

Otago Polytechnic Students' Assn

# Distance Students' Handbook 2018



## Welcome

OPSA welcomes you to study at Otago Polytechnic. We wish you success in your studies and hope that you find your experience to be productive and satisfying.

Please use this handbook as a resource, but also remember that there are many dedicated staff at Otago Polytechnic and OPSA that are willing to assist you. Don't hesitate to use the contact information in this handbook and your course information materials to find assistance with other questions you may have.



# USEFUL CONTACTS

**OPSA** – Otago Polytechnic Students' Assn is an independent organisation within the Polytechnic and is run by students for students. We provide student services on behalf of the Polytechnic including facilities, advocacy and representation

*Feel free to contact OPSA anytime with any queries, concerns or issues you may have*

**OPSA Advisory Board President/Chair:**

➤ Kerry Rushton [opsa.presidents@op.ac.nz](mailto:opsa.presidents@op.ac.nz) 027 455 7616

**Student Support Advisor**

➤ Lesley Scoullar [Lesley.scoullar@op.ac.nz](mailto:Lesley.scoullar@op.ac.nz) 027 611 7795

**Telephone:** OPSA Office (03) 4776-974 0800-762-786

[www.OPSA.org.nz](http://www.OPSA.org.nz)

[www.opsa.org.nz/facebook](http://www.opsa.org.nz/facebook)

## STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM 0800 762 786 [studentsuccess@op.ac.nz](mailto:studentsuccess@op.ac.nz)

Life off campus can be exciting and challenging, so our Student Success Team are here to support and help you through any issues that might arise, so do contact them and seek help if it is required.

Patricia Quensell	Student Success Team Leader/Careers
Sharon Ward	Administrator
Wayne Green	Careers
Ashleigh Crosbie	Careers
Anna Seiuli	Student Advisor - Pasifika
Sheena Roy	Student Advisor - International
Yvonne Fogarty	Student Advisor - International
Danni Roberts	Wellbeing and Disability Support Advisor
Aya Garcia	International Homestay Coordinator
Celia Hepburn	Student Advisor

## CHAPLAIN

[chaplain@op.ac.nz](mailto:chaplain@op.ac.nz) (03) 479-6094

## COUNSELLING

Not all distance students are charged a Student Health Levy, but if you require counselling, please contact:

- Danni Roberts, our Well Being Advisor at Student Success. [dannir@op.ac.nz](mailto:dannir@op.ac.nz)  
*Danni can work with and support distance students and if necessary refer them onto a counsellor.*  
0800 762 786 [studentsuccess@op.ac.nz](mailto:studentsuccess@op.ac.nz) or contact
- Student Health <https://www.op.ac.nz/students/support/tile?id=179> 0800 762 786

## LEARNING ADVISORS

0800 762 786 [studentsuccess@op.ac.nz](mailto:studentsuccess@op.ac.nz)

The team of Learning Advisors offer support in the skills you need for success in your course. Contact by phone or email to let us know the support you need.

Internet sessions using your computer for adobe connect or skype, or email feedback on written work, are all available.

## LIBRARY SERVICES

0800 346 827 (*answerphone*) (03) 479 8940

[www.moodle.op.ac.nz](http://www.moodle.op.ac.nz)

[distance.library@otago.ac.nz](mailto:distance.library@otago.ac.nz) or [lending.robertson@otago.ac.nz](mailto:lending.robertson@otago.ac.nz)

[www.library.otago.ac.nz/Robertson/off\\_campus.htm](http://www.library.otago.ac.nz/Robertson/off_campus.htm)

The distance library services is for students living outside Dunedin and can use the service to request library material or ask for research assistance.

- There is an online 'distance form' to make requests for library material and free postage is provided for the return of books supplied by this service.
  - Allow 5-7 days for your requests to arrive – sorry, no urgent/priority service is available
- Go to distance learners on the library website for more information

## IT SUPPORT SERVICE DESK



0800 765 948 email [servicedesk@op.ac.nz](mailto:servicedesk@op.ac.nz) to contact our IT Service Desk Staff.

8am to 5pm - Monday to Friday, fully staffed

5pm to 8pm - Monday to Friday, one person on duty

2pm to 6pm – Sundays, one person on duty

Closed Public Holidays

We can provide support and advice for most IT difficulties you may encounter on Windows or Apple computers, including the computers you might be using from home.

**Distance Students:** Remember we are here to help should you need it!

## TE PUNAKA OWHEO

Services for Maori Students, including: scholarship information, counselling, study/financial support etc.

