

VTAC

Year 10 Guide

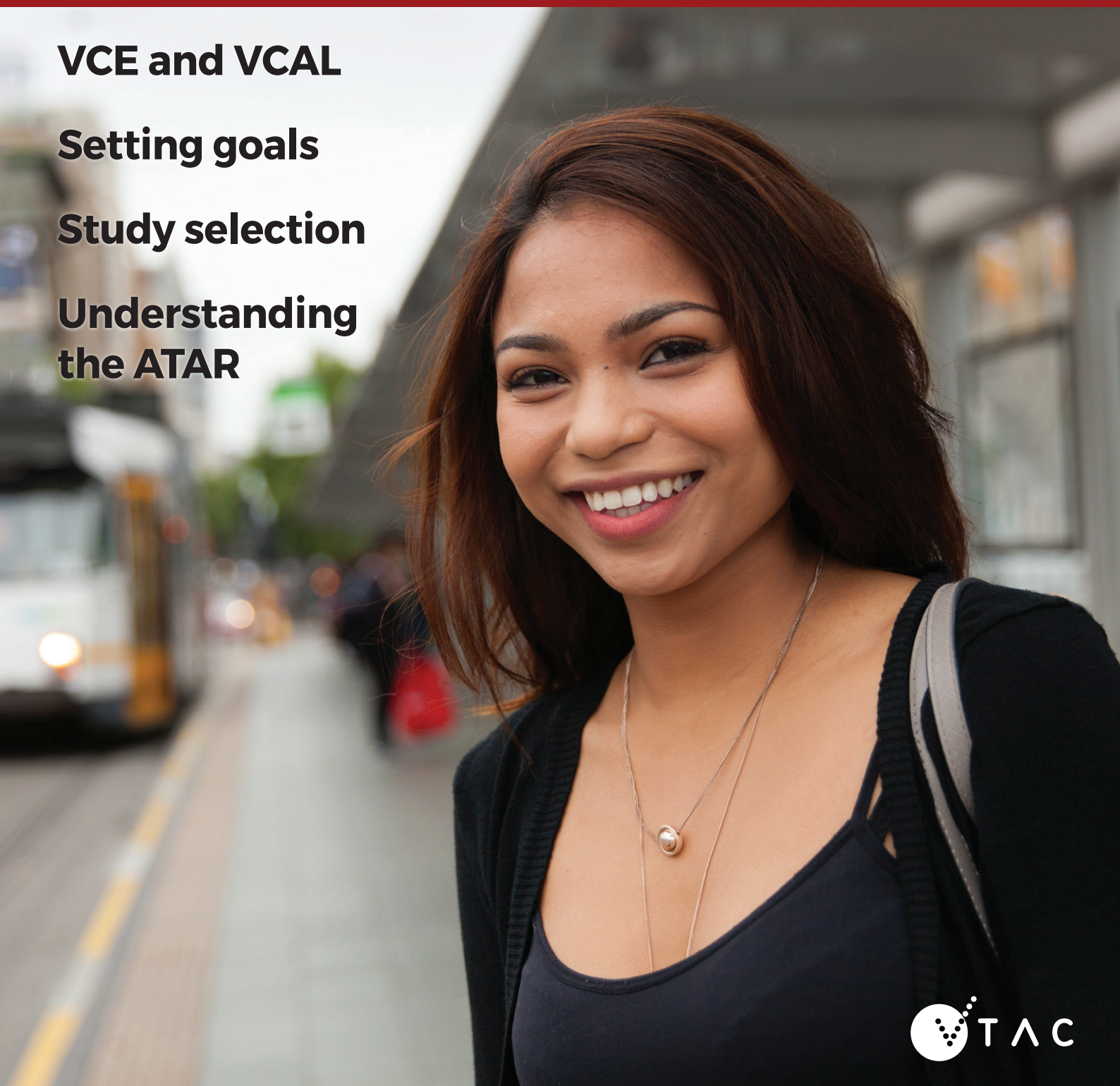
Choosing senior school studies for the right reasons

