

Careers Newsletter



BLUE MOUNTAINS
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

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What's On in the Next Few Weeks

[myfuture Insights: Thinking in a joined-up way – the importance of the careers information ecology](#)

November 28, 2023

Where do young people look for information about careers? Monash University researchers recently set out to find the answer to this question, analysing what career information sources young people use, which ones they are most confident in, and the interrelationships between them. Their findings describe a 'careers information ecology' comprising various sources that complement one another, as well as the degree to which young people trust each one. Most importantly, they note the significance of certain relationships, such as with parents and peers, in the careers information ecology.

Join the authors of our latest Insights paper, Professor Steven Roberts and Dr Ben Lyall to learn more about their research findings, and how taking an ecological view of career information can help you support students to access and make sense of the information they need. Obtain practical suggestions on how to help students navigate an increasingly complex careers information ecology.

[Find out more](#)

[ACU | Discover Physiotherapy at North Sydney Campus](#)

November 28, 2023

Want to know how physiotherapists help people improve their health and live well? In this hands-on activity, you'll learn the techniques they use to quantitatively measure strength and determine injury in patients.

Visit our interactive, fully functional physiotherapist simulation wards. Discover how our students engage in highly realistic interactions with high tech manikins to develop and practise interpersonal and decision-making skills which make ACU physiotherapist students in high demand when they graduate.

[Find out more](#)



[The GiST | Leverage the E in STEM in primary schools](#)

November 29, 2023

“Young children are natural engineers. They’re very creative, they can follow directions, they naturally want to learn about their environment, they are very curious. They’ll explore, they’ll build, they’ll construct and that’s all part of engineering.”

Professor Lyn English will explore some of the learning affordances of early engineering experiences and how they integrate meaningfully and naturally within early STEM and STEAM curricula in primary schools in Australia including within Maths and in the innovative design-based problem-solving featured within the Design and Technologies Curriculum.

[Find out more](#)

[University of Sydney | Life in the field: chemistry in action](#)

November 29, 2023

Have you ever wondered how Professor Marie Curie discovered polonium and radium, forever transforming the use of radiation in medicine and healthcare? Perhaps, you spend your days pondering how the first molecules formed in the universe and led to the beginning of life on Earth. Or maybe, you are simply in awe of the periodic table of elements.

Join this session to discover what studying chemistry really involves, what an average day of a chemical scientist or materials scientist is like, how you can pursue studies towards becoming one as well as the diverse career paths open to you in this field.

[Find out more](#)

[ACU | Discover Psychology at Strathfield Campus](#)

November 29, 2023

Learn about the importance of empathy and being empathetic – a fundamental tool in psychology. You will learn about the big five personality traits and complete a personality test to better understand yourself and others. Using case studies, you’ll discuss psychological disorders and how to go through diagnostic criteria to provide possible treatment options. You’ll also visit the Mary Aikenhead Health Clinic – our teaching facility staffed by ACU postgraduate psychology students.

[Find out more](#)

[University of Sydney | Discover the journey to university](#)

November 29, 2023

Join us for an engaging webinar, where we will take you on the journey of a high school student’s path to higher education. Dive into the world of university offerings, follow their steps, and explore the moments that shape crucial decisions.

Get an inside look at what drives your aspirations, discover the support available along the way, and gather the practical insights you need to confidently navigate the road to university.

This webinar offers:

- A personal insight into the transition from high school to university.
- Realistic guidance to navigate through various university options.
- Valuable resources and networks to support your journey.

[Find out more](#)



[ACU | Discover Nursing at North Sydney Campus](#)

November 30, 2023

Learn how nurses work at the forefront of patient care and experience how they save lives by taking part in a real-world emergency scenario.

Visit our interactive, fully functional nursing simulation wards. Discover how our students engage in highly realistic interactions with high-tech manikins to develop and practise interpersonal and decision-making skills which make ACU nursing students in high demand when they graduate.

[Find out more](#)

[UNSW | #CareersUnlocked: Trends, Threats, and the Future of Cyber Security](#)

November 30, 2023

In today's digital age, cyber-crime is skyrocketing at an unprecedented rate. The cyber security industry is set to nearly triple in size over the next three years, making it a field of unparalleled growth and opportunity.

Here's a staggering fact: the industry demands more than 16,000 cyber security professionals. That's right, this field is not just growing; it's booming! In fact, Australia is estimated to increase its computing capacity by around 250% over the next two years. But how can you seize these exciting career opportunities? Join a distinguished panel of academic and industry experts as they unravel the complex landscape of cyber security. You'll gain invaluable insights into the rising trends and imminent threats, and understand why hacking is on the rise, directly impacting businesses and personal lives.

Our expert panel includes luminaries such as Professor Richard Buckland and Dr. Eila Erfani, both from UNSW, as well as UNSW alumni Priyal Dalal, a Cyber Security Consultant at KPMG. They will delve into the impacts and opportunities this dynamic field presents.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to unlock your career in one of the most exciting and rapidly evolving industries of our time. Join us for this engaging and informative event.

[Find out more](#)

[University of Sydney | Alumni Festival](#)

December 2, 2023

Finishing school and curious about what university life might be like? Join us at the University of Sydney for the Alumni Festival. With the campus open to everyone, this is your chance to explore behind the scenes of some of our state of the art facilities, discover the colleges and get hands on with our exciting research.

We're excited to give our future students opportunity to connect with some of our incredible alumni – including big names like Dr Karl, Jordon Raskopolous and Adam Liaw – and show off our incredible campus. Free entry. We hope to see you there!

