

# Distance Students' Handbook 2016



## 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 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:**

➤ Kayla Miller [opsa.presidents@op.ac.nz](mailto:opsa.presidents@op.ac.nz) 027 5536535

**Student Support Advisor**

➤ Lesley Scoullar [Lesley.scoullar@op.ac.nz](mailto:Lesley.scoullar@op.ac.nz) 0276 117795

**Student News:**

[studentnews@op.ac.nz](mailto:studentnews@op.ac.nz)

**Telephone/fax:**

OPSA Office (03) 4776-974 0800-762-786



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

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

Life on 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 come and seek help if it is required.

Brayden Murray	Student Success Team Leader
Sharon Ward	Administrator
Patricia Quensell	Career Advisor
Anna Seiuli	Pasifika Advisor
Rebecca Swindells	Kaitautoko
Sheena Roy	International Student Advisor
Flavia Rubini	International Accommodation/Student Advisor
Barbara Fogarty	Disability Support Advisor

## **CHAPLAIN – Mike Wright**

[chaplain@op.ac.nz](mailto:chaplain@op.ac.nz) (03) 479-6094 or text 021 735 286

## **COUNSELLING**

The counselling service is a free and confidential service with the main focus of the service being individual counselling for all students

### **Phone/on-line Counselling**

Counsellor available for phone or skype appointments on Monday evenings from 6-9pm

**To make an appointment**, please phone 0800 762 786 between 8.30am – 5.00pm weekdays and ask for Student Health.

You will be asked to provide your skype address and phone number. If a phone call is required, the counsellor will phone you at your appointment time.

## 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

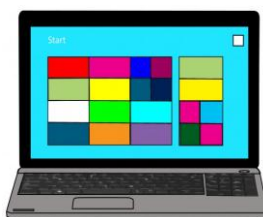
[www.moodle.op.ac.nz](http://www.moodle.op.ac.nz)

[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.

## OTHER HANDY CONTACTS

Otago Polytechnic 0800 762 786 *all departments & services*

StudyLink 0800 88 99 00

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

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

# 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 distant students, 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 course may not charge a Student Services Fee, but an alternative "Student Access" card is available to obtain 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)**
- Alternatively, you can post a passport sized photo to the OPSA Office (PO Box 5381 – Dunedin 9058) with the above details
- **This card will also be your access to:**
  - Robertson library services, discounts throughout the country, Student Job Search

## 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.



## 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 get one from the OPSA office – 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 our weekly updates of “student news”

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



## 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.

## 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.



## LANDLORD ISSUES

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



[www.fb.com/OtagoPolytechnicStudentsAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/OtagoPolytechnicStudentsAssociation) or “OPSA Otago” if you’re on Twitter

## 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!

- There is a \$5 per day park in lower Union Street (Behind S Block)



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