VCE and VCAL

Setting goals

Study selection

**Understanding
the ATAR**

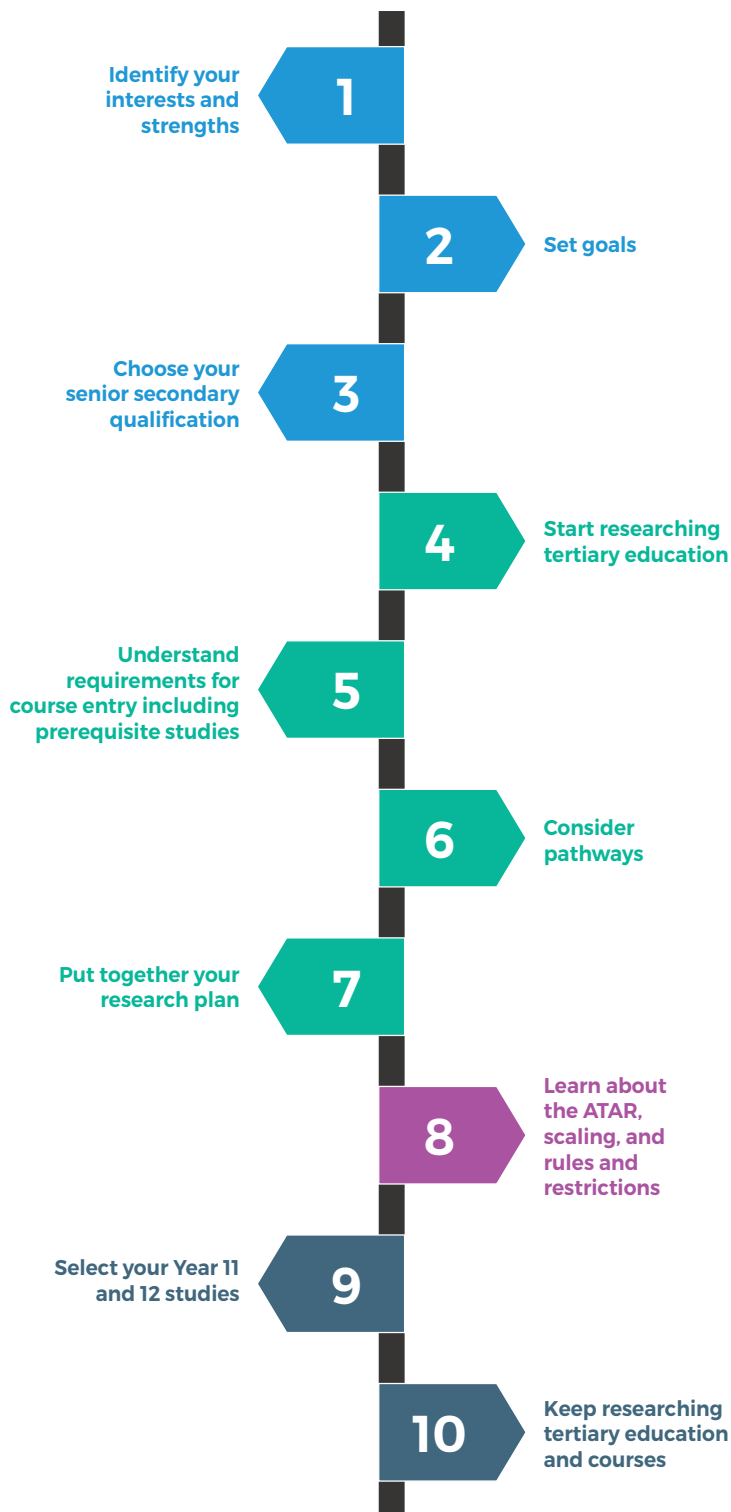


Contents

- 2 Choose your studies: **step-by-step**
- 3 How this guide **helps you**
- 4 Your **strengths and interests**
- 6 **Setting and reaching goals**
- 7 **Senior secondary qualifications**
- 8 **Researching tertiary education**
- 10 **Making sure you'll be eligible: entrance requirements**
- 11 **Prerequisite studies**
- 12 **Selection**
- 13 **Pathways**
- 14 Your **research plan**
- 15 **The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)**
- 16 **Scaling: keeping things fair**
- 18 **Studies used for the ATAR: rules and restrictions**
- 20 **From aggregate to ATAR**
- 22 **Choosing Year 11 and 12 studies**
- 23 **Your next steps**

This copy of the
VTAC Year 10 Guide
belongs to:

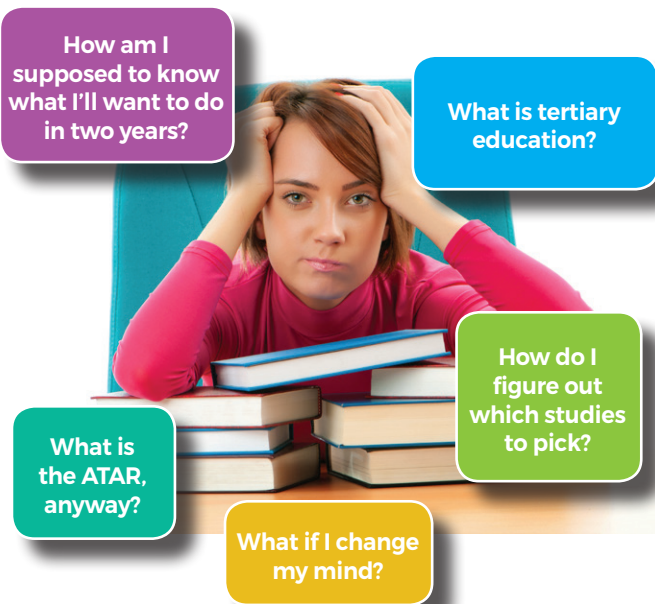
Choose your studies: step-by-step



How this guide helps you

As a Year 10 student about to choose your Year 11 and 12 study program, it can all seem a little overwhelming. But if you break it down into steps, it becomes more manageable. Let us show you how.

So many questions



Finding answers

In Year 10 you will be asked to make some decisions about what you **might** like to do after school and what you want to study in your senior school years.

This guide is designed to help you:

- » discover study opportunities for after you finish school
- » figure out which study options are right for you
- » understand the requirements for these courses
- » learn about what the ATAR is and isn't, and
- » make decisions about your Year 11 and 12 studies.

While there's a lot of information to take in, we don't expect you to read this guide from cover-to-cover in one sitting. Instead, we suggest you read a section at a time. Each section contains information and activities to help you think about what decisions are right for you. The diagram on the facing page, *Year 10 step-by-step course research journey* shows you how to break things down.

Quick tips

Keep in mind, the decisions you make about your studies now are important, but they're not the only chance you'll have to choose or change your future study and career options. There are many avenues to tertiary study and the career you want. It doesn't hurt, however, to do some investigation and planning so that you give yourself the best opportunity to be happy with your choices in the long run.

It's your decision

Study choice is your personal decision and requires you to think carefully about what you are good at, what you are interested in and which studies will help you reach your goals. It's a good idea to speak to other people about their experiences and what they think you are good at, but the decisions you make should be yours.

How to choose

When choosing studies think about what interests you and what you are good at. Check out the studies your school is offering and whether or not it's possible to study individual subjects at any other school. There's no point choosing studies that aren't available to you.

Stuck? Consider a broad program

If you have no idea which studies you want to take up in two years, don't panic! Keep your VCE study program broad with studies across the areas you are interested in and are good at. Research prerequisite studies, but don't think you should study every single one.

A 'good' ATAR?

The ATAR is a rank, not a score and there is no pass/fail ATAR. If you get an ATAR of 50 it means you have performed better than 50 per cent of your age group. A 'good' ATAR is the ATAR you need to get you into the course you want.

How not to choose studies

Don't choose studies if you don't like them or aren't good at them. Choosing studies simply because of how they were scaled last year doesn't guarantee you a 'good' ATAR. If you perform well in all of your studies, you will increase your chance of getting a 'good' ATAR regardless of whether or not the studies are scaled up or down.

What is VTAC?

VTAC stands for the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre. But what is it, exactly? VTAC is the central hub for tertiary course applications in Victoria.

VTAC receives, processes and forwards applications to the institutions you have applied to. VTAC doesn't decide who gets into a course—that's the institutions' job. We just make the process a lot easier for you and them.

VTAC is also responsible for calculating the ATAR for Year 12 students at the end of the year.

Once institutions have looked at all your information, they advise VTAC whether or not they want to make you an offer to enrol in a course. VTAC sends you the offer that's highest on your preference list.

VTAC also processes special consideration claims through the SEAS application, and some scholarship applications.

Your interests and strengths

Think about the activities listed below and identify how much you enjoy each one. Try to think of example experiences as you go through the list.

How much do you enjoy...	Love it	Like it	It's okay	Not really	Hate it
Doing things outside	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organising things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring for people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talking to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out how things work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being creative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working in a team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working on your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Can you think of any other activities that you enjoy? Write them down and reflect on how you feel about them.

Allies

Allies are people who can help you with your course and career exploration and planning. They could be teachers, family, friends, sports coaches or community leaders. Essentially an ally is someone whose opinion you value, knows you well and who is happy to support you in figuring out and pursuing your course and career goals.

Make a list of your key allies

Interview your allies

Make a list of questions to ask them about:

- » their course and career pathways
- » your strengths and qualities
- » any opportunities they know of or advice they can give you in pursuing your course and career goals

Questions for your allies

Reflect and plan

Summarise what you have learnt about yourself through the above activities.

