

# STUDENT SELECTION AND ADMISSIONS

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### 1. Overview

Astra Institute of Higher Education (“ASTRA” or “the Institute”) upholds the principle that all course applicants are treated fairly, equitably, and independently of their educational background, entry pathway, mode or place of study. To ensure this the Institute has open, fair, clear and transparent procedures that are based on clearly defined entry criteria for making decisions about the selection of students.

In its design and implementation, this policy promotes the Institute’s commitment to:

- i. excellence in academic standards;
- ii. merit-based student selection;
- iii. clear and consistent admission requirements that are appropriate to accepted external frameworks and standards, including the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and standards of course professional accrediting bodies;
- iv. a diverse and representative student population; and
- v. flexible entry pathways that recognise course applicants’ skills and experience.

Further the Institute will ensure that entry requirements do not present unreasonable barriers to access and will include provision for applications for additional consideration from students who:

- i. are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- ii. are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- iii. are a mature aged applicant;
- iv. have a disability or long-term medical condition;
- v. have difficult circumstances (family or background); and/or
- vi. have suffered disadvantage in their prior academic performance.

### 2. General entry requirements

Entry requirements for each course offered by the Institute are designed to ensure that prospective students have the requisite academic preparation and English proficiency to complete their intended course with no known limitations that would be expected to impede their progression and completion of the course.

All students must be 18-years of age or over at the time that they commence the course for which they have applied.

To satisfy the general entrance requirements for admission to a course, applicants normally meet at least one of the following entry requirements:

- i. Successful completion of Year 12 or equivalent with a minimum ATAR (or equivalent) of 65; or
- ii. Successful completion of an equivalent secondary qualification either interstate or overseas and attainment of the required entrance standard; or
- iii. Satisfactory completion of an accredited Tertiary Preparation Program or a Foundation Year Program offered by an Australian university that would enable students to gain entry to an Australian university; or
- iv. Satisfactory completion of one-year full-time equivalent accredited study at a registered institute of tertiary education at AQF Level 4 or above; or
- v. Admission to candidature for an undergraduate degree at an Australian University.

In the case where there is doubt about a course applicant's ability to successfully undertake the course, then the applicant may be interviewed by the Dean or their delegate before a final decision on the admission of the applicant is made.

Entry requirements for all courses will be published on the Institute's website for the information of all course applicants.

All applications for admission to a course shall be made on the Application for Admission form and lodged in the manner prescribed on the form.

### **3. Additional entry requirements**

In addition to general entry requirements, certain courses may specify additional requirements which applicants are required to meet in order to demonstrate their capacity for success in the course. These may include, but are not limited to:

- i. specific studies (e.g. English or mathematics at a specified level);
- ii. attendance at interviews;
- iii. presentation of folios; and/or
- iv. submission of supplementary information forms.

Additional entry requirements where approved will be published on the Institute's website for the information of all course applicants.

### **4. English language proficiency**

International student course applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate competency in the English language. English proficiency can be demonstrated by providing proof of an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) overall test result (or

equivalent alternative test result as defined by regulation) that meets the specified level of English proficiency specified for the course.

Minimum IELTS for all courses will be published on the Institute's website for the information of all course applicants.

Other acceptable evidence of English proficiency, to IELTS, includes:

- i. Internet-based TOEFL (IBT);
- ii. Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE);
- iii. Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE);
- iv. English for Academic Purposes (EAP 2);
- v. PTE Academic Module; and
- vi. Certificate IV in ESL.

#### **4.1 Exemptions**

Domestic student course applicants are exempt from the English language proficiency requirements.

International student course applicants who meet the following criteria are also exempt from the English language proficiency requirements.

- i. Citizen and passport holder of the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand or the Republic of Ireland.
- ii. Successful completion at least five years of study in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa or the Republic of Ireland.
- iii. Successfully completion of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, or study at Certificate IV level or higher in Australia within two years of applying for a student visa.

International student course applicants who do not meet the specified English proficiency requirements may be given a conditional offer of admission pending successful completion of an English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) program prior to commencing their course.

### **5. Special and alternative entry arrangements**

Applicants who are 21-years of age or over who have not completed Year 12 (or equivalent) may be admitted for entry to a course by addressing one of the following special and alternative entry arrangements:

- i. Successful completion of a Special Tertiary Admissions Test administered by a tertiary admissions centre;
- ii. Submission of a portfolio of prior and current academic and professional work; or

- iii. Submitting an application for credit that meets the requirements of the Institute's *Credit for Prior Learning Policy and Procedure*.

Course applicants applying under special and alternative entry arrangements may additionally be required to attend an interview with the relevant Course Coordinator to assess the applicant's capacity for higher education studies. The applicant should submit a portfolio of prior and current academic and professional work prior to the interview to assist in the assessment process.

Criteria used by the Course Coordinator when selecting applicants to a course under special and alternative entry arrangements may include:

- i. the capacity to pursue tertiary studies;
- ii. motivation to pursue tertiary studies in the discipline of the chosen course;
- iii. demonstrated potential for academic studies based on the applicant's portfolio;
- iv. relevant professional and industry experience.

The processes used to monitor the progress of students enrolled under special and alternative entry arrangements may include:

- i. monitoring of the student's progress by the Course Coordinator at the conclusion of each trimester in the first year of the student's enrolment;
- ii. a 'Review of Student Progress' meeting between the student and the Course Coordinator at the conclusion of the first year of the student's enrolment.

