Admissions Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') aims to have a diverse and representative student cohort and maintain high academic standards in its courses, by identifying applicants with potential to achieve academic success in their chosen studies.

(2) We believe in providing quality education, training, and research that matters and changes people's lives for the better. In doing this, we are committed to education that is accessible, safe and inclusive, so that students can thrive and reach their full potential, regardless of their social, cultural or educational background.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy outlines the principles for admitting students to the University and describes the process for applying to courses at the University.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies to all applicants seeking entry into CDU courses, award and non-award, including microcredentials, pathway and foundation courses, and vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) courses, except:

a. Admissions for non-formal short courses not linked to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) are not subject to this policy but are managed in accordance with the CDU Express Offering Policy and Procedure.

(5) More detailed process information for:

a. higher degree by research (HDR) course can be found in the Higher Degree by Research - Admission and Enrolment Procedure; and
b. VET courses can be found in the VET Student Enrolment Procedure.

Section 4 - Policy

(6) The University aims to attract, select and retain a diverse range of students with the potential to achieve academic success in their chosen studies.

(7) To grant applicants the opportunity to apply and succeed in their education, the University will ensure:

a. Access to alternative entry pathways and reasonable adjustments so that a diverse range of applicants can participate in University study.
b. Students have the academic foundations and information needed to achieve in their chosen course.
c. Fair and transparent selection processes that are merit based and take equity considerations into account.

d. Regional, rural and remote engagement within the Northern Territory to enhance participation in these areas.

(8) Applicants have a responsibility to:

a. Understand admission criteria, including inherent requirements of the course, which may include the requirement to be vaccinated, criteria for professional registration, licencing, pre-requisites and any other required knowledge, skills, or abilities.
b. Seek advice regarding the course, including their rights and obligations, inherent requirements, or any concerns, prior to accepting an offer.
c. Apply for credit or recognition of prior learning in a timely way, so that the University can recognise formal and informal learning, demonstrated skills, employment history and community contribution. See the VET Recognition Procedure or Academic Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy as relevant.

Admission Criteria

(9) To be eligible for admission, applicants must satisfy all admission criteria as set by the University and published on the University website and in relevant publications. This includes, but is not limited to:

a. Minimum age requirements;
b. English language requirements;
c. Academic entry criteria including minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) or equivalent; and
d. Course-specific entry criteria including VET qualification regulations.

(10) Satisfying the admission criteria enables an applicant to be considered for admission but does not guarantee an offer of admission to the course.

(11) International applicants intending to study in Australia as an international student visa holder will only be considered for admission into an approved Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) course. In addition to meeting all the requirements as determined by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), they must also demonstrate that they are a genuine student.

Minimum Age Requirements

(12) Applicants must be at least 15 years of age at the time of course commencement and have completed Australian year 10 (or equivalent), unless otherwise specified in the admission criteria.

a. High School students may undertake VET for Secondary Schools training in accordance with Northern Territory Department of Education Vocational education and training delivered to secondary students - policy.
b. Applicants who are under the age of 18 will be required to provide written consent from a parent or legal guardian.
c. International applicants who are under the age of 18 must be cared for in Australia by a parent or legal guardian and be assessed under the International Students - Welfare of International Students U18 Procedure.

English Language Requirements

(13) Entry into all courses, across all modes of delivery and locations, requires applicants to meet the required level of English language proficiency as outlined in the English Language Proficiency Policy and on the Course Finder on the University website.

a. Where applicable, international applicants must also satisfy the English language requirements for student visa applications.

Academic Entry Criteria and Course Specific Entry Criteria

(14) VET course entry criteria are listed as part of the national qualification details, listed on training.gov.au and applied by the University.

(15) The University will determine academic and course specific entry criteria for all HE and HDR courses.

a. Entry criteria are established as part of a course's initial accreditation and may be updated through the accreditation process.

