

## Student Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure

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### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide information for staff and prospective and current students on the rules and procedures governing admissions into TOP. This policy document and its implementation is consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF 2015).

Admission standards support TOP's mission and values of integrity, capability and honesty. TOP values education as an important life long experience for people from all cultures, irrespective of age and gender. All consideration given to student admission is fair and ethical and conducted in a transparent manner.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy document applies to general admission requirements for domestic and international applicants to TOP's undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including associate degrees and diplomas. It also provides information on admission to non-award study at TOP.

TOP's Academic Board determines the general admission requirements set out in this policy document and the specific admission requirements for each course or unit.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Academic merit** is a measurement of academic achievement in relevant previous studies.

**Admission** includes procedures and processes involved in the application and approval to undertake a course of study at TOP.

**Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)** measures the rank of applicants based on achievement in Australian Senior Secondary qualifications, such as the NSW Higher School Certificate.

Top Education Group Ltd trading as Top Education Institute and Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce

ACN: 098 139 176 | CRICOS Code: 02491D | TEQSA PRV 12059

Add: Suite 1, Biomedical Building, 1 Central Ave, Eveleigh NSW 2015

Tel: + 61 2 9209 4888 | Fax: + 61 2 9209 4887 | E-mail: info@top.edu.au | www.top.edu.au

**Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)** is a nationally administered framework that is structured around levels of criteria that specify the standards for Australian educational qualifications.

**Capacity** refers to the potential a student has to succeed in studies and gain advantage from higher education.

**Department of Home Affairs** is a Commonwealth Government department responsible for issuing visas to overseas students. International applicants must adhere to all requirements of the Department of Home Affairs as well as those required by TOP.

**Domestic student** is a student who is one of the following:

- Australian citizen (including Australian citizens with dual citizenship);
- New Zealand citizen;
- a permanent humanitarian visa holder.

**Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation** is a body of legislation relevant to overseas students. TOP complies with the legislation.

**Higher Education Standards Framework** refers to the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*.

**International student** is any student who is not a domestic student.

**Recognition of prior learning (RPL)** is a process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit.

## 4. PROCEDURES

### 4.1 Admission Principles

- Admission into TOP is determined on the basis of: academic merit; the capacity for tertiary level study; and the likelihood of success in completing the course. TOP recognises that 'academic merit' or 'capacity' or 'likelihood of success' can be measured by formal qualifications and also by means other than formally recognised educational attainment.
- It is the policy of TOP to assess all applications for admission in accordance with procedures that are fair and equitable. Decisions regarding admission are consistent and free of bias and discrimination.
- TOP recognises that applicants for admission may have undertaken previous studies with learning outcomes reflected in courses for which they seek admission into TOP. In such instances, TOP undertakes to grant academic credit for prior learning in accordance with with TOP's *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy*.
- Admission to courses, programs, non-award studies and units in TOP is determined on

the basis of merit and perceived likelihood of success. Students admitted to a course will therefore commence their studies with a sufficient basis of prior knowledge and skills to achieve the course learning outcomes and the learning outcomes for the AQF in the time available for the course.

- TOP will monitor academic progress and provide appropriate learning support to students admitted under any admission scheme.

## 4.2 General Eligibility Requirements

Applications for admission to TOP are only considered if eligibility requirements are met. Further to TOP's general requirements, all programs have specific eligibility requirements.

- **Age:**

### *Domestic student applicants –*

- Applicants under 17 years of age prior to the relevant semester start date will not be considered for entry to a TOP course unless they have completed year 12 or an AQF diploma (or higher) qualification or equivalent, or unless their qualifications, preparedness for higher education and level of attainment are acceptable to the Provost.
- Applicants under 17 years of age may also be required to provide evidence that they possess an outstanding academic record and that they are adequately prepared for higher education. Such evidence may include: performance in external examinations that exceeds minimum academic requirements for course selection; relevant employment, community, sporting and/or cultural activities; and referees' reports. TOP reserves the right to request any additional information in order to assess an application.
- The application will be assessed and then the applicant will be interviewed by the Provost and the Senior Manager of Student Services.
- The application will be reviewed by the Provost who will: approve an offer of admission to an underage applicant; or reject the application; or offer a deferred place.
- An offer of admission to an underage applicant may include specific conditions and requirements, including the Provost's discretion to withdraw an offer prior to enrolment, or terminate enrolment at any time on reasonable grounds relating to the academic progress or the health, safety or wellbeing of the applicant.