[Find out more](#)

[Strengths Based Parenting for Neurodivergent Families](#)

December 5, 2023

Learn how you can apply the science of positive psychology to unlock your children's potential and improve their wellbeing.

In this 2 hour webinar, you'll learn how to:

- Help leverage your child's unique strengths and specific interests,
- Create sensory friendly spaces that nurture their energy and improve their focus and mood, and
- Tackle those tricky behaviours and talk about difficult situations with confidence.



The webinar will consist of:

- Live online training with clinical Psychologist and certified Neurodivergent Coach, Mariane Power
- Group based Q&A session, with the opportunity to submit questions via email prior to the event
- Access to a bonus Strengths Playbook PDF, to help you capture new ideas and turn them into action straight away
- A recording of the session, available for 30 days, so you can review your learnings or catch up on anything you've missed!

[Find out more](#)

Young Space Explorers

December 6, 2023

At the Young Space Explorers event, students in Years 9, 10 & 11 have the opportunity to dive into a wide range of activities, from crafting lunar tools to unravelling meteorite mysteries, assembling mini rovers, and embarking on virtual space journeys. Through immersive workshops and sessions, participants tackle tangible space scenarios while deepening their understanding of advanced STEM principles. Each workshop lasts 60 minutes, and students can choose up to four distinct sessions.

[Find out more](#)

SCCE | Exchange Webinar

December 6, 2023

Preparing for your exchange program is an important part of the process and is vital to continued program success. At these online meetings, an experienced high school exchange advisor will share an overview of high school exchange programs with Southern Cross Cultural Exchange.

You'll learn more about living with a host family and how studying overseas can help you develop confidence and independence... and gain a lifetime of memories.

[Find out more](#)

Important Future Events

UNSW | Info Week

December 13 to December 15, 2023

Join us at our Info Week events to get personalised advice and all the information you need to finalise your UAC preferences.

Your ATAR doesn't have to be a make or break. Info Week is your opportunity to learn more about your transition to uni – tour our campus, attend lectures, and chat with current students and academics to explore how your UNSW journey could look.

[Find out more](#)



[University of Newcastle | ATAR Info Day 2023](#)

December 14, 2023

Join us on campus at our ATAR Info Day to get all your questions answered to kick start your uni journey! If you have questions about studying in 2024 or didn't quite get the marks you need, our ATAR Info Day is a chance to chat with our admissions and pathways teams to help you understand your adjusted ATAR and entry options.

Bring your mates and grab a free bite to eat, relax with some live music and talk to our team about degrees, changing preferences and alternative entry options.

You'll also have the chance to take a tour of our beautiful campuses and chat with current students to find out what uni is really like.

Our info sessions are held on the day that ATARs are released and prior to the close of change of preferences for consideration in the December Round 2 (14 December), so it's perfect timing to get the advice you need to finalise your UAC application.

[Find out more](#)

[CSU | ATAR Advice Days](#)

December 14 to December 15, 2023

We know you might have some questions when your ATAR drops.

That's why we're running in-person ATAR Advice Days on campus so you can get your questions answered to help make some big decisions easier.

What you can expect:

- Get advice on how to preference courses to receive the best offer for you.
- Learn about admission pathway options if your ATAR isn't what you'd hoped.
- Chat with an adviser about a personalised plan for getting into your #1 course.
- Find out how to accept your offer and how offer rounds work.
- Get tips on preparing for uni to give yourself the best start!

We can also walk you through scholarship information, accommodation options and provide extra info about the courses you're interested in.

Best of all, you can chat with a current student and explore the campus with a personalised tour.

[Find out more](#)

[ACU | Change of Preference Tours](#)

North Sydney: December 14 to December 16, 2023

Strathfield: December 14 to December 16, 2023

Blacktown: December 14 to December 16, 2023

Explore ACU's campuses and discuss your study options by booking a guided campus tour with our friendly staff. Tours are available at 10am, 1pm and 3pm AEDT.

[Register for North Sydney](#)

[Register for Strathfield](#)

[Register for Blacktown](#)



[UOW | ATAR Live Chat](#)

December 14, 2023

Is your ATAR higher or lower than you expected? Is it enough to get into your dream course? What about your other options and pathways? Join us online as we answer your questions live – giving you the answers you need so you can make the right decisions.

[Find out more](#)

[UOW | Options Day](#)

December 15, 2023

Looking for clarity around which courses to apply for or what to do next once you have your ATAR? UOW will be hosting Options Day in December to guide you around the decisions you need to make to study at UOW in 2024. We will have faculty experts, current students and important information ready for this event at our Wollongong and Liverpool campuses.

[Find out more](#)

[UTS | Info Day](#)

December 15, 2023

Info Day is your chance to explore undergraduate course and pathways options.

Speak 1:1 with UTS staff, attend an info session or join a campus tour to discover more about your options at UTS.

[Find out more](#)

Scholarships

[Do you need to pay tax on scholarships?](#)

Receiving a scholarship can be a huge boost, not just to your education, but your quality of life too. It might mean you can afford better study equipment, don't need to work as many hours, or provide you with a place to live.

While there are undoubtedly many benefits to receiving a scholarship, one common question students have is whether or not they need to pay tax on scholarships. In this article, we'll delve into the details so you can apply with peace of mind.

First off – what is tax?

