



# ALFRED DEAKIN HIGH SCHOOL

*Excellence, Responsibility, Community, Respect*



## Alfred Deakin High School Gifted and Talented Policy 2023

### Purpose

The *ACT Government's Gifted and Talented Students Policy 2021* reflects the ACT Government's continued interest in pursuing the very best provisions to meet the learning needs of gifted and talented students. This Policy provides consistent advice to principals regarding the best approaches in identifying and supporting gifted and talented students in ACT government schools (ACT Education Directorate, 2019). *The Alfred Deakin High School Gifted and Talented Students Policy 2023* outlines the programs and provisions in place to support Gifted and Talented students in this schools' context.

### Definition

Currently in Australia the definition most used by education departments is Francois Gagné's *Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (2.0)* (DMGT). The DMGT acknowledges "that giftedness is a broad concept that encompasses a range of abilities: it also recognises that giftedness is only potential and must go through a transformative process in order to become a talent" (ACARA, 2023).

GIFTEDNESS designates the possession and use of outstanding natural ability in at least one domain (intellectual, creative, socio affective, sensorimotor), to a degree that places an individual in the top 10% of age peers.

TALENT designates the outstanding performance or competency in at least one field of human activity (academics, arts, business, leisure, social action, sport, technology) to a degree that places an individual in the top 10% of age peers in that field (Gagné, 2012).

"Developmentally appropriate programs for gifted and talented students may include a combination of provisions to allow students access to meaningful learning opportunities such as a differentiated curriculum, incorporating advanced learning through enrichment experiences, counselling interventions, acceleration options, and grouping. These provisions are interdependent and strongly supported by research as central to increasing the learning outcomes for gifted individuals" (ACT Education Directorate, 2023).

At Alfred Deakin High School the Unicorn Gifted and Talented Program provides identified students with cluster grouping opportunities and high ability students are offered a differentiated curriculum, full of challenges and in line with their interests and abilities, together with an educational environment that promotes their talents. Students are also offered enrichment opportunities through access to:

- self-directed projects
- fast-paced core subjects
- whole-to-part discovery of concepts (understanding the big picture before the details)
- critical and creative thinking skills
- in-depth topic development
- competitions
- interdisciplinary curriculum
- real world problems

### Identification Process

To be eligible for the Unicorn Program, students must be enrolled at Alfred Deakin High School first. Alfred Deakin High School is classified as a Category A school by the ACT Education Directorate. As a category A school we are generally not able to accept students from out of their area. All schools in the ACT cater for gifted and talented students and it is unlikely that if you are residing out of area that a place would be offered at ADHS based on giftedness alone. All students at Alfred Deakin High School complete cognitive testing which assesses students' verbal, quantitative, and non-verbal abilities as part of our individual and whole school data collection. Students will be placed in some, or all, of the four core Unicorn classes. The testing informs our whole school decision making processes and also provides guidance around instructional decisions and strategies for individual students and classes. ACT Education guidelines indicate that schools should make use of multiple instruments from both qualitative and quantitative categories in their identification processes and research the instruments that best meet their needs. Therefore, the school may employ Psychologist-administered individual ability tests, which are the only reliable measures which determine the



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Full Scale Intelligence Quotient and/or the level of cognitive giftedness. The program also caters for twice-exceptional learners, individuals with exceptional talents in areas such as maths, science, arts, and technology, who also have neurodiverse characteristics such as ASD or ADHD (Klingner, 2022). Our Twice-Exceptional students are managed in conjunction with the Diversity faculty. Further to this, the GATLO will oversee and coordinate the development of Individual Learning Plans for students that require any specific learning, social emotional needs, transition plans and supports. They will utilise a Case Management approach when required, collaborating with staff, parents/carers and, where appropriate, students to support the needs of the Gifted and Talented learner.

The GATLO will write to families to offer students a place in the program following the cognitive testing process. It is important that students offered a place within the program meet the criteria outlined through our identification processes (top 10% of age peers), as students who are well placed in the program demonstrate a strong sense of belonging, strive for academic excellence and strengthen their self-esteem and school engagement (Valadez et al., 2022). There is however evidence that students who do not qualify through these processes can be impacted by reduced self-esteem and it can negatively impact their engagement, self-concept and academic achievement (Valadez et al., 2022). Students are offered a place for their full four years at Alfred Deakin High School. Should the program not be suitable for the student, the GATLO will discuss with the student and their family before any joint decision is made regarding movement out of the program.

## **Acceleration Process**

The *Alfred Deakin High School Gifted and Talented Policy 2023* outlines the requirements relating to the partial or full grade acceleration of students and is consistent with the [Directorate's Gifted and Talented Student Acceleration Procedure](#) (ACT Education Directorate, 2021). Acceleration is an educational intervention that moves students through an educational program at a faster rate than usual or younger than typical age. Acceleration involves matching the level, complexity and pace of curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student and will assist in ensuring gifted learners become "confident...successful lifelong learners" (Council of Australian Governments Education Council, 2019). It is vital to ensure that acceleration, of whatever type, is something that the student desires. As every gifted student is different, this policy is in place to ensure clarity for all decisions made in accordance with the individual needs of our students.

If full grade acceleration is indicated as a need, at ADHS we base our decision on several pieces of information, one of which is the rating of the student completed by the IOWA Acceleration scale (ACT Education Directorate, 2021). The IOWA is considered the gold standard for assessing full grade acceleration and we have selected the IOWA as this tool is endorsed by the ACT Education Department as part of the decision making process linked above. The IOWA is completed internally by the ACT Education Service, by the School Psychologist attached to our school.

## **Acceleration Recommendation**

When an acceleration recommendation is made, this may take a number of forms, as outlined in the linked procedures document. This can include:

- Subject based acceleration within school
- Whole grade acceleration within school
- Subject based acceleration beyond our high school setting
- Whole grade acceleration, or dual-enrolment or early entry in alternate curriculum programs in a different school or sector to our current high school setting

The final decision on acceleration sits with the school principal who may consult with Education Support Office staff, the relevant network Director of School Improvement or the Senior Director of Clinical Practice. Successful acceleration relies upon collaboration between school, home and student; appropriate selection of acceleration type; sufficient accelerative intervention; and sufficient support, including with transition.



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