What I know about myself

Find opportunities

Look for opportunities to explore your strengths and interests. This could be talking to people, visiting workplaces, volunteering or formal work experience. List three potential opportunities. For example, 'find work experience in an engineering office', 'talk to Uncle David about what physicists do', 'coach Under 7s soccer to experience working with little kids'.

1	
2	
3	

Key points

- » You work out your strengths and interests by reflecting on your experiences over time:
 - » think about the past and new things you might like to experience
 - » discuss your interests and strengths with your allies
 - » look for opportunities to explore your strengths and interests

Setting and reaching goals

Goal setting is a way to work out what you want to achieve in the future. Then you can figure out what you need to do to reach each goal.

Thinking about the future

When selecting studies for Year 11 and 12, it's important to think about what you might like to do in the future. Of course, no one expects you to have it all worked out. You will change, and new opportunities will appear. However, if you can set yourself some future goals you can start figuring out how to achieve them.

Types of goals

Goals are things you would like to achieve. They can be long-term goals for well into the future, short-term goals to achieve in the next year or two or mid-term goals in the middle. Often long-term

goals have mid-term and short-term goals that lead to them. You can set goals for all kinds of things, including career goals, goals for personal interests, experiences, and the way you want to live your life. Often career and personal goals depend upon each other.

Dahra, Lou and Aki

Dahra, Lou and Aki each have long-term goals that are career related, personal and about how they would like to live. The diagram below shows the medium-term and short-term goals they have set to achieve their long-term goals. Note how their short-term goals are about their senior secondary programs.

Long-term goals

- » Work as an engineer solving problems
- » Have a stable job
- » Start a postgraduate degree
- » Have read 1000 books

- » Run my own gaming studio
- » Own a Harley
- » Work flexible hours
- » Move out of home

- » Work with children
- » Work overseas
- » Live sustainably with like-minded people
- » Have released at least one album



Medium-term goals

- » Complete a Bachelor of Engineering.
- » Get paid engineering internships
- » Get good uni grades
- » Keep reading

- » Complete a business or game design degree...or a double degree in both...or a Diploma of Business then a game design degree.
- » Work out which tertiary study program is right for me
- » Work part-time and save

- » Complete Diploma of Early Childhood Education & Care
- » Work part-time in after school program
- » Look into overseas volunteer programs
- » Start playing gigs with my band



Short-term goals

Complete VCE with maths and science prerequisites
Study VCE Literature: books!

Complete VCE With VCE VET studies in Business (Cert III)

Complete VCAL (Senior) with Community Service and Health industry pathway



Dahra



Lou



Aki



me

Setting your own goals

Imagine your future

Imagine your life at 26 and think about what kind of life you would like to be living, including where and how you would like to live, the experiences you would like to have and the kind of job you would like. Don't worry if you can't think of a specific career, but if you can describe an area of interest, or a few ideas, that's a good start. The things you were imagining could be your **long-term goals**. Ask yourself, which ones are realistic? Discuss this question with a classmate or ally.

Plot your journey

1. Pick some personal and career **long-term goals** and add them to the diagram on the facing page.
2. What are some **medium-term goals** that could lead to the long-term goals? Discuss with a classmate or ally and add to the diagram.
3. What about the **short-term goals** you need to achieve before you can obtain your medium-term goals? Discuss and add to the diagram.

4. When you've completed your journey diagram, think about and then discuss the following questions with your classmate and/or allies.
 - » Are these goals achievable?
 - » Are there other short- or medium-term goals you need to set?
 - » Will you need to prioritise some goals over others?
 - » Do any of the goals depend upon each other?
 - » What are some other ways you can reach your goals?

Key points

- » Goals are things you want to achieve in the future
- » Goals can be short-, medium- or long-term
- » Short-term goals can lead to medium-term goals
- » Medium-term goals can lead to long-term goals
- » Setting goals can help you work out what to do next

Senior secondary qualifications

Many life goals depend upon having an income. Most people obtain their income by working. Most jobs require you to have completed secondary and tertiary qualifications.

Tertiary courses set a range of requirements for entry. Most of those offered through VTAC require completion of VCE (or equivalent). Some others require completion of either VCE (or equivalent) or VCAL (Senior). Before deciding on a senior secondary qualification, it is important to look at the tertiary courses you might want to study and find out the secondary school qualification required. See [page 10](#) for more information on entrance requirements.

If you don't complete these Year 12 qualifications there are **some** other pathways to tertiary study. Speak to your careers professional and institutions about pathways.

VCE and VCAL (Senior)

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is responsible for the two Victorian senior secondary certificates: the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). The VCAA puts out a publication to help you plan your VCE or VCAL studies called *Where to Now?* Make sure you check it out.

If you are studying VCAL, it's important to know that VCAL (Senior) is the level required for entry into VTAC courses that accept a VCAL qualification for entry.

VCE equivalents

Tertiary institutions recognise many other secondary school qualifications as equivalent to the VCE. This includes an interstate Year 12 and the International Baccalaureate (IB)—offered by a small number of Victorian schools.

Senior secondary qualifications

VCAL	VCE	VCE equivalents
VCAL (Senior)	May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » VCE studies » VCE VET studies » VFE studies, and » one approved higher education study. 	International Baccalaureate (IB)
VCAL (Intermediate)		Interstate Year 12
VCAL (Foundation)		Approved overseas Year 12 equivalents

See [pages 18-19](#) for rules and restrictions relating to VCE study combinations for the calculation of the ATAR.

Key points

- » Secondary school and tertiary qualifications are needed for most jobs
- » Tertiary courses set entrance requirements
- » Requirements include the kind of secondary qualification you need to have completed

Researching tertiary education

Tertiary education means it comes after secondary education. In other words, courses at universities, TAFEs and independent tertiary colleges—study you can do after completing secondary school.

In Year 10 it's important to get an idea of the kinds of tertiary courses available and to research eligibility and application requirements. This includes the type of Year 12 qualification required and the prerequisite studies you must complete to be eligible for selection.

This section of the guide covers researching:

- » types of tertiary courses and institutions
- » entrance requirements for applicants
- » prerequisite studies
- » selection, and
- » pathways.

Research tools

Websites

There are heaps of resources online. Every institution has a website with information about their courses. VTAC has a range of web applications too (see next column) and there are several other useful course and career websites you should visit.

- » For study, training, career and life advice, visit Youth Central (youthcentral.vic.gov.au)
- » For all post-secondary VET courses, including those not offered through VTAC, visit the Victorian Skills Gateway (skills.vic.gov.au/VictorianSkillsGateway)
- » To research careers visit MyFuture (myfuture.edu.au)
- » For projected demand for jobs in different industries visit Job Outlook (joboutlook.gov.au)
- » For a information about courses across Australia, visit Course Seeker (courseseecker.edu.au)

It's important not to complete all your research online—you really need to visit an institution before working out if it's right for you.