If you're unfamiliar with the concept, tax is essentially a bit of money taken off the top of your income and earnings. That money then goes to the government, who uses it to provide public services and build new infrastructure, like hospitals, schools, and roads.

Nearly everyone who has a job will pay tax. There are minimum amounts you need to earn before you start paying tax though. And most of the time, your employer will automatically withhold tax from your pay, so you don't need to worry about a thing.

So the real question is do scholarships count as income, and consequently, will some of it be taken as tax? Let's find out.



In Australia

If you receive a scholarship in Australia, chances are it will *most likely* be considered exempt income (that is, you *don't* pay tax on it). However, there are a few conditions to meet:

- You must be a full-time student. Unfortunately, part-time students must always declare scholarships as income.
- Your scholarship is **not** tax exempt if, as a condition of the scholarship, you work or will work in the future for the person or organisation funding the scholarship.
- The scholarship must be provided to you principally for educational purposes. If the scholarship or your course involves unpaid work experience, this still counts as educational.

If your scholarship is taxable, you must include it on your annual tax return. The ATO will then assess whether or not you will have any tax deducted from your scholarship payments.

If you have any concerns or questions, we suggest you get in touch with the scholarship provider or the [ATO](#).

Ready to apply?

Keep in mind that these are all general guidelines. Whether or not you need to pay tax on scholarships will come down to your personal circumstances and the conditions of the scholarship. So if you have any doubts or concerns, make sure you talk to a professional first, whether it's your careers advisor, someone from the university, or the tax office.

You can read more about scholarships, including application tips, and search for opportunities on our website [here](#).

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

[Navigating apprenticeships for teens of concerned parents](#)

Apprenticeships are a great way to get skilled for your future career. In fact, there are many careers where an apprenticeship is the only pathway. Unfortunately, some people can still hold some outdated views of apprenticeships – and if your parents are the ones feeling a bit concerned, it might put a damper on your future plans.

We get it; your parents want what's best for you. If you want to show them that doing an apprenticeship is what's best for you, here are some things you can talk about to change their minds.

The advantages of apprenticeships

First things first, your parents are probably going to want to know what the advantages of an apprenticeship are. You probably already know all the reasons, and they might not even have factored in to your decision – but here are some apprenticeship benefits that might reassure your parents:

- **Job security and financial stability:** Parents worry about your future stability. Reassure them by highlighting that [many apprenticeships lead to full-time employment](#), and you'll be earning while you're learning (you could even sweeten the deal by showing them you already have a budget planned for when the money starts coming in).
- **Academic progress:** Remind them that apprenticeships still include classroom work, so you won't miss out on academic growth. Plus, you'll have the advantage of being able to apply what you learn in a real work setting.



- **Long-term career prospects:** Apprenticeships aren't just a job; they're a stepping stone to a fulfilling career. Share stories of [successful individuals who kick-started their journeys through apprenticeships](#).

Open communication is key

Sit down with your parents and have an open, honest conversation. Discuss your passion for the field and how an apprenticeship aligns with your goals. Be ready to answer their questions and address any concerns they may have. If you find the conversation getting heated, it's probably best to leave it for another time.

Do some research and planning

Show them you've done your homework. Share information about reputable apprenticeship programs, success stories, and potential career trajectories. Having a well-thought-out plan will definitely help to ease their worries.

Connect with former apprentices

If possible, connect with other people who have gone through apprenticeships. Their first-hand experiences can provide valuable insights, and serve as living proof of the benefits.

It's your choice

In the end, remember that your future is in your hands. While your parents probably just want what's best for you, only you can decide your path. No matter what you end up doing, having your parents on your side for support always helps.

If you want to read more about apprenticeships, take a look at our website [here](#).

Getting Ready for Work

[9 unusual Christmas jobs to consider](#)

With Christmas just around the corner, we thought we'd do some research in to some more unusual jobs you could think about doing if you love all things Christmas (or just want to take advantage of the festive season to make some cash).

Reindeer walker

No Santa experience is complete without reindeer. Lots of shopping centres, garden centres, and entertainment venues hire real reindeer to entertain the Christmas crowds – and they need reindeer walkers to exercise, feed, and look after them.

Ice marshals

All around the world in the run up to Christmas, ice skating increases in popularity. Temporary rinks pop up in many town centres for anybody to have a go. Ice rink hand-holders, AKA ice marshals (which sounds much cooler), are needed to hand out skates and help people on the ice when they're struggling.



Christmas tree decorator

If you love decorating and Christmas is your favourite time of the year, you could find work as a professional tree decorator. They're needed in shops, businesses, hotels, private homes, and even local councils hire them.

Turkey plucker

Exactly what it sounds like, in this role you'd be preparing turkeys for festive feasts. It's certainly not glamorous, but it is essential. Maybe this is more of a career for the grinchers among us.

Gift wrapper

If you never get sick of wrapping gifts and can make even the most simple item look enticing, then your skills will be well in demand around Christmas.

Mince pie maker

A great mince pie is the icing on the Christmas feast for lots of people. If you've got the time and the skills, you could sell stacks of these delicious festive treats.

Caroller

Help to spread the spirit of Christmas by singing hymns or special carols at large events, small scale venues, or even door-to-door.

Christmas cracker joke writer

If you're a bit of a comedian and love to come up with new jokes, you could be the person making the nation chuckle and roll their eyes by coming up with new jokes for the Christmas crackers each year.

Christmas light detangler

If you are practical, dextrous, and have the patience of the saint, this could be a great little annual earner for you. Some stores offer this as a professional service, but you could also set yourself up with your own business.