Contact: Rebecca Williams 027 201 9614 [www.op.ac.nz/students/Maori-students/](http://www.op.ac.nz/students/Maori-students/)

## OTHER HANDY CONTACTS

Otago Polytechnic 0800 762 786 *all departments & services*

[www.op.ac.nz](http://www.op.ac.nz)

StudyLink 0800 88 99 00

[www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz)

## COMPLAINTS

Students who are experiencing personal or course related problems are welcome to approach the [OPSA.Presidents@op.ac.nz](mailto:OPSA.Presidents@op.ac.nz), or the [Lesley.scoullar@op.ac.nz](mailto:Lesley.scoullar@op.ac.nz), or see the contacts page for telephone details.

Complaints could be a problem with your course, landlord or finances - whatever is bugging you.

## USEFUL SERVICES & RESOURCES

Don't forget your Student ID Card — order today if you haven't already [idcards@op.ac.nz](mailto:idcards@op.ac.nz)



### OPSA/OP Student ID Card

As a distance student, you are usually charged for a student ID card and a student services fee. Students studying off the Dunedin campus are NOT charged for services they cannot access. Some courses may not charge a Student Services Fee, but an alternative "Student Access" card is available to obtain ID/ library services.

ID Cards are processed at the OPSA Office and returned by post – replacement cards cost \$15.00

- email your details (including ID number, name & return address) and attach a photo in jpg. format (plain background, no sunnies or hats) to [idcards@op.ac.nz](mailto:idcards@op.ac.nz)
- This card will also be your access to:
  - Robertson library services, discounts throughout the country, Student Job Search



### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

OPSA also helps manage financial support for hardship or special projects. We provide information on assistance that may be appropriate and available, including emergencies. OPSA and Otago Polytechnic administer a student hardship fund, which may offer a grant or advice to students experiencing difficult unforeseen financial hardship. You can download an application form, or complete online <https://opsa.org.nz/support/grants-and-hardship/> – make sure you complete the budget planner as well.

#### Studylink – Special Needs Grant

[www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) check out what is available – a one-off payment may help out with urgent things like food, bedding and emergency dental or medical treatment. You may be eligible if you have urgent and necessary needs and have no other way to meet these costs.

### STUDENT E-NEWS & STUDENT HUB

Check your student email for updates of "student news" which will also be posted on our website and linked from facebook.

You are most welcome to email your classified adverts or other items of interest to [studentnews@op.ac.nz](mailto:studentnews@op.ac.nz)

Important notices/events will be posted on your student hub and [www.opsa.org.nz/facebook](http://www.opsa.org.nz/facebook)

## HARASSMENT & BULLYING

You have the right to enjoy your time at OP without being made uncomfortable about your age, gender, race, religion, or sexuality. If you think you are experiencing harassment from another student or a staff member, contact OPSA to speak with a contact person.



## GOT PROBLEMS – need help?

OPSA is here to help and your advocate on your behalf and provide you with information on issues relating to study, grades, teachers, marking, complaints, student discipline, landlords and more.

During your studies at OP you may need advice in understanding Polytechnic policies and procedures as well as active support regarding your rights and responsibilities or other concerns.

OPSA has professional and dedicated staff responsible for ensuring that student concerns are raised and handled in a non-judgmental manner and to achieve a resolution acceptable to the student wherever possible.



## LANDLORD ISSUES

You have specific legal rights under the Residential Tenancies Act, check them out at Flattening 101: [www.dbh.govt.nz/flattening-101](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/flattening-101)

The best approach is to first talk to your landlord about what's wrong and say what a good solution might be. If that doesn't work send the landlord a letter. If that doesn't work contact Tenancy Services [www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-index](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-index) they may be able to help, or you can take the issue to mediation [www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-mediation](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-mediation)

If the mediator or Tribunal make an order that the other party does not meet, there are steps to take to enforce an order [www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-orders](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-orders)

**OPSA is here to assist you at any stage of the above process.**

## OP POLICIES

Otago Polytechnic has policies governing how it operates, eg. Withdrawals and refunds, karing, personal information, complaints procedures, harassment and bullying etc. If you'd like a copy of any of these please contact OPSA

## OPSA ON FACEBOOK

Become a friend of OPSA and keep up with the latest news etc.



[opsa.org.nz/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/opsa.org.nz)

## PARKING

If you are coming to Dunedin to attend a block course – limited street parking is available all round campus – BUT CHECK to ensure you are parking in the right spot!



- Do not park in any staff (numbered) parks on campus sites or you will be towed.

