



## MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES



Office of the Dean/Administration

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Productivity Commission  
Level 15, Fujitsu Tower, 141 The Terrace

PO Box 8036,  
Wellington 6143

Email: [info@productivity.govt.nz](mailto:info@productivity.govt.nz)

**Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences**  
**The University of Auckland**  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland 1142  
New Zealand

**DDI** 64 9 923 6740  
**E** [jd.fraser@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:jd.fraser@auckland.ac.nz)

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**Division of Health Sciences**  
**University of Otago**  
PO Box 56  
Dunedin 9054  
New Zealand

**DDI** 64 3 479-7413  
**E**

Dear ???/

### **Response to the Waikato University Statement to the Productivity Commission**

*"Every year thousands of students choose the University of Auckland and the University of Otago as places to study because this is the only way they can create the option to study medicine. Otago and Auckland do not accept first year science papers taught at other universities for entrance to the medicine programmes even though most universities could teach these programmes at the same standards."*

This statement is only partially correct, and it overlooks two major reasons for requiring students to complete their year 1 studies of the Universities of Auckland and Otago. First, it is true that biochemistry and cell biology could be taught in those universities that have biology faculties. However the human organ systems teaching is not able to be taught at universities lacking expertise in human biology and disease. The same is true for the teaching of population health, which is very specific to the health of human populations and can be taught in Auckland and Otago and probably Massey and Canterbury, but not further afield. The suite of courses provided has been tailored to provide precisely the background our students require, and this is unlikely to be achieved by selection of courses designed without this specific purpose in mind.

The overwhelming reason for requiring Year 1 students to complete key papers within the Universities of Auckland and Otago, is to allow a fair ranking of their academic capabilities, since this is a critical part of determining who is admitted to the medical and other courses. If students were permitted to choose which papers they took, then this selection would be driven by their wish to optimise their grades, leading to gaming within the system. If students were allowed to choose universities with a view to optimising grades, then the gaming would become even more of a problem. The need for fair and equitable academic assessment requires that all students complete the same course of instruction and the same assessment process, which mandates that both instruction and assessment take place within Auckland and Otago.



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Students have the option of applying to the Otago or Auckland medical programmes as graduates from any University in New Zealand (noting that approximately 30% of medical students are admitted as graduates).

Yours sincerely

John Fraser  
Dean  
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences  
The University of Auckland

Peter Crampton  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Division of Health Sciences  
Dean, Otago Medical School  
University of Otago