to join the University as Chief Students Officer, a newly established role with responsibility for the strategic leadership, integration and performance of the University's student services, pastoral care, residential life, wellbeing, safety and student experience functions.

This is a rare opportunity to lead a portfolio of significant scale and breadth and to shape the services and environments that support students throughout their time at Otago.

The Role

Reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Operations) and as a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group, you will provide executive leadership across an extensive and diverse student facing portfolio. With an operating budget of approximately \$107 million and more than 400 staff, the portfolio spans residential colleges and accommodation, student health and wellbeing, disability support, recreation, careers and campus safety alongside services supporting Māori and Pacific students.

This is both a strategic and highly operational leadership role. Working closely with the Provost and leaders across the University, you will strengthen and connect support across the student journey, lead service improvement and redesign, and ensure services are accessible, culturally responsive, financially sustainable and easy for students to navigate. You will build strong partnerships with the Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) and student communities, ensuring student voice informs the design and improvement of services.

In this role you will also provide senior leadership for the University's pastoral care, wellbeing and student safety responsibilities, including its obligations under the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice and other relevant regulatory frameworks.

Above all, you will help shape the unique Otago experience, creating an environment in which students can live well, feel safe, belong and participate fully in university life.

Qualifications and Experience

We are looking for an accomplished senior leader with significant experience in the tertiary sector and a strong understanding of contemporary student experience. You will understand the diverse needs and expectations of students and how services, support and residential environments contribute to their wellbeing, belonging, participation and success.

You will bring substantial operational leadership and service delivery experience across large, diverse and complex environments, together with senior level oversight of student facing services. You will know how to connect services around students' needs and bring a strong working knowledge of pastoral care, student wellbeing and the regulatory environment within which universities operate.

Commercially astute, you will be comfortable leading significant budgets and making sound decisions about priorities, resources and service models. You will have the judgement and curiosity to question how services are organised, identify opportunities for improvement, and lead change across established structures and professional disciplines.

You will be an experienced people leader, who can lead through others, build capability and bring together teams with very different professional disciplines and service areas. You will also have the credibility and relationship skills to work effectively with students and student representatives, academic and professional leaders, and external partners.

You will bring strong cultural capability, including an understanding of Māori and Pacific communities, te reo Māori and tikanga Māori, and a commitment to giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi through your leadership. You will champion equitable outcomes and accessible, inclusive services and environments.

For someone who has built a career in tertiary education and is ready for a substantially broader leadership challenge, this is a rare opportunity to strengthen Otago's distinctive residential and pastoral model and shape the student experience at institutional scale.

Equal Employment Opportunities

The University of Otago is strongly committed to diversity in staffing and we encourage applications from under-represented groups who are suitably qualified. Parental leave without pay of up to 52 weeks including paid parental leave of up to twelve weeks' salary may be granted. The Otago University Childcare Centre operates childcare facilities covering the period from birth to five years.

Māori partnerships and the Māori Strategic Framework

While the University has a special partnership with Ngāi Tahu, as mana whenua within its takiwā (tribal area) of Te Wai Pounamu, it also has Tiriti-based partnerships with a number of other iwi: Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Porou Hauora (Ngāti Porou), Ngāti Toa, Te Atiawa and Tipu Ora Charitable Trust (Te Arawa).

The University's commitment to iwi aspirations and Māori development is articulated in its Māori Strategic Framework, which is a platform for the collective commitment to excellence in educational outcomes for all who come to Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka.

otago.ac.nz/maori/maori-strategic-framework

Pacific Strategic Framework

The University is strongly committed to Pacific student achievement and meeting the needs of Pacific peoples. Its Pacific Strategic Framework signals its intentions to support Pacific students to succeed in their tertiary education journey. There are skilled staff members, both within the academic divisions and the service divisions, who are dedicated to supporting Pacific students through university study.

otago.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/211217/the-university-of-otago-pacific-strategic-framework-2022-2030-088124.pdf

The University of Otago Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

Founded in 1869, the University of Otago is New Zealand's first university and remains one of its most highly regarded. Today, Otago is a vibrant, research-intensive institution with a strong sense of purpose, known for academic excellence, intellectual curiosity and a deeply collegial culture.

We are proud of the breadth and quality of our work across the Health Sciences, Humanities, Sciences and Business. Otago consistently performs at the highest level across national education and research benchmarks, including the Tertiary Education Commission's performance indicators, and has an exceptional record in the national Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards.

Teaching and learning at Otago

Otago offers more than 300 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, taught by academics who are leaders in their fields and deeply committed to student success. Teaching is research-informed, student-centred and supported by strong professional services and modern learning environments.

Around 5,000 of our students are enrolled at postgraduate level, reflecting the central role that research and advanced scholarship play in the life of the University. The academic year generally runs from February to November, across two 13-week semesters, with additional flexibility through Summer School and a growing range of distance and blended learning options.

Research excellence with real-world impact

Research underpins everything we do. Otago is home to New Zealand's first medical school and the country's only schools of dentistry and surveying. We are also the sole national provider of Radiation Therapy and an undergraduate degree in Neuroscience.

Our researchers hold leadership roles in national centres of research excellence and partner across all National Science Challenges. Otago hosts a wide range of multidisciplinary research centres and themes, including two of the world's most respected longitudinal health and development studies. We foster a research environment that supports researchers at all career stages, with programmes and groups dedicated to early and mid-career development, strong interdisciplinary collaboration, and a commitment to academic freedom and scholarly exchange.



Our campuses and community

The University of Otago's main campus is located in Dunedin, with teaching, research and student life closely integrated in a compact, campus-based setting. The layout encourages connection across disciplines and contributes to a strong sense of academic community.

