

University of Otago: Quick Facts

Academics

- *Admissions Requirements*
 - Junior status +
 - Minimum GPA of 3.0; students with lower GPA welcome to apply
 - See FAQ #3 on backside of this page
- *Program Academics*
 - “Papers” at Otago is the same terminology as a class at Alma
 - “Points” at Otago is the same terminology as credits at Alma
 - Typical semester = 54-72 points. 54 points maintains full-time status.
 - 18 point paper typically = 4 AC credits; 24 point paper typically = 5 AC credits
 - Most papers are offered in a single semester, only once a year
 - The University can seek pre-approval for papers student must take to graduate OR involve a field work component
 - Recommended to be pre-approved for 5-7 papers; most have no maximum class size
 - 100 level papers do not require prerequisites; 200-300 levels require prerequisites
 - Papers numbered above 300 are postgraduate and require an advanced background
 - Normally students are not permitted to take papers from Dentistry, Medicine, Medical Laboratory Science, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy
 - GEOL 252 (very popular with two 5-day field trips) limited to 25 study abroad students per year. Limited approval of 15 students with high GPA and geological background.
 - Different teaching style →
 - Grade is largely based on one or two tests
 - Very difficult to get an “A” in a course
 - Papers are typically updated on Otago’s website in August.
 - Alma’s Fall term: Students fulfill “S” course requirement
 - Alma’s Winter term: Students fulfill “S” course *spring-term* requirement. Student must confirm with Registrar when semester dates are published.
 - Student can expect to hear result of application within three to five weeks of application’s receipt.
 - Alma College allows pass/fail for a course provided it meets guidelines published in the Academic Catalog. Refer to the Pass/Fail Option form (provided with Step 4) for complete instructions. Pass/fail must be requested within nine weeks after the class begins.
 - Incomplete grades must be replaced by letter grades within six weeks from being recorded on the Alma transcript, or they convert to “E”. Contact the Registrar for assistance when you have received an Incomplete grade.

Housing

- Accommodation options, applications and instructions provided by Otago upon acceptance.
- Options include:
 - University housing offered at 12 residence halls, **with limited availability**. If campus housing is assigned, room fees are billed to your Alma account. All other costs including bond, food, electricity and other utilities are paid directly to Otago.
 - Private flats (size/cost vary; self-catered)
 - Home-stay with family, all meals provided
- University flats are not heated. Most housing in Dunedin is heated by electric heaters, and homes are not as warm as at home. Bring warm clothing.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *What travel documents do I need to go to New Zealand?*
 - A passport is required for international travel and must be valid at least 180 days beyond the last date of the program.
 - A student visa is required for entry into New Zealand. Instructions will be provided by Otago.
2. *Can I use my cell phone in New Zealand?*
 - Using a U.S. cell phone abroad to make local and/or international calls can be very costly. Check with your service provider for details.
 - One option is purchasing phone cards once you arrive in New Zealand. It is not recommended to purchase international calling cards while in the United States because they often will not function once you are abroad.
 - PicCell Wireless and other such companies allow students to rent a phone with a global SIM card and charger appropriate for New Zealand.
 - The cheapest option is to set up Skype or QQ, a free internet-based calling service. Look online for details.
3. *Will I have internet access at school? Should I bring my laptop?*
 - Computer resource rooms are throughout campus, with many open 24 hrs/ day, seven days/ week.
 - There is limited wireless internet access throughout the campus. Bringing your laptop is recommended for personal convenience, but is not necessary.
 - Internet cafes can be found throughout Dunedin. There are also some places throughout Dunedin that offer free wi-fi to paying customers.
4. *Where can I get certain documents for my application notarized?*
 - There are two Notary Publics on campus that can notarize your documents –Jodie Reeves at the Provost Office and Sandee Gadde in President Abernathy's office.
5. *On Otago's application, it asks for my Residence Visa. What does that mean?*
 - a. If you are currently living in a country other than the one you hold citizenship in, list the country where you have a Residence Visa. For example, students from Ecuador with a Residence Visa to live in the United States would write in United States as their Residence Visa.
6. *What kinds of public transportation options are available?*
 - Buses are the most convenient and cost- effective method of transportation.
 - Taxis are typically more expensive.
 - Planes, trains and buses service the Otago area and surrounding cities.
 - Inter-island ferry services allow for easy passage to and from the North and South Islands.
7. *Who can I contact if I have questions about the application process, or general questions about the University of Otago program?*
 - Your first point of contact should be the University of Otago's official website (www.otago.ac.nz).
 - If your questions aren't answered by thoroughly checking the website, you can contact staff at Otago by e-mail at international.admissions@otago.ac.nz.
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/international/internationalstaff.html> has a list of International Admission staff contact information.
 - Off-Campus Studies staff are always available to help answer your questions.