

# Admissions Policy and Procedure

## 1. Introduction

The Australian Performing Arts Conservatory (APAC) Admissions Policy and Procedure sets out the principles, scope, purpose, policy statements, procedures and responsibilities relating to the admission of applicants to APAC's courses. This Policy and Procedure is designed to support academic quality, to foster good practice and to drive compliance with mandated higher education standards.

### 1.1. Purpose

The intent of this Policy and Procedure is to set out an approach to the admission of applicants to APAC courses that ensures admissions decisions are applied consistently and fairly; accommodates student diversity; and contributes to creating equivalent opportunities for academic success.

This Policy and Procedure operates in conjunction with the following APAC policies and procedures: *Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure; APAC Admissions Criteria and Requirements; Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure.*

### 1.2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to students and prospective students, staff, members of decision-making bodies, and any third parties involved in the admission of students to APAC's courses.

### 1.3. Principles

- admission processes and practices are transparent, fair, timely, and consistently applied;
- admission requirements are broadly merit based, in particular taking into account the demonstrated academic achievements of applicants;
- admission processes and practices support student diversity and are equitable in providing opportunities for applicants of all backgrounds;
- entry requirements are appropriate for the course to enable students to successfully complete the course, including proficiency in English;
- admissions processes and practices ensure that applicants are informed of their rights and obligations prior to enrolment and payment of fees;
- admissions requirements, and associated information, are clearly expressed, comprehensive, current, and are available on the website in time for applicants and prospective applicants to make informed decisions;
- admissions decisions are made by academic and professional staff who have the requisite knowledge and skills;

- admission requirements are approved by the Academic Board, and are regularly monitored and reviewed, using an evidence-based process, benchmarking with similar institutions, and focusing on key student sub-groups; and
- APAC may seek to achieve strategic objectives through its admissions decisions.

## **2. Policy Statements**

### **2.1. Equity, Fairness and Consistency**

- i. As a higher education provider, and in accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, APAC will treat all students and potential students fairly and has open, fair and transparent procedures. Admissions decisions are broadly merit-based, taking account of its commitment to create opportunities for applicants of diverse backgrounds, in particular applicants from backgrounds under-represented in the courses it offers or who have experienced educational or social disadvantage. Specific consideration is given to the admission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. While admissions decisions take account of applicants' academic achievements, account is also taken of non-academic factors, such as demonstrated skills, non-academic achievement, commitment, employment history and life experience.
- ii. Admissions decisions are made on the basis of a consistent application of approved admissions criteria and utilise processes for confirming the accuracy and authenticity of academic qualifications and supporting documents. Admissions criteria are calibrated to ensure the admission only of applicants judged to have the capabilities and background that will give them a reasonable expectation for academic success in their course. Admissions criteria include requirements for the level of English proficiency needed to participate successfully in their course.
- iii. Admissions decisions take account of APAC's capacity to deliver high quality learning for particular numbers of students in particular courses, given its staffing, facilities and resources.

### **2.2. Communication and Information**

- i. Admissions requirements, and associated information, are clearly expressed, comprehensive, current, and are easily accessible on the website in time for applicants and prospective applicants to make informed decisions. Information is regularly updated and checked for accuracy. This Policy and Procedure is also easily accessible on the website, as is the information listed in ii., iii., and iv. below. Applicants and prospective applicants are directed to the website in any marketing or promotional material they might access and in responses from APAC to their enquiries.
- ii. The admissions process ensures that, prior to enrolment and before fees are accepted, students are informed of their rights and obligations, including:
  - all charges associated with their proposed studies as known at the time and advice on the potential for changes in charges during their studies;

