

OMNI Electron & Confocal Microscopy equipment charges from 1st January 2025

Charges for Microscope use

In July 2021 OMNI introduced a tiered fee structure that offers a reduced hourly rate for use of the electron & confocal microscopes for high users. Principal Investigators can choose whether to be charged at the casual hourly rate or select a pre-paid tiered fee. Health Science Division (HSD) rates only apply to Dunedin HSD departments.

How the tiered fee structure works

- PIs select a tier based on their expected microscope use (within an OMNI unit)
- PIs complete the “Tier user application form.pdf” available from the OMNI website and submit this to the omni.accounts@otago.ac.nz email address
- The account number(s) provided will be billed the tiered fee amount up front
- This can be used for the PI’s entire lab group i.e. include several students/post-docs
- Equipment usage (hours) will be recorded from the instrument booking system
- PIs will receive a monthly statement and be notified when maximum hours for the tier have been used up
- If more hours are needed PIs may choose to EITHER upgrade their tier by paying the difference between the previous and new tier cost OR continue to be charged at the casual hourly rate
- Applies to a single calendar year but can start at any time of year (i.e. ends 31st December and does not carry over to the next year)
- No refunds/carry forwards unless equipment unavailable/broken for a significant period (see below)

Tiered fee rates for 2025

Tier	No. hours	HSD - Dunedin		Non-HSD	
		Cost	Min hourly rate	Cost	Min hourly rate
Casual	1	\$65	\$65	\$260	\$260
Tier 1	Up to 35	\$1750	\$50	\$7000	\$200
Tier 2	35 to 70	\$2900	\$41	\$11600	\$166
Tier 3	70 to 150	\$5250	\$35	\$21000	\$140
Tier 4	150 to 500	\$7200	\$14	\$28800	\$58
Tier 5	500 to 2000	\$9000	\$4.50	\$36000	\$18

Note: The Nikon Ti2E fluorescent microscope in CM is charged at \$15/h

Examples of use to help you choose a Tier

h/week	No. weeks	total hours	Casual \$65/h	Tier / cost
4	12	48	\$3,120	2 / \$2,900
4	24	96	\$6,240	3 / \$5,250
8	24	192	\$12,480	4 / \$7,200
8	40	320	\$20,800	4 / \$7,200

How to register for a tiered fee

Users must register to use the OMNI unit each year, as usual, using the existing registration form (see link from the webpage). To opt into the tiered fee system the PI needs to complete the “Tier user application form.pdf” available from the CM and EM websites and send this to the omni.accounts@otago.ac.nz email address. You will need to provide the PI name, Department, OMNI unit (EM or CM), account code, Tier number and names of any associated students/post-docs/staff. Your account will be billed the Tiered Fee that month. From then on you will be sent a monthly statement of the microscope hours used.

What the charges cover

For HSD Dunedin campus users these charges are designed to cover 25% of the costs associated with the microscopes including maintenance, staff, occupancy and depreciation as per the RIC funding model. The HSD Dunedin Schools pay for the other 75% of these operating costs.

Non-HSD user rates

Non-HSD users from Schools that do not contribute to the operating budget of the RIC units, may also opt into the tiered charging option but the rates will be 4 times those of the Dunedin HSD (full cost recovery).

Charges for staff time

There is no charge for staff time spent training users to operate the microscopes and prepare samples. Staff time will be charged for if they are operating the microscope or preparing samples for users (\$21/h HSD; \$85/h non-HSD).

Refunds/Carry Forwards

If the Tier Fee has not been used within a calendar year due to exceptional circumstances beyond the user’s control (for example an instrument is broken), you may apply for your Tier Fee to be carried forward to the following year. Please email your justification to omni.accounts@otago.ac.nz and your request will be considered by the Operations Manager and Financial Advisor. Refunds are unlikely to be approved, especially if the grant account has been closed, due to accounting law.