1. Context

THINK is committed to excellence in academic standards as well as equity objectives (as outlined in the Diversity and Inclusion Policy) for a diverse and representative student population. Core to THINK’s philosophy 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.

THINK’s 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 course:** a course leading to an accredited qualification or national training package.
- **Postgraduate courses:** vocational and higher education qualifications at AQF levels 8-10.
- **Undergraduate courses:** vocational and higher education qualifications at AQF levels 1-7.

**Domestic applicant:** a prospective student who is an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen, or a holder of an Australian permanent visa (holders of all categories of permanent resident visas including Humanitarian Visas).

**Experience:** includes a combination of factors sufficient to demonstrate readiness for higher education. It includes mature age entry, professional experience, community involvement and work experience (Improving the transparency of higher education admissions: Joint higher education sector and Australian Government Implementation Plan, 2018).

**Experience-based entry schemes:** a selection method used by THINK to assess and select applicants for admission who may not have educational qualifications sufficient for an offer of admission to a course but who have other relevant work and life skills and experience that make them a suitable candidate (Improving the transparency of higher education admissions: Joint higher education sector and Australian Government Implementation Plan, 2018).
International applicant: a prospective student applying to study with THINK:
- in Australia who:
  - holds or may be granted a temporary visa with study rights, or
  - holds or may be granted an Australian student visa as defined by the Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001, or
- offshore (outside of Australia) and is not a domestic applicant
- online who resides offshore and is not a domestic applicant.

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 course 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 course of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification, for example, work-based courses and non-accredited professional development courses.

Reasonable adjustments: adjustments that can be made to allow a student with a disability to participate in education on the same basis as other students. Adjustments are reasonable if they balance the interests of all parties affected and do not affect the academic standards or inherent requirements of a subject or course.

Special entry: special consideration admission of applicants into a course whose study, work or life experiences have been impacted by disability, illness, family disruption or other compelling circumstances. It includes Educational Access Schemes.

Underage: an individual below 18 years of age.

3. Scope
This policy applies to all domestic and international applicants for admission to THINK’s vocational and higher education courses.

4. Principles
Selection and admission to courses at THINK are based on processes that:
- are fair, equitable and transparent,
- are merit-based,
- identify students with the capacity to succeed in tertiary study,
- encourage diverse and representative access and take into account possible educational or social disadvantage, and
- recognise formal, non-formal and informal prior learning.
5. Admission criteria for vocational courses

Applicants to all vocational courses must meet any course-specific entry requirements specified by the Industry Skills Council, defined in the relevant Training Package and published in the Admission Criteria.

Applicants must provide Proof of Identity. Moreover, under the Student Identifiers Act 2014, applicants to vocational courses must:

- provide their Unique Student Identifier (USI) at the time of application if they already have one, or, for international applicants applying to study in Australia, authorise THINK to apply for one on their behalf,
- authorise THINK to access information available via their USI, and
- consent to the use of their USI in their academic records.

In addition, domestic applicants to Diploma or Advanced Diploma qualifications who wish to access the VET Student Loan will be assessed to establish if they have the aptitude to complete the qualification. Evidence of completion of the following is considered sufficient to demonstrate the core skills and capacity required to undertake a Diploma or Advanced Diploma:

- a completed Australian secondary education qualification or equivalent,
- exit Level 3 or above of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) in both reading and numeracy. The assessment will be conducted using the Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) test, or
- a certificate of qualification at level 4 or above in the Australian Qualifications Framework and the course for the qualification was delivered in English.

6. Admission criteria for undergraduate courses

To be eligible for admission, undergraduate applicants must satisfy the minimum admission criteria and any course admission criteria or prerequisites. All entry and course admission criteria apply consistently across different campus locations and/or modes of study.

The Improving the transparency of higher education admissions: Joint higher education sector and Australian Government implementation plan classifies applicant background into four groups (2018, p.6):

- **Higher education study**: applicants whose highest level of study enrolment since leaving secondary education is a higher education course, whether at a university or non-university provider.
- **Vocational education and training (VET) study**: applicants whose highest level of study enrolment since leaving secondary education is a VET course.

1 The Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) test validly assesses against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) to meet the requirements for VET Student Loan enabled courses (Diploma and Advanced Diploma). The assessment is based on a range of real life texts and situations in English. Each student must independently complete their LLN. Individual student results will be communicated to the student as soon as practicable after completion of the assessment and to the Secretary in the form, manner and by the time requested by the Secretary. These results will be retained for a period of 5 years in accordance with VET guidelines.

The Australian Council for Education Research developed the test (Core Skills Profile for Adults) and is an approved testing tool as specified by the VET guidelines.
• **Work and life experience** (includes less recent secondary results): applicants who left secondary education more than two years previously and have not undertaken VET or higher education study since then.

