

# Admissions Policy

## 1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for potential students seeking to enrol in higher education courses at the Australian Performing Arts Conservatory. This policy outlines the entry requirements and processes for admission into a higher education courses at the Conservatory.

This policy applies to all members of the Conservatory's higher education community.

## 2. Objectives

The Conservatory will provide potential students with professional, ethical and responsible information whether written or verbal, relating to enrolment in its higher education courses. Where possible, verbal assertions should be supported by either:

- reference to a written source such as the Conservatory's website; or
- confirmed in writing by the staff member concerned.

The Conservatory is committed to conducting fair and transparent processes for admitting students into the Conservatory's higher education courses. The objectives of this policy are to:

- undertake admissions processes and decision-making in a fair, equitable and timely manner, and based on merit
- ensure students are informed of their rights and obligations prior to enrolment and payment of fees
- ensure that entry requirements are appropriate for the course to enable students to successfully complete the course, including proficiency in English
- provide alternative pathways for entry to the Conservatory's higher education courses, including recognition of prior learning
- support student diversity, including under-represented groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

### 2.1 Relationship to the Higher Education Support Act 2003

As a Higher Education Provider and in accordance with the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* the Conservatory will treat fairly all students and potential students and has open, fair and transparent procedures that are based on merit for making decisions about:

- a) the selection, from among persons who seek to enrol with the Conservatory; and
- b) the treatment of students.

Potential Students seeking to enrol with the Conservatory, regardless of their background, circumstances or eligibility for funding will be assessed for entry to study through the same published entry requirements and through the same process.

The above undertakings do not prevent the Conservatory taking into account, in making decisions about the selection and treatment of students or potential students, educational disadvantages that a particular student has experienced or the fact that the student or potential student may be enrolled via a restricted access arrangement.

### 3. Implementation

The Admissions Manager will ensure that assessment of potential students' applications for enrolment into the Conservatory's higher education courses are conducted in a fair, equitable and timely manner, according to the individual entry requirements for each course.

#### Entry Requirements

##### General undergraduate requirements

The entry requirements for undergraduate courses are:

- an Australian Senior Certificate of Education or equivalent
- completion or partial completion of an accredited Australian tertiary qualification or an international equivalent qualification
- significant relevant work experience if the applicant can demonstrate a reasonable prospect of success
- satisfactory English language proficiency demonstrated by either:
  - an English pass level in an Australian Senior Certificate of Education or equivalent; or
  - attainment of a specified level of achievement in a recognised English language test, such as IELTS (or equivalent) at a score of at least 6.0 (with no individual band score less than 5.5), or TOEFL equivalent; or
  - evidence of satisfactory completion of an accredited tertiary award in English; or
  - evidence of working in an organisation where verbal and English communication is required.

##### Course specific requirements

The entry requirements for each higher education course will be specified as part of the course curriculum documentation and will be found in the Course Outline, as approved by the Academic Board.

The specific entry requirements for a higher education course may specify:

- whether an award must meet a minimum GPA or level of achievement or have particular areas of study
- whether other qualifications are acceptable if the applicant does not have the requisite award
- whether an audition or special admissions test is required
- if work experience or other professional experience is required, or may be substituted for a formal qualification
- if membership of a professional body is required
- the level of English language proficiency required.

### 4. Procedure

#### 4.1. Application for Admission

Potential students must apply for admission using the Admissions Form, and demonstrate that they meet the entry requirements by providing evidence such as, but not limited to:

- Certified copies of testamurs and academic records for previously completed courses of study at other institutions
- Resumes, references and other details as evidence of work experience including the scope and levels of responsibility.

- Participation in an interview conducted by the Director of Higher Education, where relevant, to ascertain levels of ability and prior knowledge.
- Copy of English language test, where relevant
- All documentation required for the issuing of a Letter of Offer

Potential students should submit their Admissions Form along with all required documentation to the Admissions Manager by email to [admissions@apac.edu.au](mailto:admissions@apac.edu.au).

### **Work Experience Evidence**

For work experience evidence, potential students must provide the following:

- employer's name and contact details
- job title
- period of time the position was held
- references from employers, including details about the tasks undertaken whilst in their employ, and the level of work responsibilities
- letters from clients, supervisors, employers, contractors
- portfolio of all relevant evidence supporting the application.

## **4.2. Assessment of Application**

The Admissions Manager will undertake the initial assessment of the potential student's application for enrolment and determine if the information is complete.

### **Academic Assessment**

If an academic assessment of the application is required, the Admissions Form and supporting evidence will be forwarded to the Director of Higher Education for further assessment. The Director of Higher Education may delegate assessment to another academic staff member. The person assessing the admission application:

- will ensure that the application is assessed against the evidence provided
- will consider any special circumstances such as listed disabilities and cultural sensitivities
- may request additional information
- will make a recommendation on whether the potential student should be admitted to the course

### **Work Experience Assessment**

The Director of Higher Education will assess work experience claimed by the applicant based on the evidence provided. The Director of Higher Education must include reasons for not accepting a potential student's work experience as suitable for admission to the course.