(16) Minimum academic entry and course specific entry criteria will include relevant competencies, educational achievement, and/or work and life experience required for entry.

a. The University will determine the equivalency of any formal qualifications that an applicant has achieved.
b. Applicants may be required to undertake additional selection tasks (such as an interview, audition) or tests.
c. Applicants will have any relevant overseas qualification assessed by using the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) published assessments or as documented in current Country Education Profiles issued by Australian Education International, UK National Information Centre (ENIC) or grades awarded under the European Credit Transfer System for completed courses.

Educational Access and Inclusion

(17) The University recognises that a wide range of personal or systemic factors can cause an applicant to face educational disadvantage. Applicants therefore may not always be able to demonstrate their full potential to succeed at tertiary study through the usual University admission processes.

(18) Applicants who are recognised as having faced educational disadvantage include:

a. Applicants from a school that qualifies for equity adjustments on the basis of their remoteness, participation rate, mean ATAR, or Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage.
b. Applicants who have experienced educational disadvantage because of their:
    i. First Nations status;
    ii. Regional or remote location;
    iii. Gender identity and/or expression;
    iv. Ability and/or health status;
    v. Sexuality;
    vi. Family status, sole parent responsibilities, or carer responsibilities;
    vii. Impact of family or gendered violence or abuse;
    viii. Socio-economic status or financial hardship; or
    ix. Other factors contributing to educational disadvantage that applicants are able to demonstrate.

(19) When assessing applicants who face educational disadvantage, the University may take a range of other evidence into account. Evidence considered may include, but is not limited to:

a. Year 12 subject results, even where applicants do not qualify for an ATAR.
b. Educational impact statement or recommendation completed by a High School Principal or Year 12 Co-ordinator.
c. Medical impact statement completed by a registered health professional who is treating the applicant for their condition.
d. Community Elder recommendations.

e. Involvement and/or leadership in sporting, performance, community, volunteering, defence, or business activities.
f. Results from approved supplementary tasks, such as writing tests.

(20) Applicants with disability or who have carer responsibilities for a person with disability are advised to liaise with the University about reasonable adjustments under the Students with Disability Policy as part of their admission process.

Admission for School Leavers

(21) The University recognises that there are many ways to complete Year 12 studies and that not all students who complete Year 12 will qualify for an ATAR, and that a student's ATAR may not demonstrate their full potential to succeed at tertiary study.

(22) The University may therefore design alternative entry pathways to take a range of other evidence into account for School Leavers. Evidence considered may include, but is not limited to:

a. Year 12 subject results, even where applicants do not qualify for an ATAR.
b. Recommendation completed by a High School Principal or Year 12 Co-ordinator.

Process of Admission

(23) Applicants must apply for admission in accordance with the process and timeframes published by the University. Applications may be subject to fees.

Offers

(24) Applicants will be assessed for an offer of admission based on merit and their suitability against the relevant admission criteria.

a. The University may establish quotas for courses. When demand exceeds the number of available places, the University will determine the ranking of each application and offer places based on merit or until all available places have been filled.
b. Applicants for non-quota courses may submit a special consideration request to their relevant Tertiary Admissions Centre or directly to the University Admissions Office. Requests will be reviewed and additional ranks may be applied at the discretion of the Admissions Manager.
c. The University may decide to create sub quotas for cohorts of students who have experienced educational disadvantage or who are located in the Northern Territory.

(25) The University will provide applicants with essential information with or after issuing offers, including any:

a. Special requirements of the course; and
b. Conditions on an offer for international applicants, applicants to the Bachelor of Clinical Sciences or CDU/School of Menzies medical program, or HDR applicants, as outlined below.