- policies, arrangements and potential eligibility for advanced standing and;
  - policies on changes to or withdrawal from offers, acceptance and enrolment, tuition protection and refunds of charges.
- iii. Offers of admission are in writing and include any particular conditions of enrolment and participation for undertaking particular courses of study that may not apply to other courses more generally, such as health requirements for students undertaking clinical work, requirements for security checks, particular language requirements and particular requirements of work placements. If legally required, offers of admission may only be accepted with the consent of an applicant's parent or guardian.
- iv. For international applicants specifically, offers of admissions must include comprehensive, current and plain English information on:
- the requirements for the student's acceptance into a course, including the minimum level of English language proficiency, educational qualifications or work experience required, and course credit if applicable;
  - the CRICOS course code, course content, modes of study for the course including compulsory online and/or work-based training, placements, other community-based learning and collaborative research training arrangements, and assessment methods;
  - course duration and holiday breaks;
  - the course qualification, award or other outcomes;
  - campus locations and facilities, equipment and learning resources available to students;
  - the details of any arrangements with another provider, person or business who will provide the course or part of the course;
  - indicative tuition and non-tuition fees, including advice on the potential for changes to fees over the duration of a course, and cancellation and refund policies;
  - the grounds on which the student's enrolment may be deferred, suspended or cancelled;
  - set out the circumstances in which personal information about the applicant may be disclosed by APAC, the Commonwealth including the TPS, or state or territory agencies, in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988;
  - APAC's internal and external complaints and appeals processes;
  - state that the applicant is responsible for keeping a copy of the offer of admission which the applicant signs, and receipts of any payments of tuition fees or non-tuition fees;
  - matters relating to refunds of tuition fees and non-tuition fees in the case of student default and provider default, specifically:

- amounts that may or may not be repaid to the student (including any tuition and non-tuition fees collected by education agents on behalf of APAC);
  - processes for claiming a refund;
  - the specified person(s), other than the student, who can receive a refund in respect of the student identified in the letter of offer which the applicant signs, consistent with the ESOS Act;
  - a plain English explanation of what happens in the event of a course not being delivered, including the role of the Tuition Protection Service;
  - a statement that "This written agreement, and the right to make complaints and seek appeals of decisions and action under various processes, does not affect the rights of the student to take action under the *Australian Consumer Law* if the *Australian Consumer Law* applies".
- the ESOS framework, including official Australian Government material or links to this material online; and
  - accommodation options and indicative costs of living in Australia.

### **2.3. Admissions Standards, Review and Improvement**

- i. Criteria for admission to each course, including academic and English language proficiency requirements, are approved by the Academic Board. The approval process is informed by an annual evidence-based, analytic review of academic progression, academic success and course completion rates of identified student cohorts. Relevant subgroups may include but are not limited to, demographic and socio-economic-cultural factors and by recruitment channel.
- ii. The findings of the review are provided to the Learning and Teaching Committee for consideration and as a basis for recommendations to the Academic Board. Subsequently the Academic Board decides what adjustments, if any, are to be made to admissions criteria. The Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Board may initiate benchmarking of admissions criteria for comparable courses at other institutions to inform this process.
- iii. APAC's broad approach to admissions is regularly reviewed, utilising feedback from prospective applicants, applicants, enrolled students, staff involved in the admissions process, student recruitment agents and other stakeholders, advice from external experts, and benchmarking with processes and practices at other institutions.
- iv. Compliance issues identified in the review process, including issues concerning the proper application of this Policy and Procedure, including honouring its Principles, are expeditiously addressed. Identified opportunities for improvement are considered and pursued where feasible.

## 2.4. Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

Admissions practices and processes will be compliant with education provider obligations under the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021; the Higher Education Support Act 2003; and Standard 2 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

Admissions practices and processes will also be guided by the admissions transparency framework.

## 2.5. Complaints and Appeals

Applicants may seek a review of any decision regarding the assessment or outcome of their application for admission by completing the Student Complaint Form, in accordance with the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*.

## 3. Procedure

### 3.1. Application for Admission

- i. Prior to enrolment, prospective students will be provided with the APAC Admissions Pack for the relevant course. Collectively, documents in the pack provide information as required by the Higher Education Standards Framework and the National Code.

The Admissions Pack includes information on domestic and international student fees; course structures; living and studying in Australia for international students; and the Student Handbook:

- ii. Prospective students must apply for admission using the relevant Application Form accessible via the APAC website or using editable PDF form from an approved APAC Education Agent.
- iii. Prospective students are required to provide proof of identification and citizenship, by submitting either their Birth Certificate or Passport with their Application Form.
- iv. Applicants need to demonstrate that they meet the relevant entry requirements by providing evidence such as, but not limited to:
  - certified copies of testamurs and academic records for previous courses of study at other institutions;
  - resumes, position statements, references and other information evidencing work experience' including the scope and levels of responsibility;
  - evidence of English Language Proficiency
  - demonstration of capacity, aptitude and discernible talent in an audition or portfolio as specified for each course.

- v. Applicants are guided through the application process in APAC's online student management system.