### **English Language Proficiency Assessment**

An assessment of English language proficiency must be undertaken if the potential student's English Language Proficiency was not fully met in accordance with the entry requirements for the course. Staff assessing English language proficiency must check submitted documentation to ascertain if the applicant meets the English language requirements in one or more of the following ways:

- English is their first language
- English was their language of instruction in their secondary and/or previously completed tertiary studies
- Satisfactory performance in secondary or tertiary studies already completed in an English speaking country

- Achieved a satisfactory level of performance in an English language subject at Year 12 or equivalent
- IELTS or TOEFL score is sufficient for the specific course entry requirement.

IELTS and TOEFL results will only be considered if no more than **two years have elapsed** between the date of the test or final examinations and the date of commencement of study, unless the potential student has been studying for a minimum twelve (12) months with another provider where the main course of instruction is in English.

Staff assessing IELTS and/or TOEFL results are to verify test results with the issuing body via online verification systems: <http://www.ielts.org/default.aspx>

Potential students who do not meet the English Language Proficiency requirements are to be advised of bridging courses such as an ELICOS or ESL program that may be offered at another provider. Fees for attending such programs shall be met by the potential student.

### **4.3. Admissions Decisions**

The Director of Higher Education is responsible for making decisions on enrolment applications that are fair and transparent and adhere to the requirements of this policy. Decisions should also take into account the entry requirements of the course. The Director of Higher Education must record the decision on the Admissions Form.

All potential students should refer to the *Refund Policy Domestic Students*, the Student Handbook and other Conservatory policies and procedures before signing an Acceptance of Offer, as they contain very important information that you will need during your time at the Conservatory.

#### **Notification of Decision Process**

The Admissions Manager will notify applicants of the decision on an admissions application, in writing, within 7 days of receiving an admissions assessment decision from the Director of Higher Education. This notification will outline:

- admission outcome: acceptance or refusal
- reasons for refusal of admission
- further documentation or information required for those applications receiving a Letter of Offer
- options available to the potential student, such as the opportunity to apply for credit or alternative pathways if unsuccessful

#### **Admission Acceptance**

If an applicant has met the requirements and been accepted into the course, the Admissions Manager will prepare and send a Letter of Offer. The Letter of Offer will include:

- course details (start date, duration, location etc.)
- a Tax Invoice outlining the fees to be paid, due dates, and payment options
- an Acceptance of Offer Form and instructions for accepting the offer
- Student Agreement (attached)

To accept the offer, potential students must complete and sign the Acceptance of Offer Form and Student Agreement, and return it together with payment to the Admissions Manager. Applicants

should accept the offer as soon as possible after receiving the Letter of Offer to ensure that a place is available. Refer to the Letter of Offer for deadlines.

The Conservatory reserves the right to withdraw an offer of admission if it finds that incomplete or inaccurate information was provided by the applicant, or if circumstances change significantly such that the applicant no longer meets the entry requirements.

### **Student Agreement**

The Conservatory must enter into a written agreement with each student. The Student Agreement must be signed or otherwise accepted by that student (parents or guardian if student is under 18 years of age). The written and signed agreement must take place at the same time or before the Conservatory accepts any tuition fees from the student.

The Student Agreement should be reviewed annually and include that:

- The CEO or other legally qualified person is to endorse content of the agreement (whether there is any change required or not) at the time of review;
- The endorsing person must report the review outcome at the first Board of Directors meeting of the following year; and
- The relevant version controls are to be endorsed, the website and intranet updated and obsolete versions removed from circulation.

The Student Agreement must provide the following information to each student:

- the course code(s) and course title(s) for which the student is to be enrolled and any conditions on his or her enrolment
- the total amount of all fees including course fees, administration fees, materials fees and any other charges
- payment terms, including the timing and amount of fees to be paid and any non-refundable deposit/administration fee
- the fees and charges for additional services, including such items as issuance of a replacement qualification testamur
- the circumstances in which personal information about the student may be shared between the Conservatory, the Australian Government and designated authorities and, if relevant, the Tuition Assurance Scheme
- advice to the student regarding his or her obligation to notify The Conservatory of a change of address while enrolled in the course.
- refund information relating to the refund of course fees in the case of student and provider default, including:
  - amounts that may or may not be repaid to the student
  - processes for claiming a refund
  - a plain English explanation of what happens in the event of a course not being delivered
  - a statement that “This agreement, and the availability of complaints and appeals processes, does not remove the right of the student to take action under Australia’s consumer protection laws”.