Print publications

Institutions print a lot of information on courses, which you can pick up at events such as those below.

Expos

Course and career expos are held every year. They give you the opportunity to speak to people from lots of different institutions and pick up information about courses.

Open days and campus events

Studying is much more than the course you're interested in—it's also about finding an institution that is the right fit for you. Open days, campus tours and tertiary experience days give you the opportunity see facilities and ask questions. While campus tours are small events, open days can be the size of a festival with teaching staff and student services staff on hand to answer complex questions. It's a good idea to visit a couple of open days over Year 10 and 11. This is so you have less research to do when you're in Year 12.

Current students and graduates

Talk to people! Do you know of anyone who is a student or graduate of a course or institution you're interested in—maybe a friend's older sibling? Or someone working in a field you're

interested in? Ask for a chat and make a list of questions first. Don't speak to just the one person, get a range of perspectives.

The benefits of tertiary education

People who complete tertiary education generally have:

- » enhanced skills, capabilities and knowledge
- » higher employability
- » higher incomes
- » greater civic involvement
- » healthier lives, and
- » greater social and professional networks.

The shared benefits of a tertiary educated population include:

- » a more cohesive society
- » increased innovation, and
- » greater public revenue.

Sources:

OECD (2017), *Education at a Glance 2017: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2013), *Education Indicators in Focus: what are the social benefits of education?* OECD Publishing, Paris.

VTAC research tools

CourseSearch

VTAC CourseSearch is an online tool for researching tertiary study options. It is available on the VTAC website (www.vtac.edu.au).

CourseSearch lists all the courses on offer through VTAC that commence in 2020. Most of these courses will be available in 2022, too—but some might close and new ones will become available.

CourseSearch allows you to search by your interests to find related courses. Each course entry provides an overview of the course content and information about eligibility and application requirements.

Keep in mind this information—including prerequisites—may have changed by the time you're ready to apply to courses.

VTAC Prerequisite and Course Explorer

It's important that you know about prerequisites for courses commencing in 2022 now, before you choose your Year 11 and Year 12 subjects—this is why we have the VTAC Prerequisite and Course Explorer. Learn more on [page 11](#).

VTAC App

The free VTAC App offers offline access to CourseSearch and the Prerequisite and Course Explorer, with the advantage of personalisation, allowing you to save a short list of courses you are interested in.

Any changes to course information are updated when your device is connected to the internet. You can download the app from the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Tertiary courses

Different courses teach different skills, capabilities and knowledge and at different levels. They can take different amounts of time to complete and lead to different outcomes. What is important is that you look for courses that are right for you: courses that will help you reach your goals.

There are two types of tertiary education in Australia: vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.

Vocational education and training (VET)

VET focuses on practical skills, capabilities and associated knowledge in specific industry areas. This national system of courses includes workplace training, apprenticeships and traineeships, as well as courses you can study at TAFEs and independent tertiary colleges. Some schools offer VET studies as a part of the VCE – this can be a great way to try out VET study while obtaining an additional qualification.

There are several different levels within the VET system:

- » Certificates I-II are the most basic qualifications and introduce learners to a vocational field. These courses can also provide a pathway to further learning, particularly for those who have not completed a Year 12 certificate.
- » Certificate III-IV courses include trade-level certificates and can lead to skilled employment. Certificate IV courses can be used as a pathway to Diploma level training or higher education courses.
- » Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas provide deeper level training and equip learners to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work. They also provide a pathway to higher education and can sometimes provide credit towards an undergraduate degree.

Higher education

Higher education courses provide professional qualifications with an emphasis on the development of transferable skills, knowledge and theory. Some courses have fixed vocational outcomes, leading to careers in specific areas, such as accountancy or nursing, while others are 'generalist' with more flexible career goals, such as business or science.

Universities offer higher education courses and so do some TAFEs and independent tertiary colleges.

The standard higher education qualification is the Bachelor degree. These typically take three to four years to complete, full time. A Bachelor degree is a type of undergraduate degree.

Higher education also includes postgraduate degrees, for people who have already completed a Bachelor degree.

Another kind of undergraduate qualification is an Associate degree, which typically leads into a Bachelor degree course.

Types of institution

Universities, TAFE providers and independent tertiary colleges all offer courses through VTAC, but how are they different?

Universities

Universities offer higher education courses. Some 'dual sector' universities include a TAFE and therefore offer VET courses as well.

Depending on the course, studying at a university might involve lectures with lots of other students, smaller tutorials, seminars, practical laboratory-based learning or fieldwork. Many universities also offer work-based subjects, such as internships. Some university study is offered online. This might be for the entire course, or just for some subjects.

Most university campuses are large and have associated infrastructure including sports centres, cafés, libraries and accommodation on site or nearby. The social aspect of university life is encouraged with clubs, societies and social events, which provide important opportunities to make friends. Student support services are provided to assist students with academic and personal needs.

TAFE or polytechnic providers

TAFEs or polytechnics mostly offer VET courses—including Certificates I–IV, Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas—and some also offer higher education degree courses.

Depending on the course, studying at a TAFE or polytechnic may include industry-based learning, classroom learning, practical studio work, written and practical assignments and group work.

TAFEs and polytechnics also have a range of clubs, student services and recreational facilities.

Several TAFEs and polytechnics have a formal relationship with universities, offering a secure pathway into a degree course at a university.

Independent tertiary colleges

Independent tertiary colleges (ITCs) often focus on specific industries and offer a range of VET and higher education courses.

Like universities and TAFE providers, ITC courses include a mix of practical work, classroom learning, industry-based learning and assignments.

ITCs are often smaller than university and TAFE campuses, so they can have a more personalised feel to them. Facilities are often industry specific. Student services are also available.

Several ITCs have formal relationships with universities, offering a secure pathway into a degree at those universities.

Course types and durations

Certificate I-III	3-6 months
Certificate IV	6-12 months
Diploma	1-2 years
Advanced Diploma	2 years
Associate Degree	2 years
Degree	3-4 years
Double Degree	4-5 years

Key points

- » Tertiary education is beneficial for many reasons
- » There are two types of tertiary education: vocational education and training (VET) and higher education
- » VTAC has a range of online tools to help you research courses
- » Download the free VTAC App to explore your course options

Making sure you'll be eligible: entrance requirements

No matter how well you perform in Year 12 or how much you want to do a course, if you don't fulfil all the entrance requirements for the course you won't be considered.

1. Minimum tertiary entrance requirements

Minimum tertiary entrance requirements are the minimum level of education you need to have completed to be considered for selection into tertiary studies when applying through VTAC. VTAC is responsible for assessing your minimum tertiary entrance requirement status.