Want something more traditional?

If none of these unusual Christmas jobs floats your boat, have a look at [these other careers](#) you might find rewarding instead.

Or read more about jobs on our website [here](#).

Work Experience

[Green work experience ideas](#)

The world is quickly growing more and more eco-conscious. When we think of sustainability, careers in science, engineering, or manufacturing are usually the first that come to mind. But [green careers](#) and [green skills](#) are seeing huge growth in demand from employers in all different kinds of industries.

In their [Global Green Skills Report](#), LinkedIn estimate that demand for green skills will outstrip supply by 2026 – that's only just over 2 years away.



They also found that more people are being hired in green jobs than other areas too.

As a student today thinking about your future career, it's more than likely you'll need to develop green skills, no matter where you want to end up. That's where work experience comes in – it's a fantastic way for you to build skills and explore potential careers of interest, all without the commitment of a job.

So if you're looking for opportunities to build green skills or are dreaming of a green career, we have some green work experience ideas you might like to look into.

Renewable energy

Global demand for renewable energy [is booming](#), and employment in renewable energy has [nearly doubled since 2012](#). And renewable energy companies need more than just engineers and electricians to run – they need finance specialists, designers, salespeople, environmental analysts, lawyers, admin workers, and so much more.

If you're interested in devising cleaner and more efficient ways to power our world, there are lots of businesses and organisations out there you might like to work with. Contact local solar, wind, or hydroelectric companies and express your interest in opportunities for work experience, either in the office or out in the field. You could be finding out how renewable infrastructure is designed, helping connect homes to renewable energy generators, or discovering how companies market and sell their products or services.

Biodiversity and agriculture

Agriculture and food production is unfortunately [the largest contributor](#) to habitat destruction and pushing species to the brink of extinction. In order for our ecosystems to thrive, we need to find more sustainable and eco-friendly methods of farming.

Thankfully, there are already lots of people and companies on the job. This includes government parks and agriculture departments, local farmers, wildlife rescues, and research institutions, who all often have work experience opportunities for students. You could even get involved through health and nutrition initiatives, working with doctors, supermarkets, or even local food stores to call for a change in our dietary habits and reduce the pressure food production places on biodiversity.

Green transportation

Global sales of electric cars has soared from [118,000 in 2012 to a whopping 10.2 million in 2022](#) – and it's expected to *more than triple* to 36.9 million by 2030. So it stands to reason more people will be needed to design, manufacture, and sell all of these new vehicles.

You might like to find work experience at an auto mechanic, car dealership, or automotive designer, and get a glimpse into how electric vehicles (EVs) are made, sold, and repaired. Or find opportunities with local councils or government and discover how policy and urban planning can influence green transportation options (like building more charging stations, facilitating easier access to public transport, or providing subsidies to people who swap to an EV).

Media and communication

There are [lots of people out there already doing fantastic things](#) to combat climate change, biodiversity loss, and health-related environmental impacts. But how do we know about these wonderful things? Because someone tells us, of course.



Many news sites are dedicated to reporting on climate and environment, and are always looking for people to help contribute further, whether it's through writing, photography, social media management, or even website design and maintenance. Or you might like to take a look behind-the-scenes at your local newsroom, from camera operation to sound and lighting effects. If you're feeling confident, you could even become a content creator to spread the word about other passionate environmental champions and green initiatives.

Finance and investment

In order to transition to a cleaner, greener world, it all needs to be financed somehow. And skills in carbon accounting, carbon credits, emissions trading, impact assessment, and sustainability reporting are [among the fastest-growing green skills](#) in the US and the European Union.

If maths and money is more your style, there are still lots of ways you can have a green career. You could find work experience in a bank or investment firm and learn how finances are being used to fund clean energy and recycling projects. Learn about how insurance brokers are dealing with an unprecedented rise in natural disasters caused by climate change. Or delve into how companies reduce their carbon impact through emissions trading.

Find out more

These green work experience ideas are just the tip of the iceberg – there are lots of other companies, businesses, non-profit organisations, and individuals out there to research and explore.

You can read more about work experience and search for opportunities on our website [here](#).

Competitions

[2024 Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year Competition](#)

The bioregion that encompasses Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and New Guinea possesses a unique natural heritage stretching back more than 80 million years, to the break-up of the great southern continent of Gondwana.

Professional, emerging and junior photographers from around the world are encouraged to submit their photographs taken in the Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and New Guinea bioregion.

With 10 categories, including a new Aerial category, the competition encompasses a wide range of styles and subjects for photographers to be inspired by. The overall winner wins A\$10,000 cash and a holiday prize generously provided by Coral Expeditions.

Entries close on 6 February 2024.

Find out more and enter [here](#).

Resources

[5 New Year's resolutions for high school students](#)

The end of the year is nearly upon us, and now is a great time to reflect on everything you've achieved over the past 12 months. It's also a good time to think about what you'd like to achieve in 2024; and many of us like to set New Year's Resolutions.



A New Year's Resolution is essentially something you want to do *differently* over the coming 12 months. Think of it almost like setting a goal. What you decide for your New Year's Resolution is entirely up to you. It could be anything at all, from eating less chocolate, to learning the violin, or running an ultramarathon. It could even be as simple as resolving to be kinder to your siblings. If you need some inspo, check out our top 5 New Year's resolutions for high school students.

"I want to take better care of myself."

Self-explanatory. Get more sleep, eat more vegetables, try to do some exercise, and be kind to yourself.