(26) A conditional offer may be made by the University to:

a. an international applicant, where:
    i. The University is waiting on confirmation of the applicant's academic results;
    ii. Not all the admission criteria have been met;
    iii. Not all necessary documentation has been submitted; or

iv. Not all selection tasks have been completed.

b. a domestic HE applicant who has applied to either the Bachelor of Clinical Sciences or CDU School of Menzies medical program and where:
   i. The University is waiting on confirmation of the applicant's academic results; or
   ii. Not all the admission criteria have been met; or
   iii. Not all necessary documentation has been submitted.
c. an HDR applicant where the University is waiting on confirmation of the application results or another condition as specified by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

(27) Where an applicant does not meet the academic or course specific entry criteria, the University may offer the applicant admission to an alternative course.

a. Where possible, the completion of the alternative course will provide the applicant with a pathway to their intended course choice.

Accepting an Offer

(28) Admission to a course will be finalised when an applicant accepts their offer to the course.

a. Some offers will lapse if not accepted by the specified deadline.
b. An applicant who does not satisfy the conditions of a conditional offer within the specified time period may have their offer withdrawn.

Deferral of admission

(29) Applicants may apply to defer their admission to a course for up to one (1) year from when the offer is made.

a. International applicants who defer their offer will need to satisfy all admission requirements and may be required to undergo re-assessment of their genuine student (GS) requirements prior to the approval of their deferral request.
b. Not all courses are available for deferral, as advised on the University website.

Change of Course Preference

(30) Applicants may change their course preference before the advertised closing date.

a. International applicants can request a change of their course preference directly with the University.
b. Domestic applicants can change their course preference:
   i. via the relevant Tertiary Admissions Centre or MyNextCourse for higher education coursework courses;
   ii. by contacting CDU TAFE for VET courses; or
   iii. by contacting Research and Innovation for HDR courses.

Withdrawal or Cancellation of an Offer

(31) The University may withdraw or cancel an offer of admission where:

a. The offer was made on the basis of incomplete or inaccurate information the applicant or certifying authority supplied;
b. There are insufficient enrolments to make the course viable, which can only occur if the provider default obligations are not breached; or

c. An error has been made in the assessing and processing of the application.

Refusal of Admission

(32) The University may refuse admission to any applicant to any course at its discretion, including (but not limited to) where an applicant:

a. has previously been excluded from the University for any reason;
b. owes money to the University;
c. has been excluded or had their enrolment cancelled at any other tertiary educational institution;
d. is deemed not to meet the genuine student criteria;
e. is deemed to pose a risk to the students and/or staff of the University or the wider University community;
f. may prejudice the reputation, management, good governance or discipline of the University;
g. has engaged in dishonest and/or deceitful behaviour in the process of applying for admission to the University or any other tertiary educational institution;
h. would not be able to lawfully enter University premises for all or part of the duration of a course by reason of a court order; or
i. would be unable to meet the requirements of a course, including but not limited to attendance or participation requirements.

Review of Decision

(33) An applicant may request a review against a determination made under this policy within ten (10) working days of issue of the formal outcome. The outcome of such a review will be final.

Reporting

(34) The University will aggregate data to monitor, review and report on student success in relation to admission standards, including the allocation of credit, English language proficiency and the basis of admission.

a. Reports will be provided to relevant management and governance committees to identify common themes, trends and drive improvements.
b. Reporting will occur in accordance with the Comprehensive Recording Framework, and every effort will be made not to disclose any details that could identify individual students.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(35) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(36) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(37) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	21st October 2026
Review Date	21st October 2029
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	14th October 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Lisa-Marie Stones Director Student and Academic Services
Implementation Officer	Georgina Sudijo Manager Future Students and Admissions
Enquiries Contact	Georgina Sudijo Manager Future Students and Admissions --- Student Administration

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Inherent Requirements" - The abilities, knowledge, and standards of conduct and performance that are essential for a student to achieve the learning outcomes of a course or unit. These may include compulsory standards set by professional registration, or accreditation bodies.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called ‘governance documents’ and are often referred to as ‘policy’ or ‘University policy’.

"Higher education coursework course" - Higher education coursework courses include award courses, which lead to a qualification recognised by the AQF, and accredited non-award courses, including enabling, foundation, preparatory, bridging, study abroad, international exchange, and other types of accredited non-award courses.