Minimum tertiary entrance requirements for post-secondary VET courses

Certificates I-III generally have no minimum tertiary entrance requirements. However, Certificate IV or higher level VET courses require applicants to have successfully completed VCE (or equivalent), Senior VCAL, or to have met specific special entry requirements.

Minimum tertiary entrance requirements for undergraduate higher education courses

The minimum tertiary entrance requirements for higher education courses in CourseSearch are satisfactory completion of the VCE or equivalent. This includes the satisfactory completion of VCE Units 3 and 4 of one of the following English studies: English, English as an Additional Language, Literature or English Language. Completion must be in sequence and in the same calendar year unless interrupted study status is granted.

VCE equivalents include interstate or overseas equivalents to VCE, the IB and some Certificate IV or higher study.

2. Institutional entrance requirements

In addition to meeting minimum tertiary entrance requirements, some institutions have specific institutional requirements you must meet. For example, this could be an age requirement, or some universities might specify a minimum ATAR. If specified, institutional requirements can be found in the participating institutions section of the VTAC website: vtac.edu.au/institutions

3. Essential requirements and admission criteria

When you are preparing to apply for courses, you will need to make sure you complete all the essential requirements and admission criteria required for each course. These are updated each year and listed in VTAC's CourseSearch (vtac.edu.au/coursesearch). Make sure you look under both 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria' for any interviews, tests, supplementary forms or other requirements you need to meet. **Prerequisite studies** for the next course intake, are also listed here. Keep reading for information on researching prerequisites for courses commencing in 2022.

Where to find essential requirements and admission criteria

Each course has its own entry in CourseSearch. It includes the qualification name, the institution that offers the course and a course outline. Select 'current Year 12 or recent secondary graduate' to find the essential requirements and admission criteria for Year 12 applicants. Remember, these might change for the year in which you apply for courses.

For detailed instructions on using CourseSearch, download our CourseSearch fact sheet from vtac.edu.au/publications

The screenshot displays the CourseSearch interface. At the top, it shows the 'Course Title' and 'Sector'. Below this, it lists 'Qualification/award name: minimum duration' and 'Institution'. The 'Campus' and 'Course code' are also visible. There are three buttons for 'FEE TYPE': 'FT/PT', 'VTAC/DIRECT', and 'VTAC/DIRECT'. The 'COURSE OUTLINE' section is partially visible. Below the outline, there are five filters for applicant eligibility: 'Applicants with recent secondary education (Current Year 12)', 'Applicants with recent secondary education (completed in 2017 or 2018)', 'Applicants with higher education study', 'Applicants with VET study', and 'Applicants with work and life experience'. The 'ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS AND ADMISSION CRITERIA' section is highlighted with a red border. It contains three main sections: 'Essential requirements for selection and application', 'Essential requirements for enrolment or graduation', and 'Admission criteria'. To the right of these sections is a 'At a glance' summary table with three rows, each showing a bar representing the requirement and the word 'Compulsory' next to it.

Key points

- » To be eligible for a place in a course you must meet:
 - » minimum tertiary entrance requirements
 - » any institutional entrance requirements
 - » 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria', including prerequisite studies

Prerequisite studies

Prerequisites are VCE studies you must have completed to be eligible for selection into a course. They are set two years in advance so that Year 10 students can plan ahead.

What are prerequisites?

Prerequisites set the knowledge and skills you need to understand a course's content. If you haven't completed the required prerequisites (or equivalent) for a course, you won't be selected. This is why it is important to look ahead to what you might want to study after school, before selecting your Year 11 and 12 subjects.

Where do I find prerequisites?

Prerequisites are set two years in advance so that Year 10 students know what prerequisite studies are needed for courses commencing the year after they complete school.

Prerequisites for 2022 are available from the '2022 Prerequisites' list (vtac.edu.au/publications) and the VTAC Prerequisite and Course Explorer (vtac.edu.au/explorer).

VTAC Prerequisite and Course Explorer

The Prerequisite and Course Explorer helps you create and change VCE programs and identify prerequisite studies needed for entry into university and VET courses in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

It allows you to:

- » explore courses you will be eligible to apply for in 2022
- » see the impact on the range of courses available to you by adding and removing different VCE studies, and
- » filter tertiary courses by a range of factors including area of interest.

You will also need to meet the minimum study score requirement for each prerequisite. These will be published in CourseSearch in the year that you make your application.

The Prerequisite and Course Explorer is regularly updated to ensure you have access to the most up-to-date information. For detailed instructions on using the Prerequisite and Course Explorer, download our fact sheet from vtac.edu.au/publications

Things to know about prerequisites

- » Prerequisites can change from year to year and are published two years in advance. Make sure you look up the prerequisites for the year you want to apply to a course.
- » Be aware, prerequisites can differ between similar sounding courses.
- » Minimum study scores for prerequisites are your VCE study score, not your scaled study score.
- » If you fail to meet a prerequisite, talk to the institution about pathways into the course that allow you to complete the prerequisites (or equivalent).

Key points

- » Prerequisite studies must be completed to be eligible for a course
- » Course prerequisites for 2022 are listed in the Prerequisite and Course Explorer or the '2022 prerequisites' list on the VTAC website

Using the Prerequisite and Course Explorer

To find courses that require a particular study as a prerequisite follow these instructions:

1. Select 'I want to enter a single VCE subject to see which courses require it'.

Enter your study plan

Begin searching

To begin exploring course options, select what you would like to do:

I want to use my whole VCE study program to see which courses I am eligible for

I want to enter a single VCE subject to see which courses require it

2. Enter the study you want to search and the year you will be starting tertiary study. In this example the year is 2022 and the study is 'Maths: Mathematical Methods'

I want to use my whole VCE study program to see which courses I am eligible for

I want to enter a single VCE subject to see which courses require it

List tertiary courses that commence in:

2020 (Year 12) 2021 (Year 11) 2022 (Year 10)

Select a study

List Courses

3. The courses that have set this prerequisite for 2022 are shown. In this example, the first course has set the prerequisite of Units 3 and 4 in 'any maths'. The second example has included Mathematical Methods in a group of Unit 3 and 4 studies. The applicant must have studied at least one of these studies.

Search Results

Course example 1

Example institution
Example campus

HE VTAC

Units 3 and 4: any English; Units 3 and 4: any Mathematics.

Course example 2

Example institution
Example campus

HE VTAC

Units 3 and 4: any English; Units 3 and 4: one of Maths: Mathematical Methods or Maths: Specialist Mathematics.

Selection

Meeting the entrance requirements for a course does not mean you will automatically get a place. Selection into a course is competitive as there are typically more applicants than there are places.