Benefits – you'll just feel better, which is always nice. Plus, when you're feeling healthy and happy, you're more likely to do well in all aspects of your life – which in turn will set you up for success post-school.

You can find some great tips on leading a healthy lifestyle [here](#).

"I want to try harder at school."

Deciding you want to put more effort in is always a great idea. To make your resolution more achievable, being a bit more specific can help – think "I want to stop failing my maths tests" or "I want to achieve above average marks in every subject".

Benefits – verbally committing to trying harder can be a great incentive. It'll keep you on track, and give you something to work towards. Plus, hopefully you'll get better marks.

Need inspiration? Read up about some ["famous failures"](#) who refused to give up on their dreams.

"I want to not take on too much."

You've probably heard the phrase "don't bite off more than you can chew". This is the same thing.

You're already studying, and possibly working. You're probably also playing sport, staying fit, enjoying some extracurriculars, and maintaining a social life. So next year, maybe resolve not to put yourself under too much pressure.

Benefits – you'll feel happier and less stressed. Trying to do too much at once usually ends in some form of disaster, so look after yourself and learn to say no from time to time.

Here's an article from the Black Dog Institute about [how to deal with burnout](#) (it's aimed at people in the workforce, but the tips are relevant for anyone).

"I want to try something new each month."

Trying new things is the way we learn what's right for us. Now's your time to try just about everything on offer – and if you don't like it, you don't have to make it a long-term commitment. So enrol in new sports, take classes, volunteer, and grab opportunities that come your way.

Benefits – trying new stuff is fun! Just ask any [adventurer](#). And you can build your resume at the same time; don't forget to add the skills you learned along the way too.

"I want to think positively."

Banish doubt. It'll only hold you back. At this stage in life you can do or be almost anything you want if you work hard enough. Yes, you still have to do the work and put in the hours, but thinking positively can change your life. So stop telling yourself you're not good enough.

Benefits – once again, you'll just feel better. Don't forget that while positive thinking alone is a great start, you need to turn that energy into positive action as well. As [Tony Robbins](#) says, "You can sit in the garden of



your mind telling yourself there are no weeds, but to build a truly fulfilling life, you need to stop covering up the weeds with positive thinking – and pick them instead.”

Start ASAP

Hopefully these New Year’s resolutions for high school students have given you some inspiration. Our top tip? Start thinking about your resolutions as soon as possible. Who knows where you could be in 12 months time?

Remember, breaking or slipping up on your resolutions doesn’t make you a failure. Use it as a chance to take a step back, see how far you’ve already come, and start fresh tomorrow.

You might like to read other [wellbeing tips and tricks](#) to start the new year on the right foot, or check out our blog on [setting and achieving goals](#).

University rankings – What they mean and their value

The *Australian Financial Review* published their inaugural [Best Universities Ranking](#) on Wednesday 22 November, evaluating each Australian university in five areas:

- Research performance
- Global reputation
- Student satisfaction
- Career impact
- Equity and access

Perhaps unsurprisingly, some familiar names crop up at the top of the list. But what exactly do these rankings mean, and how seriously should they be taken by prospective students?

The best universities?

The AFR ranked these universities as the top five out of Australia’s 40:

- University of Queensland
- University of New South Wales
- The Australian National University
- Monash University
- The University of Adelaide

But things start to get interesting when you dive into the full scores. UNSW received second overall place, largely bolstered by the fact that it’s ranked 1st for career impact, and 2nd for both research performance and global reputation. On the other hand, it was only ranked 36th for student satisfaction (that’s the 4th lowest possible rank!) and 29th for equity and access.

So what does this tell us?

What actually matters to students

What these lists tell students is that esoteric and potentially biased factors like global reputation (calculated by using “[underlying data from the most prominent international rankings agencies](#)”) and research performance should matter more than how satisfied they are with their experience, or how equitable the university’s policies and practices are.

Which in reality, seems kind of backwards. A student in Year 12 probably isn’t going to be involved with a university’s research department for a few years – if ever, as most students only complete degrees by coursework. What will immediately concern them is whether or not the university caters to students from diverse backgrounds, or how happy they are in their classes.



When sorting the rankings by student satisfaction, the list is completely flipped on its head, with these five universities rated best:

- Bond University (=12th overall)
- Edith Cowan University (6th overall)
- University of the Sunshine Coast (=15th overall)
- The University of Notre Dame Australia (=30th overall)
- Deakin University (=7th overall)

And again when sorted by equity and access:

- Central Queensland University (=12th overall)
- Federation University Australia (=33rd overall)
- James Cook University (=15th overall)
- University of Wollongong (=7th overall)
- University of New England (=24th overall)

Even when sorted by best career outcomes, *only 2* of the top 5 overall ranked universities make the list:

- University of New South Wales (2nd overall)
- The Australian National University (3rd overall)
- Charles Sturt University (=38th overall)
- Central Queensland University (=12th overall)
- The University of Sydney (=15th overall)

What's difficult to understand is how the top 5 universities can be given such a rank based on only two (maybe three) of five total criteria. And the reason is clear: these rankings obviously place more importance on research and global reputation than student satisfaction, equity, and career outcomes.

Weighing up the rankings

Professor Tim Brown, former director of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute and contributor to the rankings, [explains the weightings as such](#):

"The pillar scores on student satisfaction and research are equally weighted for the overall score. Because these two are direct measures of university performance, these were rated at three times the other three equally weighted pillars, averaging to compute the overall score."