## REPRESENTATION

OPSA has representatives on various Polytechnic boards and committees and regularly meets with management. If you have any concerns or views you wish conveyed as a distance student please do not hesitate to let OPSA know.

## STUDENT DISCOUNTS

Check OPSA's website <https://opsa.org.nz/information/discounts/> for a list of student discounts which are available to you with your OPSA student ID card.

- Always ask for a student discount, even if they don't advertise one



## STUDENT JOB SEARCH

SJS is a nationwide agency set-up by students' associations to help find students work while studying. They have a high success rate, and a huge range of jobs in lots of different areas.

- It is free to use
- You can register online at [www.sjs.co.nz](http://www.sjs.co.nz) or contact the team by calling 0800-757-562.

## SUPPORT & COMPLAINTS (external)

OPSA is also here to assist with support and advocacy for your external complaints if it affects your study or to link you up with someone who can

Free Legal Advice	<a href="http://www.communitylaw.org.nz">www.communitylaw.org.nz</a>
YouthLaw	<a href="http://www.youthlaw.co.nz">www.youthlaw.co.nz</a>
Citizens Advice Bureau	<a href="http://www.cab.org.nz">www.cab.org.nz</a>
Ministry of Education	<a href="http://www.minedu.govt.nz">www.minedu.govt.nz</a>
Dept of Building & Housing	<a href="http://www.dbh.govt.nz">www.dbh.govt.nz</a>
Trade Unions	<a href="http://www.opsa.ig.org.nz/links.php">www.opsa.ig.org.nz/links.php</a>
Employment Relations	<a href="http://www.dol.govt.nz/er">www.dol.govt.nz/er</a>
Immigration Service	<a href="http://www.immigration.govt.nz">www.immigration.govt.nz</a>
Insurance Ombudsman	<a href="http://www.iombudsman.org.nz">www.iombudsman.org.nz</a>
Electricity & Gas complaints	<a href="http://www.egcomplaints.co.nz">www.egcomplaints.co.nz</a>
Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.hrc.co.nz">www.hrc.co.nz</a>
Consumer Information	<a href="http://www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/for-consumers">www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/for-consumers</a>
Police Complaints	<a href="http://www.police.govt.nz/contact/complaints.html">www.police.govt.nz/contact/complaints.html</a>
Debt Collectors & your rights	<a href="http://www.consumer.org.nz/reports/debt-collectors">www.consumer.org.nz/reports/debt-collectors</a>



## Disputes Tribunal

provides a quick, inexpensive (no lawyers), informal and private way to help resolve a wide range of civil disputes (for claims under \$15,000) [www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/disputes-tribunal](http://www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/disputes-tribunal)

## Ombudsman

For complaints about all government agencies (*including polytechnics etc.*)

Freephone 0800-802-602 [www.ombudsmen.govt.nz](http://www.ombudsmen.govt.nz) .

## STUDENT HUB

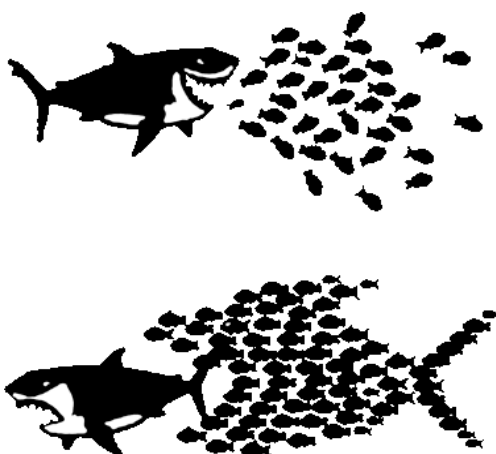
[www.op.ac.nz/student-hub](http://www.op.ac.nz/student-hub)

Access to your student information including results, important dates, etc.

You can also make a comment, complaint or suggestion

## WEBSITE

For detailed information is available about OPSA and the services it offers at [www.OPSA.org.nz](http://www.OPSA.org.nz)



## Why have a Students' Association?

### Complaints & Advocacy:

As well as offering services and facilities, OPSA is here to help stand up for your rights when you need specific advocacy or have a complaint. A students' association is an insurance policy that there will always be someone to help you when you need it.

### Representation:

OPSA is also here to make sure these rights exist in the first place, and that complaints are seldom necessary, by representing your opinion and needs so they have an influence over local and national decision-making.

It is about having someone representing you, keeping an eye on policies and decision-making to protect your rights, so you can spend time focusing on your studies.

**NO MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED – all enrolled OP students automatically belong to your Students' Assn - OPSA**