The selection process

The selection process is completed by institutions, not VTAC. The decision on who gets an offer for a course is based on the assessment of a range of criteria.

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is one tool used, but it is not used for all courses.

Many courses listed through VTAC use a range of criteria for selecting applicants.

These may include completion of:

- » an interview
- » a folio and folio presentation
- » a pre-selection test
- » additional forms, or
- » an audition.

Information about all 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria' for courses commencing in 2022 will be published in 2021.

To get an idea of the types of criteria you **may** be required to complete, check out VTAC CourseSearch to see the criteria for courses commencing in 2020.

Special Consideration (SEAS)

If you experience difficulties that affect your education, especially during your Year 11 and 12 studies, the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) is something you should know about. The scheme is designed to make sure institutions understand your circumstances and get a sense of your full potential when they are making selection decisions.

SEAS is not just about life's difficulties—there's also a category that looks at under-represented groups in specific courses.

If you experience difficulty due to medical, disability, financial, personal or other reasons, make sure you speak to someone who can give you helpful advice. Your school counsellor or another teacher is often a good starting point.

Also, it's advisable to make a few notes about what has been happening, in particular key dates. This is so that if you want to submit a SEAS application when you are applying for courses in Year 12 you have this information on hand.

Application checklist

To give yourself the best shot at getting into a course, you will need to make sure you complete the following for **each** course you intend to apply for:

- » meet the minimum tertiary entrance requirements
- » meet the institutional entrance requirements
- » complete the required prerequisites. The required minimum VCE study score must be met
- » undertake the 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria'. This includes selection criteria and specific requirements for the course, and
- » if applicable, submit a Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) application.

Once you've submitted your application, provided you've met all the entrance requirements, institutions will compare your performance across the criteria with other applicants for that course and make offers to the best candidates.

Key points

- » Selection is completed by institutions, not VTAC
- » The ATAR is only one tool used in selection
- » Entry into a course is competitive
- » If you don't fulfil 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria' you will not be eligible for selection
- » SEAS allows you to communicate any circumstances that have affected your education to institutions

Pathways

Everyone has their own pathway though life. Your ideal pathway from school to tertiary study might be straightforward, but things don't always go according to plan. This is why we recommend researching multiple pathway options, so you have back up plans.

Planning pathways

As you research courses and careers, you'll find there's often more than one way to reach your goals. Planning pathways helps you identify your preferred pathway and, importantly, gives you back up options in case you aren't selected into your preferred course right away.

Think of pathways as a series of stepping stones that lead between each other. If you're crossing a creek, you'll have a few options in front of you. One route might look like it's the most direct but if you're not sure you can reach one of the stones, you should look at your other options for getting to the other side.

Some pathways between courses offer Advanced Standing (or credit) for what you have already studied. Charlie's nursing example is one of them. Depending on the units he studied, Charlie could get up to 18 months credit from his Diploma of Nursing towards his Bachelor of Nursing.

Researching pathways

Researching pathways is not a simple process. Institutions provide some information on their websites but you really need to talk to a range of institutions to find all the options available. VTAC recommends you get advice in writing. Your school career professional is also an important person to get pathway advice from.

Ask the questions

When researching courses, always look for pathway information. Your key questions are:

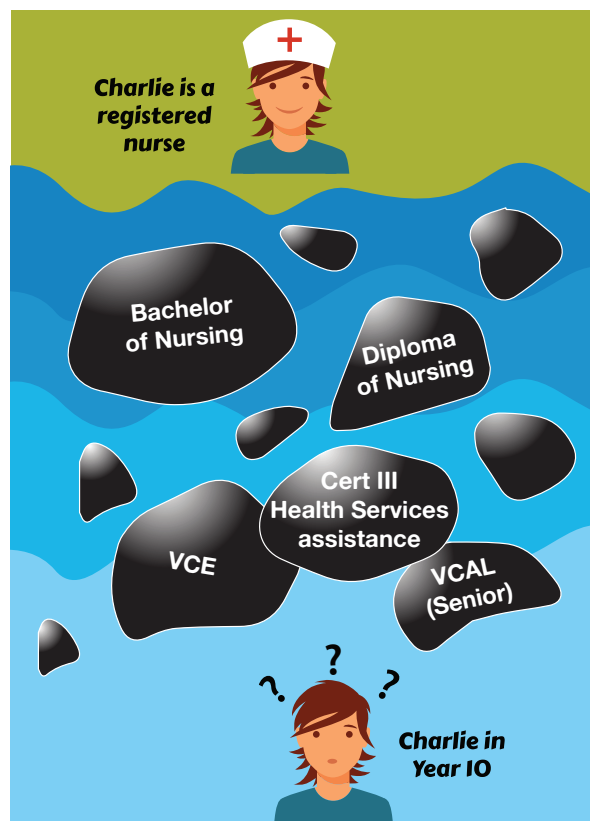
- » What are some of the different pathways into this course?
- » Which pathways offer 'advanced standing' (credit)?
- » How long would it take me to complete each pathway?
- » What units of study and academic grades would I need to move from one course into another?

Key points

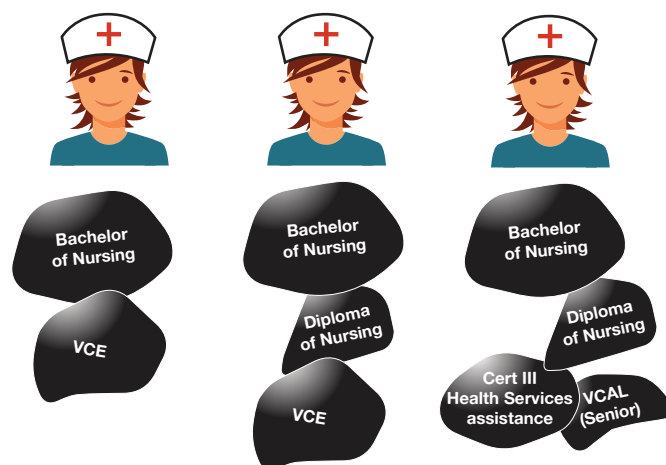
- » When you research courses, make sure you research the different pathways into them
- » Also find out where a course can lead you once it is completed

Charlie's pathways

Charlie wants to become a registered nurse.



Here are just some of Charlie's pathway options:



Your research plan

You have two years until you need to choose the tertiary courses you will apply for. That's two years to research what's on offer and what's right for you. It takes time to weigh up your different options, so don't leave it to the last minute.

Year 10 course research essentials

In Year 10 you'll be asked to choose the Year 12 qualification you want to complete and your study plan for Year 11 and 12. To make good decisions, you will need to research the kinds of tertiary courses available and what you must do to be eligible for them.

In particular, you need to know:

- » what type of tertiary courses your chosen Year 12 qualification can lead to, and
- » the prerequisite studies commonly required for courses you might consider.