• **Recent secondary education**: applicants whose admission is based mostly on secondary education undertaken at school, TAFE or other VET or higher education provider (Australian or overseas equivalent) that was completed (or will be) in the current year or within the previous two years.

The undergraduate admission criteria are contained within THINK’s published Admission Criteria for THINK Courses. This is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they remain consistent with the objectives of THINK, and include, but are not limited to:

• formal academic qualifications at the secondary, vocational, higher education level,

• aptitude or specific knowledge tests, 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 Entry and Educational Access Schemes designed to broaden access to THINK, address perceived disadvantage or encourage studies in particular disciplines. This includes but is not limited to applicants with physical disabilities, applicants from geographically isolated areas, applicants with economically disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicants.

The Program Director determines any course requirements or prerequisites required in addition to the Admission Criteria subject to the approval of the relevant Dean.

6.1 Quotas

Quotas may apply to some courses. THINK, legislative and government requirements determine the number of places available in a particular course. THINK may also set sub-quotas for the different eligibility categories. Where demand exceeds the number of available places, applicants who meet the minimum admission criteria will be admitted on a first-come-first-serve basis.

6.2 Equivalence

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

7. Admission criteria for postgraduate courses

Entry to a postgraduate course is based on a demonstrated capacity to undertake postgraduate studies in the proposed field. The admission criteria are course-specific and may include formal qualifications at the AQF Level 7 or above, a combination of formal qualifications and relevant professional experience, or extensive high-level relevant professional experience. All applications for postgraduate courses are assessed on an individual basis.

In addition, when applying for postgraduate study, applicants may be considered under the guidelines of Special Entry and Educational Access Schemes designed to broaden access to THINK, address perceived disadvantage or encourage studies in particular disciplines. This includes, but is not limited to, applicants with physical disabilities, applicants from geographically isolated areas,
applicants with economically disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicants.

8. English language proficiency
Entry to all courses requires proficiency in English under the English Language Proficiency Requirements. International applicants and domestic applicants who have not studied at the secondary level in English must demonstrate that they meet the minimum requirements for English language proficiency, specified by the relevant course as outlined in the Admission Criteria.

9. Application process
To facilitate the assessment of their application, prospective students must follow THINK’s specified application process. Instructions and timelines can be found on THINK’s website. During the application process, THINK ensures potential applicants are provided with full and comprehensive course and fees information to make an informed decision about choosing to enrol. The information provided includes, but is not limited to:

- course information, including but not limited to: admission criteria, course and census dates, course rules, subjects, units of competency, policies and procedures,
- fee information, including but not limited to: the estimated maximum course price, payment options, FEE-HELP/ VET Student Loan information, withdrawal information.

Admissions act on behalf of the academic team with delegated authority to assess applicants against the stated entry criteria and any applicable course requirements or prerequisites. The scope of their delegated authority is limited to applications that meet all the required admission criteria. Where an applicant does not meet all the admission criteria, they will be referred to the Program Director (or delegate) for assessment. Decisions about admissions will be based on a documented assessment of the applicant’s overall ability to undertake the course and achieve the course learning outcomes. If the applicant is successful, THINK will issue them with an offer letter. An offer letter outlines information about the course or courses in which the applicant is to be enrolled, associated fees, terms and conditions, and other details required under relevant legislation.

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

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

9.1.1 International applicants under the age of 18
International applicants (on a student visa) who are under the age of 18 years, except where the applicant decides to live in on-campus accommodation, must also complete and return the Accommodation and Welfare Plans form and make additional arrangements for guardianship and accommodation that satisfy the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) Migration Regulations.
9.2 Applicants with a disability or medical condition
THINK 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.

9.3 Required documents
THINK requires original or certified copies of documents prior to admission.

9.3.1 Domestic applicants
- Proof of identity and
- Proof of citizenship (for Australian and New Zealand citizens) or
- Proof of residency (for permanent residents in Australia).

9.3.2 International applicants
- Valid non-Australian passport with an Australian visa, or
- Valid government-issued proof of identity.

9.3.3 Other documents required
THINK may request applicants to provide additional documents:
- if required by the specific admission criteria for a course (e.g. proof of applicant’s previous study, evidence of work experience),
- in order to meet requirements for government funding (e.g. VET Student Loan, FEE-HELP).

9.3.4 Verifying the authenticity of documents submitted for admission
THINK may verify the authenticity of documents submitted by applicants for admission.

10. Complaints and appeals
If an applicant’s admission to THINK or to their preferred course has been rejected, they can request to have the decision reviewed by lodging a formal complaint in accordance with the Student Complaints Policy.

11. References