It's easy to understand how student satisfaction has a direct link with university performance, particularly from a student perspective. And a university's research output is also incredibly important – it "[informs public debate, improves our health and wellbeing, and helps solve our most complex problems](#)".

The problem is inextricably tying research output to a university's overall reputation. Is research valuable, and should universities strive to produce quality research? Absolutely, yes. Is it a factor your average student should consider highly when choosing a university to study at? Probably not.

And why not a higher emphasis on equity and access? A student can't be satisfied with a university at all if they can't even get in.



Student opinion and bias

Emeritus Professor Stephen Parker, AO, former national lead partner for education with KPMG and former vice-chancellor of the University of Canberra, [says this about the rankings](#):

“We say that the measurable quality of a university lies in its teaching; its research; the confidence it engenders in the value of its degrees through its wider reputation; the way it helps people in their careers; and how it counteracts disadvantage in the community.

Although we bring these together into a single, composite list, we also separate out the scores, enabling different versions of “good” to be curated.”

But when a student is looking at this list – and certainly when other news outlets report on the results – it’s common for them to take the overall rankings as pure fact. This can lead to the perpetuation of biases about certain universities ([Kaidesoja, 2022](#)), and at worst, deepen educational inequalities ([Amsler, 2014](#)). Put simply, once a university is deemed “best” or “worst”, rankings like this tend to only push that bias even further.

Rankings of this sort should, therefore, not simply be handed to students with no explanation or guidance.

Using rankings wisely

How students, teachers, and even the general public use rankings like these (and others) should come down to their own individual situations. And this can encompass a huge variety of factors: where you live, your background, what you want to study (and why), your goals beyond university, etc.

If a high school student living in a rural area is thinking of heading off to university, it may be best to look at the rankings based on equity and access rather than overall score. Meanwhile, a graduate student considering research opportunities might find the research rankings most valuable.

One huge positive of the AFR’s rankings is that they are the first to take into account student satisfaction and equity at all. This is in opposition to rankings such as the [QS World University Rankings](#) and the [Times Higher Education World University Rankings](#), which don’t factor these in.

But there is still further to go. Lots of other factors that can impact student satisfaction and success are still too difficult to measure and compare, according to Professor Stephen Parker:

“Arguably a sixth dimension would be the staff one: what is it like to work there? No systematic and national data yet exists to provide a counterpart to the public data on student perspectives.

Possibly a seventh would be university engagement with communities, but again there is no available way to compare and contrast our universities validly on this dimension.

A still more elusive metric would be “value for money”.”

Finding the right university

As Professor Stephen Parker said, there should be many different versions of “good”. What’s good for one student might not be good for another – and that’s OK.

Students shouldn’t consider any of the universities on the list “bad”, no matter where they are ranked.

Where a university excels in one area, it might falter in another. It’s about taking into account your own needs and preferences and weighing them up with what a university offers.

Rather than looking up a ranking, we suggest students ask themselves these questions to find the right university for them:

- What do I want to study, and where is it offered?
- Do I need to move away to study, and how far am I willing to go?
- What do other students say about their experience?
- What can I do with my qualification once I graduate?



- Does the university have support services I can access (study, social, health, and career)?
- What are the university's policies around flexibility, online study, etc.?
- At the end of the day, what do I feel is the right choice for me?

If you want to find out more, you can read about university and study on our website [here](#).

[Empowering your teen by building their reasoning skills](#)

As parents, guiding our teens toward making sound decisions is a fundamental part of preparing them for adulthood. Developing reasoning skills is pivotal in this process, but the teenage brain is a work in progress, and reasoning abilities evolve over time. In this blog, we'll explore why reasoning skills are vital for decision-making, how our brains naturally develop these skills, and practical ways you can help your teen [build important reasoning skills](#).

The developing teenage brain and reasoning

Adolescence is marked by many significant changes in the brain. While the emotional and social areas of the brain develop early, the [prefrontal cortex](#) (responsible for reasoning, decision-making, and impulse control) continues to mature into the mid-20s.

Impacts of limited reasoning on decision-making

Lack of reasoning skills can mean teens aren't able to effectively weigh up their options, which might lead to poor choices in relationships, school, or future pathways. This can manifest in impulsive behaviours or difficulty understanding the long-term implications of their actions or choices. It can be frustrating when we feel like our teens just won't listen to us or make silly decisions, but it's all a part of growing up (and remember that your parents probably felt the same way about you at one point too).

Benefits of boosting reasoning skills

By actively engaging your teen in reasoning exercises and discussions, you can promote their cognitive development and empower them to be better at decision-making. Sound reasoning helps teens to:

- Analyse information
- Evaluate options
- Make well-informed choices
- Identify and solve problems
- Be better equipped to resist peer pressure
- Make choices that align with their values
- Set goals
- Plan for their future
- Be aware of the consequences of their actions and decisions

All of these skills can help your teen become a well-rounded adult, ready to tackle nearly anything life might throw at them.

Building reasoning skills in everyday life

If you'd like to help your teen to develop these reasoning skills and empower them to become better at decision making and problem solving, here are a few things you could try. Remember, reasoning skills aren't something that develop overnight – so don't forget to keep an open mind and be patient with your teen as they learn and grow.



Encourage discussions and debates

Engage in discussions on a wide range of topics, such as current events, ethical dilemmas, or future plans. Encourage them to voice their opinions and ask open-ended questions. They'll be honing their reasoning skills by thinking more critically and defending their arguments using logic.

