



PL_AC_003 Admissions Policy

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1. Context

The Media Design School (MDS) is committed to excellence in academic standards as well as equity objectives for a diverse and representative student population. Core to the philosophy of MDS is that all students with the capacity to succeed in tertiary study should have the opportunity to do so, regardless of social or educational disadvantage. The Admissions Policy reflects these aims. Student selection is competitive and based on the principles of academic merit and access and equity. Selection processes are applied fairly and openly, and recognise that formal qualifications are not the only measure of the capacity to succeed.

2. Definitions

Award programme: a programme leading to an accredited qualification.

Domestic applicant: a prospective student who is a New Zealand citizen, an Australian citizen, or a holder of a New Zealand permanent resident visa.

International applicant: a prospective student who is not a domestic applicant, and who may hold a student visa and is protected under the [Education \(Pastoral Care of International Students\) Code of Practice 2016](#).

Learning outcomes: are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills, and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and can demonstrate as a result of learning.

- **Formal learning:** learning that takes place through a structured programme of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification.
- **Informal learning:** learning gained through relevant work or life experience, self-tuition and social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.
- **Non-formal learning:** refers to learning that takes place through a structured programme of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification, for example, work-based programmes and non-accredited professional development programmes.

Underage: an individual below 18 years of age.



3. Scope

This policy applies to all domestic and international applicants for admission to MDS programmes.

4. Principles

Selection and admission to programmes at MDS are based on processes that:

- are fair, equitable and transparent
- are merit-based
- identify students with the capacity to succeed in tertiary study
- facilitate diverse and representative access and take into account possible educational or social disadvantage, and
- recognise formal, non-formal and informal prior learning.

5. Entry requirements for undergraduate programmes

To be eligible for admission, undergraduate applicants must satisfy the minimum entry requirements.

Entry requirements are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they remain consistent with the objectives of MDS, and include, but are not limited to:

- formal academic qualifications at the secondary, or tertiary level
- interviews, portfolios, work and life experience, referees reports, informal and non-formal learning, or a combination of these, or
- the satisfaction of criteria for special and discretionary admission designed to broaden access to MDS.

Any proposed changes to the programme entry requirements must be submitted for consideration by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority as a type 2 change (2018).

5.1 Quotas

Quotas may apply to some programmes. MDS, legislative and government requirements determine the number of places available in a particular programme. MDS may also set sub-quotas for the different eligibility categories. Where demand exceeds the number of available places, applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis.



5.2 Equivalence

MDS undertakes to assess all applicants through processes that are fair and equitable. It is entirely at the discretion of MDS, however, to make judgements about the equivalence of qualifications and other criteria in respect of assessing the eligibility of applicants.

6. Entry requirements for postgraduate programmes

Entry to a postgraduate programme is based on a demonstrated capacity to undertake postgraduate studies in the proposed field. The entry requirements are programme-specific and may include formal qualifications, a combination of formal qualifications and relevant professional experience, or extensive high-level relevant professional experience. All applications for postgraduate programmes are assessed on an individual basis.

In addition, when applying for postgraduate study, applicants may be considered under the guidelines of special and discretionary admission designed to broaden access to MDS.

7. English language proficiency

Applicants must provide evidence of meeting the English language proficiency level required by each programme and as required by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority Rule 18.

8. Application process

To facilitate the assessment of their application, prospective students must follow the MDS application process. During the application process, MDS ensures potential applicants are provided with full and comprehensive programme and fees information to make an informed decision about choosing to enrol. The information provided includes, but is not limited to:

- programme information, including but not limited to: entry requirements, programme, refund period, programme rules, subjects, policies and procedures,
- fee information, including but not limited to: the estimated maximum programme price, payment options, refund entitlements, and withdrawal information.

The Student Administration Team acts on behalf of the academic team with delegated authority to assess applicants against the stated entry requirements and any applicable programme requirements or prerequisites. The scope of their delegated authority is limited to applications that meet all the required entry requirements. Where an applicant is applying for a course that requires submission of a portfolio, the Programme Director (or delegate) assess the submission and advise the Student Administration Team accordingly.

Decisions about admissions will be based on a documented assessment of the applicant's overall ability to undertake the programme and achieve the programme learning outcomes. If the applicant



is successful, MDS will issue them with an offer letter. An offer letter outlines information about the programme or programmes in which the applicant is to be enrolled, associated fees, terms and conditions, and other details required under relevant legislation.

8.1 Applicants under the age of 18

MDS is committed to the personal safety and social well-being of all students. MDS has obligations relating to students who are under 18 years of age (underage) at the time of admission.

Where the programme permits underage students to be enrolled, underage applicants must have their parent or legal guardian agree to MDS terms and conditions of enrolment and sign relevant documents.

MDS does not accept underage international applicants.

8.2 Applicants with a disability or medical condition

MDS will assess all requests for reasonable adjustments by an applicant with a disability or temporary medical condition under the *Disability Policy*, prior to a final decision being made regarding their admission.

8.3 Required documents

MDS requires original or certified copies of documents prior to admission. Refer to the *Admissions Procedure* for details.

8.4 Verifying the authenticity of documents submitted for admission

MDS may verify the authenticity of documents submitted by applicants for admission.

9. Complaints and appeals

If an applicant's admission to MDS or their preferred programme has been rejected, they can request to have the decision reviewed by in accordance with the *Student Complaints Policy*.

10. References

Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016.



New Zealand Qualifications Authority (2018). *Guidelines for approving and maintaining degrees and related qualifications*. Retrieved from <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/degree-approval-accreditation-and-monitoring/degree-guidelines/>

NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013 (Version 4), section 18 (English language requirements for international students). Retrieved from <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/expired-rules/programme-approval-and-accreditation/8/18/>