### *International student applicants –*

In accordance with Department of Home Affairs guidelines (<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500/welfare-arrangements-students-under-18>), international students under the age of 18 will only be considered if accommodation and welfare arrangements are deemed acceptable.

- **English language proficiency:**

The minimum English language requirements apply to all students for entry to TOP. TOP's English language requirements for entry to each level of program, and equivalents to these requirements, are approved by TOP's Academic Board.

Minimum English language proficiency requirements for particular programs are published on the '*English Language Requirements for Future Students*' section of TOP's website.

- **International applications:**

Additional general eligibility requirements may apply to international applications. Applicants must meet Department of Home Affairs and ESOS criteria for overseas student visas. It is the responsibility of overseas applicants to check these requirements as they may differ from the general TOP requirements.

- **Specific Course Eligibility Requirements**

The minimum academic entry requirement for each course is available on the TOP website.

For postgraduate research awards also refer to the *Research Higher Degree Admission and Recognised Prior Learning Policy*.

### **4.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

Recognition of Prior Learning allows for the admission of students on the basis that they have acquired prior learning through means other than formal study.

Students who intend to apply for RPL for undergraduate and postgraduate coursework awards should refer to TOP's *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy*.

Students who intend to apply for RPL for research higher degree awards should refer to TOP's *Research Higher Degree Admissions and RPL Policy*.

### **4.4 Alternative admission schemes**

Admission criteria and processes take into account equity and access considerations through the provision of alternative entry admission schemes.

TOP's Academic Board may approve undergraduate admissions schemes for purposes such as:

- encouraging and assisting indigenous students to enroll into studies;

- providing access to the educationally or socially disadvantaged; or
- addressing the under-representation of designated groups.

Each specific undergraduate admission scheme is approved by TOP's Academic Board and details, including the bonus points available for particular applicants, are contained in the Admission Procedures for each Undergraduate and Postgraduate Course.

For selection under alternative admission schemes, applicants may be required to attend an assessment workshop and an interview with the relevant Dean or delegated authority.

TOP will monitor academic progress and provide appropriate learning support to students admitted under any scheme which is based on equity and access.

For further details, students and staff should also refer to TOP's Access and Equity Policy.

#### **4.5 Scholarships**

TOP offers scholarships to eligible applicants. Selection criteria are based on 6 categories:

1. Academic merit/leadership;
2. Financial need;
3. Indigenous students;
4. Professional support;
5. International scholarships; and
6. Current students.

Descriptions and criteria for each of these categories are available on TOP's website.

#### **4.6 Students with disabilities**

The same conditions and procedures apply to the admission of students with disabilities as to all students. TOP provides assistance to students with disabilities. However, it is essential for a student with a disability to notify the Admissions Office before submitting their applications to ensure that early arrangement for their assistance can be made. Students with disabilities may be entitled to request special consideration on some assessment tasks.

For further details, students and staff should also refer to TOP's Access and Equity Policy.

#### **4.7 Exclusion and 'Absent Fail'**

An application from a student currently excluded from any other educational institution will be required to include a detailed study plan that documents a demonstration of their ability to undertake studies in which they seek to enroll at TOP. Applicants may also be required to

complete extra skill support programs, that target particular educational needs, and are in addition to the usual compulsory skill support programs completed by TOP students.

If an applicant has been previously excluded or is a student who has received an absent fail (AF) at another higher education provider, they will be required to: demonstrate how and why their prospects for academic success have improved as outlined above; provide a study plan; and complete skill support programs that are in addition to the usual compulsory requirements.

In the case of exclusion from TOP or another institution because of misconduct, an applicant will be asked to provide additional detail before admission is considered.

#### **4.8 Non-Award Studies**

An applicant can apply to undertake studies in one or more units as a Non-Award Studies student for career enhancement, professional development, cross institution credit or personal interests. Applicants for non-award study do not need to meet normal admission requirements, however, they must satisfy TOP's English language proficiency requirements.

Acceptance into Non-award Studies may be subject to individual unit prerequisites. TOP's rules and policies relating to RPL do not apply to non-award study applications.