Engage in [critical thinking](#) exercises

Provide opportunities for your teen to engage in [critical thinking activities](#), such as solving puzzles, doing brain teasers, playing [board games](#), or exploring philosophical questions. If your teen is hesitant, there are more subtle and appealing ways to engage them. Suggest a family games night, surprise them with gifts, challenge them, or ask questions when events or issues pop up on the news, at their school, or even in a movie.

Think of [problem solving](#) scenarios

Present real-life problems or scenarios and ask your teen how they might handle these situations. Encourage them to think critically and weigh the pros and cons of various approaches.

Share your own dilemmas

Discuss problems you've faced in the past, the choices you made, and the thought process behind them, then ask your teen what they would have done in the same situation. This modelling provides a template for your teen to follow.

Include them in decision-making

Give your teen opportunities to make decisions and be responsible for real-life situations and scenarios. This could be something like choosing their extracurricular activities, making plans with friends, or helping plan family trips. Ask them to analyse the potential risks and benefits in different situations. Lead on to what the potential outcomes could be and what would be the best decision in each scenario.

Promote independence

Encourage your teen to take on age-appropriate responsibilities. This could include scheduling appointments, handling money, cooking meals, or getting a part-time job. These experiences could promote reasoning skills as well as preparing them for adult life.

Seek out learning opportunities

Look for school or community programs and courses that develop [critical thinking](#), [problem solving](#), and logic skills. STEM clubs, debate teams, chess clubs, creative writing courses, coding classes, or social justice groups are just a few examples.

Empowering our teens

Helping your teen to develop reasoning skills is an investment in their future. By understanding the natural progression of these skills and implementing practical strategies, you can empower your teenager to make informed, thoughtful decisions, and equip them for success in the complex world they're navigating. You can read more blogs for parents on our website [here](#).



Workplace Spotlight

What is it like to work in a vineyard?

Vineyards are agricultural areas where grapevines are cultivated for the purpose of grape production. They are used to grow healthy and high-quality grapes that can be used for various purposes, such as making wine, grape juice, or raisins.

In addition to grape cultivation, vineyards contribute to the economy by supporting the food and wine industry, providing employment opportunities, and promoting tourism through tastings and vineyard tours.

Every vineyard is different, but there are some common things you can expect:

1. A love of the land – ensuring growth is healthy, productive, and sustainable.
2. You'll need some physical stamina – many (but not all) roles involve outdoor work.
3. Seasonal work – roles and responsibilities often change based on the time of year.

Cultivate grapevines for wine, juice, or fruit

Vineyards are usually found in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing industry. They come in diverse types, each tailored to specific grape varieties and purposes: winemaking vineyards focus on producing grapes for wine production, table grape vineyards grow varieties for direct consumption, and raisin vineyards specialise in cultivating grapes suited for drying into raisins, for example.

Key tasks

- Prune grapevines for optimal growth
- Monitor and adjust soil health and quality
- Build and repair irrigation systems
- Train vines along trellises
- Harvest ripe grapes during the season
- Sort and process harvested grapes
- Coordinate logistics for transportation
- Protect vines from pests and diseases
- Guide visitors on tours
- Provide advice on tasting and food pairing
- Sell products direct from the vineyard
- Keep thorough records and documents

You can expect varied hours and on-site work

Varied hours | Work on-site | Jobs more common in rural areas | Moderate job growth

Working hours for employees in vineyards varies depending on the time of year and their role – you'll typically work longer hours during the growing season and during holidays and other peak tourist times.

Weather conditions can also impact working hours too.

While some administrative and marketing tasks can be done remotely, the core activities involved in vineyard management and grape cultivation mainly require hands-on work.

Vineyards are more commonly found in rural areas rather than metropolitan areas. This is because rural areas offer the expansive land and specific environmental conditions (such as suitable soil types and climates) needed for successful grape cultivation.



The Career Clusters you'll find in a vineyard

People from all Clusters are needed for a vineyard to run successfully, but the most common Clusters you'll find are Makers, Informers, and Coordinators. In many roles, you might find yourself performing tasks across multiple Clusters.

What do Makers do in a vineyard?

Makers in a vineyard play a crucial role in growing, maintenance, and operations. They might repair and maintain physical infrastructure, operate machinery to plant, water, harvest, and process grapes, or drive the trucks that transport goods to and from the vineyard. Their tasks involve hands-on work, technical expertise, and a deep understanding of important equipment and systems.

- [Farmers](#) & Harvesters
- Equipment [Technicians](#)
- Maintenance Workers
- [Truck Drivers](#)

The role of a Linker in a vineyard

Linkers in vineyards help to create connections with suppliers and customers, as well as promoting the vineyard's offerings and benefits to the wider public. They answer questions for visitors and customers, help maintain good relationships between suppliers and wholesalers, and create marketing ideas and materials to promote the vineyard online or via TV and radio.

- Visitor Liaisons
- Supplier Relationship Officers
- Marketing Specialists

Where you'll find Coordinators in a vineyard

Coordinators are responsible for the administrative and managerial functions of a vineyard, and mostly work behind-the-scenes. This can include planning harvesting schedules, monitoring performance of other staff, managing inventory and ordering supplies, organising events held in the vineyard, keeping thorough records, or overseeing budgets and spending.

- Operations Managers
- [Event Planners](#)
- [Logistics Managers](#)
- [Administrative Assistants](#)

What do Informers do in a vineyard?