The next stage of course research is to look more deeply into what each course involves. You don't have to find out everything in Year 10! It's just a good time to get started and then continue through Year 11 and Year 12. This gives you two years to figure out what's right for you.

Course research questions

To more thoroughly research a course, find out:

- » what subjects you can study and which you can specialise in
- » where the course can take you—for some careers you need to have completed a course that is recognised by the professional organisation (e.g. teachers, accountants, psychologists)
- » how the course is taught
- » where the course is taught
- » what opportunities the course and institution offer you
- » pathways into the course
- » prerequisite studies and other entry requirements, and
- » anything else you want to know.

Course research: Getting started

Your senior secondary qualification

Which Year 11 and 12 qualification do you aim to complete?

- VCE
 VCAL (senior)
 IB
 VCAL (intermediate)
 VCAL (foundation)

Tertiary education and careers

List three websites you will visit to find out more about tertiary education and/or careers. What did you find out?

Website	What I found out

Write down one open day you will try to attend this year

Institution	Open day date	Things I will investigate

Tertiary courses

List three areas of study and/or work that interest you and why they interest you.

Area of interest	Why it interests you

Use these areas of interest as search terms to look up courses on (vtac.edu.au/coursesearch)—tick "Include majors in keyword search" before selecting "list courses".

How many courses were listed for each area of interest?

Area of interest	Number of courses

Essential requirements and admission criteria

Select one course. Find the "essential requirements" and "admission criteria" for "applicants with Year 12". What are they?

Course name	"Essential requirements" and "admission criteria"

Prerequisites

Use Prerequisite and Course Explorer to look up the prerequisite for this same course in 2022. What are they? Are they different to the prerequisites in CourseSearch for 2020? If so, how?

Write down the prerequisite studies required for 2022.

Course name	Prerequisite studies for 2022

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

The ATAR is a rank, not a score. It's designed specifically to assist some tertiary institutions in selecting applicants for some courses.

The ATAR is only one tool used for selection into tertiary courses, and not all courses use the ATAR. This selection explains:

- » what the ATAR is
- » what the ATAR isn't
- » how the ATAR is calculated
- » what scaling is and why we do it
- » what your aggregate is
- » rules and restrictions regarding study combinations for how your aggregate is calculated, and
- » how your aggregate becomes your ATAR.

There's a lot of detail in this section that can be hard to remember, so keep hold of this guide so you can revisit it in Year 11 and 12.

What is the ATAR?

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is an overall percentile rank reflecting a student's Year 12 achievement compared to the age group in a given year. The ATAR allows tertiary institutions to competitively rank students who have completed different combinations of VCE studies. It is calculated by VTAC **solely** for use by institutions for admission into some tertiary courses.

The ATAR is reported as a number between 0.00 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05. A student with an ATAR of 75.00 has achieved VCE results above 75 per cent of the Year 12 age group.

What the ATAR isn't

The ATAR isn't a reflection of you as a person, and there's no pass or fail ATAR. Everyone who receives an ATAR has passed the VCE. The ATAR is simply a rank that is used by institutions for some of their courses. In most cases, the ATAR is only one of many criteria and factors considered as part of the selection process.

How to qualify for an ATAR

To qualify for an ATAR through VTAC, a student must:

- » qualify for the VCE, and
- » achieve study scores in at least four permissible Unit 3 and 4 VCE studies, including one from the English group.

Is my ATAR relevant interstate?

Yes. Each state recognises the ATAR of other states as equivalent. This is achieved by the states by using a similar methodology and a statistical cross-checking process.

What is a notional ATAR?

Notional ATARs are used to rank applicants who:

- » have another qualification obtained in Victoria such as the International Baccalaureate (an ATAR is only calculated for IB students who complete the GAT)
- » have previous Victorian Year 12 results (other than VCE results).

- » complete at least one Unit 3 and 4 study outside of a January to December timetable
- » have interstate studies

A Notional ATAR is treated the same way as a normal ATAR, the 'notional' label simply indicates that the ATAR was obtained in a slightly different way. For course selection and all other purposes they are treated as equivalent.

What if I do VCAL?

VCAL students do not receive an ATAR and can therefore only immediately apply for courses that don't use the ATAR to select students for entry (see 'Pathways' for other opportunities).

How is the ATAR calculated?

The next six pages provide detailed information on the process of calculating an ATAR. A summary follows:

- » The calculation of your ATAR begins with your **VCE study scores**, provided by VCAA.
- » VTAC then scales these scores to ensure fairness. This produces **scaled study scores**. See [pages 16-17](#).
- » An **aggregate** is created by adding up:
 - » Your **primary four**: your highest scaled study score in one of English, English (EAL), Literature or English Language and the three next highest VTAC scaled study scores permissible.
 - » Your **increments**: Often ten per cent of any fifth and sixth permissible scaled study scores that are available. There are rules and restrictions that apply to which studies can be included in the aggregate when calculating the ATAR. See [pages 18-19](#).
- » Students are then ranked in order of these aggregates, which are placed on a percentile scale with intervals of 0.05. The group of students with the highest aggregates will be assigned the highest **ATAR** of 99.95. ATARs below 30.00 are reported as 'less than 30' on printed ATAR statements, however the actual ATAR is available through the online results service. Example ATAR calculations can be found on [pages 20-21](#).

Key points

- » The ATAR is designed only to select applicants for tertiary education
- » Your ATAR is a ranking. It is not your score on your VCE
- » Your ATAR can be used across Australia

Scaling: keeping things fair

In calculating the ATAR, VTAC scales study scores. This ensures fair comparison of students' achievements over all their studies, regardless of what they have studied.

What is scaling?

Scaling adjusts for the fact that it is more difficult to obtain a high VCE study score in some studies than others. This is **not** because some studies are inherently harder or easier, it is because some studies attract a more competitive cohort of students.

Scaling ensures that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged based on the studies they choose. All VCE study scores are scaled by VTAC.

Why are study scores scaled?

To select applicants fairly, institutions need an overall measure of the performance of students undertaking the VCE in **all studies** and in **all combinations**. Study scores are scaled to consider the different levels of competition in different studies.