The process includes:

- Personal details, contact information and emergency contact;
  - Academic history;
  - Identification information upload;
  - English Language Proficiency certificate upload, if applicable;
  - Academic transcript upload, if applicable;
  - Selection of an interview time with the relevant HoD; and
  - Confirmation of interview time and details (sent to applicant's email).
- vi. To finalise the application, applicants are required to accept the following Terms and Conditions:
- I declare that I have read and understood the questions and that all the information submitted is true and complete.
  - I authorise APAC to verify any information provided by me.
  - I understand that by submitting my Application for Admission to APAC, APAC is collecting personal information from me and that this includes information that is personal information covered under for the purpose of the Privacy Act 1988. I understand that the information is collected in order for staff within APAC to process my application for admission and for administrative and statistical purposes. APAC will not disclose my personal information without my consent except where a valid legal request is made.
  - I understand that, while the supply of information is voluntary, if I cannot provide or do not wish to provide the information sought, APAC may not be able to process my application.
  - If I am accepted as a Student of APAC, I agree to abide by the student expectations outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct* and all relevant APAC Policies and Procedures. (Available on the APAC website).
  - I declare that I have read, understood and accept the Terms and Conditions listed.

### 3.2. Application Checking and Assessment Process

- i. The Admissions Team will check the course application form to ensure that it includes:
- the correct course name required evidence; and
  - other required information.

If the application does not contain all required information, the applicant will be advised of the information still required to assess their application.

- ii. The Admissions Team will undertake an initial assessment of the application, based on course entry requirements.

If further, academic assessment is required, the application form and supporting evidence is forwarded to the relevant HoD for further assessment. This further assessment:

- will ensure that the application is assessed against the evidence provided;
  - will consider any special circumstances such as listed disabilities and cultural sensitivities;
  - may result in a request for additional information; and
  - will make a recommendation on whether the applicant should be admitted to the course.
- iii. English Language Proficiency is assessed against the requirements set out in the *APAC Admissions Criteria and Requirements*. Approved English Language Proficiency test results will only be considered if no more than two years have elapsed between the date of the test and the date of commencement of study, unless the applicant has been studying for a minimum twelve (12) month with another education provider where the main course of instruction is English.

Staff assessing English Language Proficiency results verify the provided test results through the online verification systems.

Applicants who do not meet English Language Proficiency requirements are provided with advice on further English Language study which they may undertake at another education provider at their own cost prior to reapplying.

### **3.3. Admissions Outcome Notification and Acceptance of Offer**

- i. Within ten (10) working days of the receipt of a complete application, the Admissions Team will notify applicants of the outcome of their application. This notification will confirm application outcome with either:
- a Letter of Offer;
  - an invitation for reapplication with options for prior upskilling and preparation; or
  - a refusal of application.

Where an applicant has also applied for advanced standing under APAC's *Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure*, they will be advised of the outcome as part of this process.

In some instances, the assessment of an application may take longer than ten (10) working days if further information is required for the assessment of advanced standing, Genuine Temporary Entrant eligibility, or academic qualifications verification.

- ii. If an applicant has been accepted into the course, the Admissions Team will prepare and send a Letter of Offer. The Letter of Offer will include:
- course details (start date, duration, location etc.);
  - all information set out in Clause 2.2 ii., iii., and iv., of this Policy and Procedure
  - an Acceptance of Offer Form; and
  - instructions for accepting the offer.

To accept the offer, applicants must complete and sign the Acceptance of Offer, which together with the Letter of Offer forms the Written Agreement, required by the Higher Education Standards Framework and National Code, between APAC and the student. The acceptance of offer should be sent to APAC within five (5) working days of the offer being made to guarantee a place in the relevant course.

Any offers, not formally accepted by the Census Date will lapse. Applicants whose offers have lapsed may reapply at a future date subject to entry requirements applying at that future time.