Informers use their extensive knowledge of agriculture, winemaking, and food to improve the quality and quantity of a vineyard's output. They might pick appropriate seed varieties, monitor soil and plant health, develop new pest control methods, test grapes for taste and nutrition, or provide visitors with in-depth information on the vineyard's history and processes.

- [Viticulturists](#)
- [Agronomists](#)
- [Food Technologists](#)
- [Tour Guides](#)



The role of Innovators in a vineyard

Innovators help to develop new infrastructure, systems, and processes to improve the output of a vineyard. They might design new equipment for grape growing and cultivation, create more efficient grape processing systems, implement sustainable growing practices, find ways to incorporate new and emerging technologies into the visitor experience, or create attractive branding elements to use in packaging and advertising.

- [Engineers](#)
- Systems Developers
- Experience Designers
- [Graphic Designers](#)

How do Guardians work in a vineyard?

Guardians in a vineyard play a vital role in ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of both the vineyard and its workforce. They do this by implementing and overseeing safety protocols, ensuring the vineyard complies with relevant industry and environmental laws and standards, or even providing emergency first aid to injured workers or visitors.

- [Workplace Health & Safety Officers](#)
- Compliance & Standards Officers
- First Aid Officers

How do we expect working in a vineyard to change in the future?

Like many other workplaces, vineyards will see big changes in the future thanks to advancing technology, climate change, and demand for sustainability.

Increased use of technology, such as drones for monitoring vine health, precision agriculture tools, and data analytics, is expected to change the way workers complete tasks such as harvesting, processing, and pest management.

There is already a growing global emphasis on sustainable and organic farming practices. Vineyards may need to adopt eco-friendly solutions for pest control, water conservation, and energy efficiency to meet the rising demand for environmentally conscious products.

With changing climate patterns, vineyards will need to adapt by experimenting with new grape varieties, adjusting planting and harvesting schedules, and implementing technologies and practices to help mitigate the impact of extreme weather events.

Job Spotlight

[How to become an Administrator](#)

Administrators, also known as administrative officers, provide behind-the-scenes essential support to teams or individuals in a variety of environments. Your responsibilities can vary depending on the specific field or industry, but you could be overseeing office operations, coordinating schedules, handling paperwork, and facilitating communication between teams.

If you're an excellent communicator, comfortable around technology, and are great at planning, multi-tasking, and problem solving, then you could make a great Administrator.



If you have these skills, you could make a great Administrator

- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Great at listening
- High level of technical knowledge
- Organised and methodical
- Flexible and adaptable
- A great problem solver and critical thinker
- Self-motivated and can work independently
- Excellent attention to detail

What tasks can I expect to do?

A 'typical' administrative role doesn't really exist. Companies often recruit professionals to fill specific gaps within their unique corporate structure, so what's required varies between employers. Nonetheless, here are some typical tasks you might find yourself doing:

- Answering phone calls, emails, and letters
- Ordering and tracking general supplies
- Managing schedules, events, and travel
- Typing minutes, records, reports, and other correspondence
- Creating spreadsheets and presentations
- Filing and organising documents, both physical and digital
- Greeting and directing clients or customers
- Managing basic finances and invoices
- Creating and scheduling social media content

Where do Administrators work?

Administrators usually do most of their work indoors during normal business hours. Again, this might vary depending on your specific role and the industry you work in. Administrators can work in nearly every single industry – including (but not limited to) education, manufacturing, STEM, health, tourism, business, arts, and agriculture.

What kind of lifestyle can I expect as an Administrator?

Part-time and casual roles are common for Administrators, giving you some flexibility in your work. The rise of remote communication tools (such as Zoom) and the effects of the pandemic have seen an explosion in remote work opportunities as well.

Most Administrators can expect to earn an average salary throughout their career.

Expect a job that involves wearing multiple hats – you'll often be juggling various tasks simultaneously. This variety can keep your work engaging, but also requires effective time management skills.

How to become an Administrator

There are no formal qualifications required to work an Administrator. However, specific employers may prefer that you have a certain level of qualification or experience, particularly if you're applying for more senior positions.



Step 1 – Finish Year 12 with a focus on English and Maths. Business and IT subjects can also be beneficial.

Step 2 – Find work experience in an office environment to find out what the work is really like, or volunteer to get some experience and build your knowledge and skills.

Step 3 – Consider taking a relevant vocational qualification to refine your skills and enhance your employability. There are also lots of micro-credentials and short courses to consider. If you are really keen or want to apply for more senior positions right away, you could consider completing a Bachelor's degree in business, communications, or administration.

Step 4 – Working as an Administrator is a career in itself, but it could also be a pathway into other roles too. Once you've begun working in Admin, you'll learn more about the industry and roles you might like to pursue. You can then upskill and leverage your networking contacts to move up the ladder.

Find out more:

- [Australian Institute of Office Professionals](#)
- [Association of Administrative Professionals NZ](#)
- [Institute of Administrative Management](#) (UK)
- [Chartered Association of Business Administrators](#) (USA)
- [Association of Administrative Professionals](#) (Canada)
- [International Association of Administrative Professionals](#)

Similar Careers to Administrator

- [Executive Assistant](#)
- [Call Centre Agent](#)
- [Logistics Manager](#)
- [Receptionist](#)
- [Virtual Assistant](#)
- [Human Resources Manager](#)
- [Business Development Manager](#)
- [Legal Secretary](#)

Find out more about [alternative careers](#).

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