### **Refusal of Admission**

If an applicant has not met the requirements, they will not be accepted into the course. However, the Conservatory may also refuse admission, even if the applicant has met the entry requirements, if it is discovered that the applicant has:

- an unsatisfactory academic history that has not been resolved

- outstanding fees at the Conservatory
- been excluded from another educational institution
- displayed conduct (including criminal activity or ethical misconduct) that would provide reasonable grounds to exclude the applicant from studying at the Conservatory

The Admissions Manager will prepare and send a letter to the applicant advising the grounds for refusal of admission to the Conservatory, and alternative pathways for entry into the course selected, if applicable.

Applicants who have met entry requirements, but have been excluded from any other educational institution, will need to demonstrate that circumstances have changed such that they are likely to succeed in the course.

### **Re-admission**

Applicants whose enrolment has lapsed, may re-apply under the same entry requirements as all other applicants.

### **4.4. Appeals**

Applicants may lodge an appeal for a review of the decision within 10 business days of receiving the decision notice if they are dissatisfied with the outcome. Refer to the *Student Grievance Policy*.

### **4.5. Deferments**

Deferment may be permitted for one trimester after an offer of admission has been made. Applicants who seek deferment to fulfil military or national service obligations may apply for a longer deferment. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Fees may apply. Deferment will not be permitted to allow commencement of another tertiary course.

The following will apply:

- Applicants who have an approved deferment will have their offer of a place held open for the period of the approval.
- Should an applicant choose not to take up their offer of a place at the end of their deferment period, their offer will lapse and they will need to re-apply through the Conservatory's admission process.

## **5. Definitions**

**Admission:** The process for admitting an applicant into a course, following a successful application and acceptance of the offer of a place in the course.

**Admission pathway:** any option available to prospective higher education students that will enable them to meet the entry requirements of their chosen courses.

**Admission requirements:** the requirements that an applicant must satisfy in order to be eligible for selection. Admission requirements comprise general entry requirements, including English language proficiency and course entry requirements.

**Advanced standing:** a form of credit for any previous learning (Australian Qualifications Framework definition) – see also the definitions for “credit transfer” and “recognition of prior learning”.

**Applicant:** A person who applies for a place in a course at the Conservatory. An applicant becomes a student upon enrolment.

**Bridging course:** a course which assists students to gain knowledge in specialist areas that are a core component of the course. If a course requires a prerequisite in an area that students have not studied or worked with before, a bridging course will help students to bridge the gap in that knowledge and gain admission.

**Census Date:** the date when a student’s enrolment is finalised. If a student withdraws after the census date he/she will have to pay fees, or if the student has requested FEE-HELP assistance, will incur a debt.

**Course:** A single course leading to an Australian higher education award.

**Course Entry Requirements:** The entry requirements that an applicant must satisfy to be admitted into a particular course, that are additional to the general entry requirements.

**Credit transfer:** a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications (Australian Qualifications Framework definition).

**Deferment:** An agreement to allow an applicant to defer taking up the place they have been offered until a later time.

**Direct application:** an application made to a higher education provider rather than through a tertiary admission centre.

**Domestic Student:** an Australian Citizen, Australian permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen.

**GPA:** Grade point average

**IELTS:** International English Language Testing System is an international standardised test of English language proficiency. It is jointly managed by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP Education Pty Ltd.

**Letter of Offer:** The offer of a place in a course to a successful applicant.

**Reasonable adjustment:** a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students (Disability Standards for Education 2005).

**Recognition of prior learning (RPL):** a process used to assess an individual’s relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit that may be granted towards completion of a qualification (adapted from Australian Qualifications Framework definition).

**TOEFL iBT:** an Internet-Based Test (iBT) that measures a candidate’s ability to combine listening, reading, speaking and writing skills, making it the most comprehensive English-language proficiency test. It is considered an industry standard in English-language assessment.

**Unit:** A discrete unit of study and a combination of units that make up a course of study.

**VET:** Vocational Education and Training

## 6. Related Documents

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- Credit and RPL Policy
- Diversity Equity and Fair Treatment Policy
- Fees Policy
- Fee Schedule
- Refund Policy for Higher Education Domestic Students
- Student Grievance Policy

## 7. Review

Three years from commencement.

## 8. Accountabilities

The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The Conservatory is responsible for distribution to potential students and the Conservatory's higher education community via the website and other publications.

## 9. Revision History

Approval Authority	Contact Person	Revision Due Date	Revision Date	Approved Date	Version No.	Revision Description
Academic Board	Chair	01/07/19		11/04/16	1	New document
			3/1/19	15/01/19	1.1	Current – add Admissions Transparency common terminology; update for Stds 2015.
Board of Directors	Chair		15/02/2019	26/02/2019	1.2	Changes for FEE-Help Application