- iii. APAC ensures all regulatory requirements, to support the acceptance of students' electronic signature on the Acceptance of Offer and Student Agreement, are met, and, in particular:
- ensures the information provided by the applicant to APAC and from APAC to the student is accessible to the applicant, including by the applicant logging in to the Student Management System using their unique identifier;
  - inform the applicant, via direct communication and in APAC's publications, of the future communications that will be by electronic means;
  - ensure appropriate security is in place for the repository of the information;
  - provides applicants with a unique identifier and advises applicant that they are personally responsible for using it securely;
  - sets out clearly relevant terms and conditions which APAC requires be accepted;
  - obtains the applicant's agreement to receive electronic communications from APAC.
- iv. In exceptional circumstances, APAC may refuse admission, even if an applicant has met the entry requirements. These circumstances may include, but are not limited to, substantiated evidence that the applicant has displayed conduct (including proven criminal activity or unethical conduct) that would provide reasonable grounds for excluding the applicant from studying at APAC or substantiated evidence that fraudulent documentation or the provision of incorrect, false or misleading information was submitted in the application for admission. In such cases, the CEO or DoHE will prepare and send a letter to the applicant advising the grounds for refusal of admission to APAC.



- v. Applicants who are dissatisfied with the admissions process or outcome may make a complaint or lodge an appeal under *APAC's Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure*. Applicants appealing an admission outcome must do so within ten (10) business days of the outcome notification being sent.

### **3.4. Deferment**

- i. Deferment is permitted for one year after an offer of admission has been made. Applicants who seek to defer to fulfil military or national service obligations may apply for a longer deferment. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Should an applicant choose not to take up their offer of a place at the end of the deferral period, their offer will lapse.

Please refer to the *Domestic Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure* or *International Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure* for more information.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **4.1. The Board of Directors**

- ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements through the oversight of APAC activities and the development, monitoring and review of policies and practices and initiating prompt action where compliance is deemed to have lapsed.
- assure itself that there is an effective and regularly reviewed system in place to set admissions requirements and to manage the admissions process in accordance with mandated higher education standards.

### **4.2. The Academic Board**

- approving admissions requirements for courses, including English language proficiency and the capacity, aptitude and talent discernible in an audition or portfolio;
- monitoring the appropriateness of course admissions standards relative to indicators of student success, including progression, grades achieved, and completion.
- considering, and taking actions based on, the findings of reviews of the appropriateness of admissions requirements and of the effectiveness of the system for managing admissions.

### **4.3. The Teaching and Learning Committee**

- oversee and monitor student progress and success, making recommendations to the Academic Board to inform admissions criteria and approaches to course design, teaching, supervision, learning and academic support where required.

#### **4.4. The Director of Higher Education**

- implementing this Policy and Procedure;
- conducting, in partnership with the HoDs, an annual evidence-based analysis of the appropriateness of admissions standards and producing a report, with relevant recommendations, for the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Board.
- coordinating the regular review of the system for managing admissions and producing a report, with relevant recommendations, for the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Board.

#### **4.5. Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- effectively carrying out the roles and tasks assigned to them, and the processes specified, in this Policy and Procedure;
- seeking advice where required on matters relevant to their responsibilities;

#### **4.6. Applicants**

- the information required by APAC to make admissions assessments and to ensure that information is complete, accurate and true.

### **5. Relevant Documents**

- APAC Admissions Criteria and Requirements
- APAC Admissions Pack
- APAC Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure
- APAC Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- APAC Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Australian Qualifications Framework 2013
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- Migration Act 1958
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018

- Privacy Act 1988
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- TEQSA Guidance Note: Admissions (coursework)

## 6. Definitions

- **Admission** is 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 Requirements** are the requirements that an applicant must satisfy in order to be eligible for selection. Admission requirements comprise general entry requirements, including academic and English Language Proficiency entry requirements.
- **Advanced Standing** is the recognition of previous successful study which may be relevant and may be applied to your current program. These studies are then credited to your current program and could reduce the number of subjects you need to complete in your current program.
- **Applicant** is a person who applies for a course at APAC. An applicant becomes a student upon enrolment.
- **Census Date** is the effective final enrolment date and charges liability date for a course or units, after which a student cannot withdraw without significant academic or financial penalties.
- **Course** refers to an approved sequence of study leading to the conferral of a higher education award.
- **Deferment** is an agreement to allow an applicant to defer taking up the place they have been offered until a later time.
- **Domestic Student** is a student who is an Australian citizen (including Australian citizens with dual citizenship); a New Zealand citizen; an Australian permanent resident; or holds a permanent humanitarian visa.
- **International Student** is a student who holds an Australian student visa which provides approval to study in an APAC course.
- **Letter of Offer** is the offer of a place in a course to a successful applicant.
- **Unit** is a discrete unit of study, where a combination of units makes up a course of study.

## Version Control and Document Owner

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