Otago also has major Health Sciences campuses in Christchurch and Wellington, along with a presence in Invercargill and Auckland. This national footprint supports clinical education, research partnerships and engagement across Aotearoa New Zealand.

With more than 85 per cent of students coming from outside Dunedin, Otago has a distinctive residential campus culture. Fifteen colleges are located close to the academic heart of the University, playing an important role in student support, pastoral care and community life, and contributing to the University's strong sense of belonging.

Our values: partnership, inclusion and sustainability

The University of Otago is deeply committed to its role in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond. We actively support the aspirations of Māori and Pacific peoples and have memoranda of understanding with a number of iwi, particularly Ngāi Tahu, the mana whenua of our Dunedin campus. Te Tiriti o Waitangi underpins our approach to partnership and engagement.

We are proud to be a Rainbow Tick certified employer and are committed to creating an inclusive, respectful workplace where people can bring their whole selves to work. Equity, diversity and wellbeing are embedded in our leadership expectations and people practices.

Sustainability is a core part of Otago's identity.

Our Sustainability Strategic Framework sets out a clear, practical roadmap across six interconnected themes, guiding decision-making and everyday action. Otago was the first university in New Zealand to achieve Fair Trade status, and our Social Impact Studio is fostering a strong culture of volunteering and community engagement among staff and students.

A place to lead, grow and belong

Otago is a place where senior leaders can make a meaningful difference. We value thoughtful leadership, collaboration across disciplines, and engagement beyond the University. Significant investment in campus development, research infrastructure and digital capability reflects our long-term commitment to excellence.

We support staff and their families through relocation assistance, professional development opportunities, flexible working arrangements where possible, and a strong sense of community. Many of our staff choose Otago not only for their careers, but for the quality of life it offers.

Learn more

Further information about the University of Otago can be found at otago.ac.nz, including:

Annual Report – otago.ac.nz/annualreport

He Kitenga: Research Highlights – otago.ac.nz/hekitenga

Otago Magazine – otago.ac.nz/otagomagazine

University of Otago InBrief – otago.ac.nz/inbrief





Living in Dunedin Te noho ki Ōtepoti

Dunedin is a city with deep roots, strong character and a remarkable sense of place. The University of Otago's southern identity is grounded in its enduring partnership with mana whenua Ngāi Tahu, and in the legacy of the Scottish settlers who founded the University just 21 years after the province of Otago was established.

Ōtepoti is the Māori name for the upper harbour area where Dunedin developed. The wider city boundary also encompasses the papatipu rūnanga at Ōtākou, at the tip of the Otago Peninsula, and Puketeraki in Karitāne to the north. The region is rich with Māori history and the stories of Ngāi Tahu whānui, who have lived in and cared for this place for generations.

A small city with a big heart

Home to around 130,000 people, Dunedin offers the best of both worlds: the cultural depth and amenities of a larger city, paired with the friendliness, safety and ease of a smaller one. Commutes are short, neighbourhoods are distinct and welcoming, and it is easy to feel part of the community.

The city's prosperity during the 1860s Otago gold rush left a lasting legacy of striking Victorian and Edwardian architecture, giving Dunedin a distinctive and elegant streetscape that continues to define its character.

Culture, creativity and ideas

Dunedin has a thriving cultural life. It boasts a strong performing arts scene, nationally significant museums and galleries, excellent libraries, and a lively calendar of festivals and events. The city's creative and literary heritage is internationally recognised through its designation as a UNESCO City of Literature.

Outdoors at your doorstep

For sport and recreation, Dunedin offers outstanding facilities, including one of New Zealand's only covered stadiums.

The natural environment is never far away: sweeping beaches, coastal walks, forest reserves and internationally renowned wildlife sanctuaries are all close to the city.

The Otago Peninsula is home to the world's only mainland royal albatross colony, as well as rare penguins, seals and sea lions, making wildlife encounters a part of everyday life for many residents.

Food, markets and green spaces

The compact city centre is lined with cafés, restaurants and bars, alongside boutique shopping and modern retail precincts. A popular weekly farmers' market showcases the region's high-quality local produce and reflects Dunedin's strong food culture.

Early urban planning ensured the city is rich in parks, gardens and green spaces, while hillside suburbs offer expansive views across the harbour, ocean and surrounding landscapes.

Gateway to the South

Dunedin is also the gateway to Central Otago. The alpine resort towns of Wānaka and Queenstown are just over three hours' drive away, opening up easy access to skiing, snowboarding, boating, mountain biking, hiking and some of New Zealand's finest vineyards and wineries.

A true education city

Education is central to Dunedin's identity and economy.

In addition to the University of Otago, the city is home to a thriving polytechnic and a wide range of high-quality early childhood, primary and secondary schools. Students, staff and their families make up more than a quarter of Dunedin's urban population, contributing significantly to the city's intellectual, cultural and sporting life.

Well connected, locally and globally

Although located in the south of New Zealand, Dunedin is well connected. The region is served by two international airports with direct flights to Australia, and the city is New Zealand's first GigCity, offering ultra-fast broadband services that support modern work, research and business.

Dunedin also maintains sister city relationships with Edinburgh (Scotland), Otaru (Japan) and Shanghai (China), reflecting its strong international connections.

More information about living in Dunedin is available at dunedinnz.com



Credit: DunedinNZ

Application process Tono

Submitting an application

The University seeks written documents from candidates wishing to apply for the role.

Candidates are therefore required to provide:

- A CV, including employment history
- A letter of application

Confidential enquiries may be directed to:

Elena Calvert
Recruitment Manager
elena.calvert@otago.ac.nz

Date of appointment

Applicants are asked to indicate the date they would expect to be available to take up the appointment.





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