## **6. Assessment of applications and verification of evidence**

Course applicants for all higher education courses offered by the Institute are required to submit acceptable supporting evidence that they meet the published entry criteria for their chosen course. Supporting evidence must be submitted in the manner described on the Application for Admission form.

The Registrar will be responsible for ensuring supporting evidence is appropriately verified and that a written record of this verification is recorded.

The enrolment of a student in a course of study will be discontinued, and any grades or qualifications awarded rescinded by the Institute, where falsified supporting documentation has been submitted as part of a successful application for admission to a course offered by the Institute.

Course applicant qualifications, skills and experience will be verified through methods including and not limited to:

- i. verification by the Australian Tertiary Admission Centre;

- ii. sighting originals or certified copies of qualifications;
- iii. direct contact with applicants' prior educational institutions, employers, and/or professional referees; and
- iv. assessment of qualifications through the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR).

Qualifications undertaken in a language other than English must be accompanied by a certified official translation.

The process for assessing applications is attached as Appendix 1.

## **7. Offers**

Based on the documentation provided and subject to the application meeting the published entry criteria, a written offer of a place in the course will be made to the course applicant via a Letter of Offer. Any conditions of the offer will be clearly specified in the Letter of Offer.

The offer of a place in a course will include the following information:

- i. All charges associated with the applicant's proposed studies as known at the time and advice on the potential for changes in charges during their studies;
- ii. Arrangements and potential eligibility for credit for prior learning;
- iii. Details on changes to or withdrawal from offers, acceptance and enrolment, tuition protection and refunds of fees and charges; and
- iv. Details of any specific requirements of the courses, such as health requirements for students undertaking clinical work, requirements for security checks, particular language requirements and particular requirements of work placements.

## **8. Acceptance**

Course applicants accept the offer of a place in the course by signing and returning a copy of the Letter of Offer and Student Agreement as directed.

Once an offer is accepted, the course applicant is enrolled in their course and sent a Confirmation of Enrolment letter with details about the course and arrangements for student orientation.

## **9. Cancellation of enrolment**

A student's enrolment may be cancelled if any statements made by the student in their admission application are shown to be false.

A student shall be deemed to be no longer enrolled in a course if the student has been excluded on academic or disciplinary grounds.

Circumstances under which an international student's enrolment may be cancelled are detailed in Section 5.2 of the Institute's *Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure*.

## **10. Request for a review of a decision to refuse admission**

Course applicants may request a review of a decision to refuse admission to a course. The grounds for a review are that the decision is inconsistent with this policy.

Requests must be made in writing and lodged with the Dean within ten working days of the applicant receiving written notification of the decision to refuse their application for admission. The Dean will respond in writing to the request for a review within twenty working days and may confirm or vary the decision.

All decisions made by the Dean in regards to reviews under this policy will be reported to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

If a course applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their request for a review of a decision to refuse admission to a course, they may utilise the Institute's *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure*.

## 11. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)</i>	A number that indicates a student's performance in the HSC relative to their Year 12 cohort, including students who did not complete Year 12.
<i>Conditional offer of admission</i>	A status of course admission whereby the course applicant is offered entry and may commence studies on the condition that the applicant satisfies one or more specified requirements in connection with their course offer.
<i>Course</i>	A structured sequence of study leading to the award of a degree, or other recognized qualification, which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by the Board of Directors of Astra Institute of Higher Education.
<i>Higher School Certificate (HSC)</i>	The credential awarded to secondary school students who successfully complete Years 11 and 12 or equivalent in New South Wales.
<i>(the) Institute</i>	Astra Institute of Higher Education.
<i>International student</i>	A holder of a student visa, who is not a citizen of Australia or New Zealand, or who is not an Australian permanent resident, or who is a temporary resident of Australia.
<i>Letter of Offer</i>	A formal invitation of admission made to a course applicant who has been successful in gaining entry into the course for which they applied.

## 12. Related documents

- Credit for Prior Learning Policy and Procedure
- Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure
- Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

### 13. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	12 October 2021	Document creation
1.1	Academic Board	24 August 2022	Amendments to '4. English language proficiency', and addition of '4.1 Exemptions'.
1.2	Academic Board	29 June 2023	Amendment to '2. General entry requirements'.

Document owner: Dean

Listed: Public document



## Appendix 1: Procedures for assessing an applicant's qualifications, experience and English language proficiency

<p><b>Admissions Department</b></p> <p><b>Completed Application Form and associated documentation are received</b></p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Completed <i>Application Form</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Original or certified copies of evidence to demonstrate applicant meets entry requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Certified evidence of date of birth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Copy of passport details (for international students)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Copy of English language test/evidence English language proficiency (if applicable)</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Admissions Officer</b></p> <p><b>Initial assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create application file</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check documentation is complete</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Request any documentation outstanding from applicant</li> </ul> <p>When application is deemed complete ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assess application against entry requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assess English proficiency (if applicable)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check student is 18 years or older (if applicable)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Refer application to Course Coordinator in the case of certain admissions categories</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Verify documentation where appropriate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If required, arrange interview/audition</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Dean</b></p> <p><b>Special assessment/validation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assessment under special category required?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assessment by Admissions Officer validated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Application approved</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Application not approved</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Registrar</b></p> <p><b>Advise outcome of application</b></p> <p>Application successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make written offer of place in the course</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send Enrolment Package to applicant</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalise documentation</li> </ul> <p>Application unsuccessful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advise applicant of outcome of application and right to appeal decision</li> </ul>
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