

Alfred Deakin High School Academic Unicorn Program

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What is the Academic Unicorn Program?

The Unicorn Program is Alfred Deakin High School's Gifted and Talented cohort and caters to students who we have identified as being gifted.

Unicorn Program

Class placement for
English, Maths, Science
and HaSS

Mainstream

Classes at ADHS are generally not streamed, particularly in year 7. This is not always the case in Mathematics, depending on the needs to the cohort.

Unicorn is not a stream that sits above mainstream classes. It is a program that caters for a specific need that sits alongside mainstream classes.

Giftedness is not what you do or how hard you work. It is who you are. You think differently.



You experience life intensely. You care about injustice. You seek meaning. You appreciate and strive for the exquisite. You are painfully sensitive. You are extremely complex. You cherish integrity. Your truth-telling has gotten you in trouble.

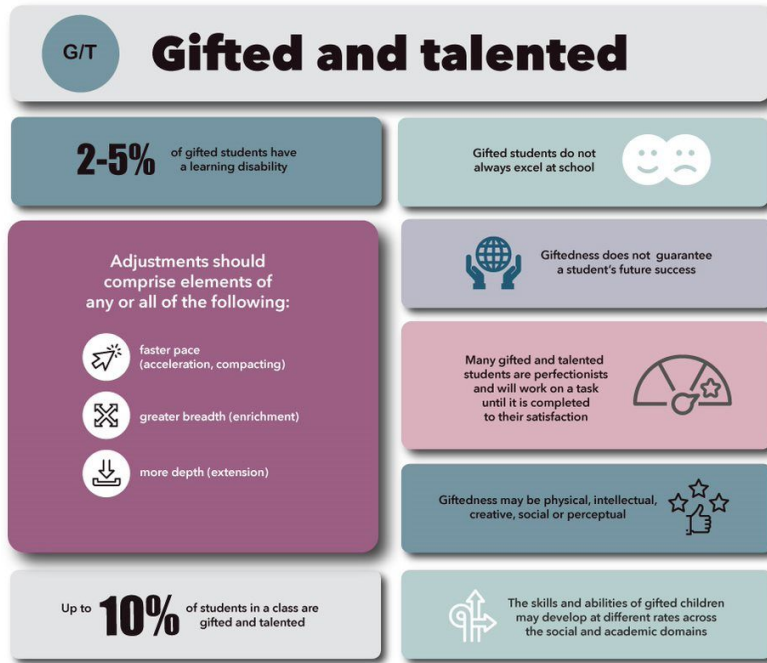
Should 98% of the population find you odd, seek the company of those who love you just the way you are. You are not broken. You do not need to be fixed. You are utterly fascinating. Trust yourself!

Dr. Linda Kreger Silverman (1993)

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.

Who are Gifted and Talented Students?



The Directorate, in its Gifted and Talented Students Policy, has used Gagné's definitions for giftedness and talent, which allows us to see them as separate but related ideas:

- Giftedness is high ability or potential in one or more domain (in the top 10% of age peers).
- Talent is high performance, achievement or mastery of above abilities in one or more field (in the top 10% of age peers).

At AHDS, we provide educational programs and services for gifted and talented students that include:

- ▶ A differentiated curriculum that supports extended and personalised learning within a child's classroom.
- ▶ Grouping strategies that provide opportunities to work with like-ability peers
- ▶ Extension tasks that deepen a student's knowledge and understanding beyond what is expected of the whole class
- ▶ Individual inquiry opportunities as enrichment for gifted students
- ▶ Flexible learning environments that promote student choice and access to resources
- ▶ Case coordination for individual learning programs when required
- ▶ Access to events such as ICAS competitions



What might this look like in a classroom?

Inquiry Projects

- Chances to pursue content at a deeper or broader capacity

Challenge

- Faster pace
- Creative and critical thinking through expanded opportunities for discussion and debate

Program Identification

Places in this program are identified through a range of means including:

- ▶ Cognitive testing (CoGAT)
- ▶ NAPLAN results & other literacy and numeracy testing
- ▶ Information from primary school teachers
- ▶ Information from parents, such as external psychological assessments

We are continually building our network and maintaining connections with PEA Primary Schools. There is some correlation between primary school G&T programs and ADHS however, placement in a primary school gifted stream does not always correlate directly with a placement in the Unicorn program at ADHS.



Identification Considerations

- Our cognitive testing is major part of the identification process - These tests cannot be studied for
- Other relevant tests undertaken by psychologists
- Previous enrolment in a G&T program is considered but does not equate to enrolment in Unicorn

All of this information is used to determine class placement and eligibility for the Unicorn program. If there is anything that you feel would help us make a decision for your child don't hesitate to get in touch.



Placement

- ▶ If identified, students are invited to join the program via a Letter of Offer, usually emailed out to parents in November.
- ▶ Year 7s are placed in Unicorn for all or some academic classes: English / HaSS / Maths / Science.
- ▶ Not all gifted students find themselves suited to the Unicorn Program and are not obliged to accept an offer.
- ▶ Placement is determined by student wellbeing, academic interests and in partnership with the family.
- ▶ Placement is fixed for a year after letter of offer is accepted and can then be reviewed at any time



Directorate Resources

→ ADHS Website:

https://www.adhs.act.edu.au/special_programs/gifted_and_talented_education

→ Directorate Fact Sheets:

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/support-for-our-students/g-and-talented-education>



Questions or Inquiries

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