A student will not be permitted to enrol in more than 50% of the units in a course on a non-award basis. Further enrolment will require application for entry to the course as an award student.

A student who satisfactorily completes a unit or units on a non-award basis may be given credit for the unit or units in an award program should successful application for entry to an award program be made.

### **5. Student Selection and Admission Processes**

#### **5.1 Applying for admission**

To be considered for selection, domestic applicants must lodge a Domestic Student Application Form, supporting documentation and relevant forms.

To be considered for selection, international applicants must lodge an International Student Application form, supporting documentation and relevant forms.

Necessary forms and details of documentation requirements are available on TOP's website.

Applicants are also invited to submit applications for RPL and/or Scholarships if appropriate.

In order to be considered for a place at TOP, applicants must submit their application on time, in the correct manner and format, and complete with all required documentation.

#### **5.2 Selection**

To be considered for selection for admission in a course or other program of study, applicants must meet the eligibility criteria and be assessed as being likely to succeed. Eligibility and 'likelihood of success' does not guarantee selection. TOP will only accept students when there are the available resources and infrastructure to accommodate student requirements. Where necessary, applicants who are eligible for admission will be ranked in comparison to one another and offers will be made in order of highest rank in terms of academic performance, English language proficiency and education background. TOP may limit the number of places in a course at its discretion.

A delegated officer from the Admissions Office will review applications and identify applicants who meet TOP's entry requirements. From these applicants, the Admissions Office will identify applicants who meet specific course or other program entry requirements and have the likelihood of success in the course, including minimum academic and English language proficiency requirements. Assessment of prior learning and consideration for credit based on RPL will also be conducted by the Dean or Dean's nominee. An application will be considered in its entirety. Greater weight may be placed on the applicant's most recent and/or relevant previous qualifications, studies or experiences. Course entry requirements and selection methodology will be applied consistently to all applicants for a course.

Following assessment of applications, eligible applicants may be required to attend an interview with the Dean or Dean's nominee for some programs. The interview establishes criteria such as relevant communication skills and motivation and assures that the program is suitable for the applicant's personal and career aspirations.

A delegated officer from the Admissions Office will verify an applicant's documents, such as academic qualifications, evidence of training or professional experience and evidence of English proficiency.

Where an applicant provides false or misleading information in their application for admission, or withholds information relevant to their application for admission to a course, program or unit, the application will be rejected. Where an offer of admission has already been made, or the applicant has commenced studies at TOP, the offer of admission will be withdrawn or cancelled.

### **5.3 Acceptance of offers**

Offers to successful applicants will be made from the Admissions Office in writing. Expiry dates for offers may be specified at the discretion of TOP.

Prior to acceptance of an offer, TOP will provide all relevant information to applicants including: information to assist in course planning and participation; TOP's obligations and policies; student support services that are available; and grievance resolution procedures.

An Acceptance of Offer form must be completed, signed and lodged and tuition fees must be paid before the application can be processed. Requests for deferral of offers should be made to the Admissions Office, with decisions made at the discretion of the office. An offer may be deferred for up to 2 semesters.

## 5.4 Appeals

An applicant has the right to make an appeal of a decision made by TOP's Admission's Office and will be provided with access to mechanisms to resolve grievances. If an applicant wishes to formally appeal an admission decision, the applicant must submit a request in writing to the Dean(s) for review.

The Dean(s) may request the Admissions Office to reconsider an application and offer the applicant admission, or the Dean(s) may reject the appeal upon review of the application. Refer to TOP's *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* for details regarding appeals.

## 5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- I. Access and Equity Policy
- II. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy
- III. Research Higher Degree Admission and Recognised Prior Learning Policy
- IV. Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

## 6 Version Control

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**Top Education Group Ltd** trading as Top Education Institute and Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce

**ACN:** 098 139 176 | **CRICOS Code:** 02491D | **TEQSA PRV** 12059

**Add:** Suite 1, Biomedical Building, 1 Central Ave, Eveleigh NSW 2015

**Tel:** + 61 2 9209 4888 | **Fax:** + 61 2 9209 4887 | **E-mail:** [info@top.edu.au](mailto:info@top.edu.au) | [www.top.edu.au](http://www.top.edu.au)