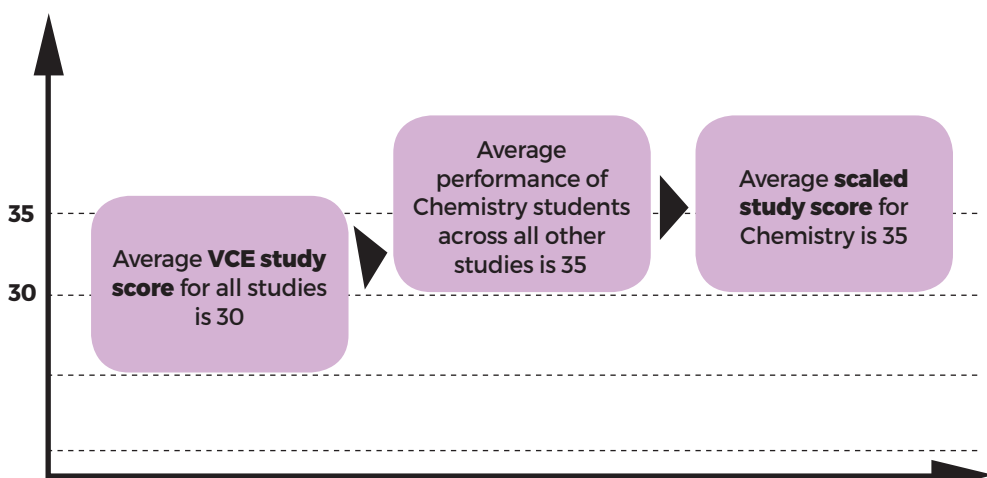
When are scores scaled?

VCE studies are always scaled in the year in which you undertook them. This may not necessarily be in the year in which you receive your ATAR.

How study scores are scaled

1. The VCAA collects your assessment results and uses them to calculate your **VCE study scores**.
2. When VTAC receives your study scores from the VCAA, each study has been standardised. The average score for each study is 30.
3. VTAC looks at the assessment data across all studies to make sure obtaining the average score in one study required the same level of achievement as every other study.
4. When the data demonstrates the overall level of scores across studies doesn't match, adjustments need to be made. This is the scaling process.
5. If competition in a particular study was higher than the average level of competition across all studies—as indicated by the group of students performing higher in their other studies—study scores need to be adjusted upwards, otherwise students doing that study would be unfairly disadvantaged.
6. Likewise, if competition in a particular study was lower than the average level of competition across all studies—as indicated by the group of students performing lower in their other studies—study scores need to be adjusted downwards, otherwise students doing that study would be unfairly advantaged.
7. Once the study scores have been scaled, they are called **scaled study scores**. It is these scaled study scores that are used to calculate the ATAR.

The basics of scaling: an example



Note: This diagram uses simplified figures and processes for the purpose of clarity. Refer to the details elsewhere in this publication and on the VTAC website for more details about the scaling process.

1. The average **VCE study score** for all studies is 30. Therefore, Chemistry VCE study scores are calculated with a fixed average of 30.
2. VTAC analyses the performance of Chemistry students in all their other studies, and calculates their overall average—across all their studies. In this example Chemistry students' overall average is 35.
3. Because the overall average for Chemistry students is higher than 30, we can see that it was harder for Chemistry students to obtain the average (or above) in Chemistry than it was in their other studies. This means, to be fair, the average for Chemistry needs to be adjusted to the new average of 35.
4. All Chemistry study scores are recalculated around the average of 35, producing **scaled study scores** for the study.

Studies with additional scaling rules

The following studies attract additional scaling rules. Unless you like these studies and are good at them, choosing these studies simply because they are treated differently in scaling won't automatically guarantee you a higher ATAR.

Mathematics

VCE Mathematics studies are designed to cater for students of differing abilities and interests. Unlike other studies there is a distinct hierarchy of studies:

- » Specialist Mathematics is the most difficult
- » followed by Mathematical Methods, and then
- » Further Mathematics.

To ensure that students undertaking the more difficult mathematics studies are not disadvantaged by the level of difficulty, all three mathematics studies are scaled against each other as well as being scaled against all other studies. The higher of the two resulting scales is used for each of the mathematics studies.

Languages

As a result of government policy to encourage the study of languages, each language is adjusted up by adding five to the initial VTAC scaled study score **average**.

This does not mean that five points are added to the ATAR. What it does mean is that for study scores at, or close to, the score average of 30, the adjustment is 5. This adjustment is different for each study score and decreases as the study score moves away from 30.

Myths about scaling

Many students believe that to achieve their best possible ATAR they need to choose studies have been scaled up in previous years. This is not true and can work against you.

Choosing a study that you are not very good at, or engaged in, simply because it may be scaled up would be a mistake. If you are concerned about your score, you need to be sure you are good at a study and that you are engaged in doing your best.

It is most likely that a 'scaled down' score in a study you performed well in will be higher than a 'scaled up' study in which you didn't.

Definitions

VCE study score

A VCE study score is based on your results in school assessments and examinations. It is a score from 0–50, determined by the VCAA, and it shows how you performed in that study relative to all other students doing **that same study**.

Scaled study score

VTAC calculates a scaled study score for each VCE study score. This is a score from 0.00 to 55.00, determined by VTAC, which shows how you performed in each study, relative to all students doing **all studies**. The scaled study score uses your VCE study score and the performance of the entire cohort of students who undertook that study compared to how they performed in their other studies.

Key points

- » **Scaling allows for fair comparison of students' achievements across all their studies**
- » **Because of this, students should freely choose studies they like or are good at without worrying about their ATAR**
- » **After a VCE study score is scaled it becomes a scaled study score**

What would happen if there was no scaling?

Without scaling		
No consistency	Assumptions made	Subjective decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A 30 in one subject wouldn't be equivalent to a 30 in another subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Individuals would make their own assumptions about scores from different subjects - "that's a soft score" or "this subject is harder than that subject". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Two students have the same score. The selection officer looks at the study and makes a personal call because they perceive one student to have completed more competitive studies than other students.
With scaling		
Consistency	No assumptions	No subjective decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A 30 in one study is equivalent to a 30 in all studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » No personal opinions about scaled study scores because of consistency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » If two students have the same ATAR or scaled study score, institutions are assured they are equal.

Studies used for the ATAR: rules and restrictions

When selecting VCE studies, be aware of the rules and restrictions about which studies can be included in your aggregate. Your aggregate is then converted to your ATAR.

Calculating your aggregate

Before producing your ATAR, VTAC must first calculate your aggregate. Your aggregate is produced as a sum of your primary four studies and a maximum of two available (and permissible) increments.

Subject to the rules and restrictions that follow, up to six studies can be used in calculating your aggregate and they may include:

- » VCE Unit 3 and 4 sequences
- » Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs with Unit 3 and 4 sequences
- » VFE studies, and
- » One approved higher education study

However, only some of these types of study can be included in your primary four, others can only be used as increments.

If you have more than six results, only the six permissible results that give the highest ATAR are used. Any studies not used for the ATAR remain visible to selection officers on your application.

'Permissible'

'Permissible' refers to the following rules and restrictions.

Primary four

These are the four studies that are counted first in the calculation of your aggregate. Your primary four aggregate is the sum of:

- » your VTAC Scaled Study Score in one of English, English (EAL), Literature or English Language, and
- » the next highest three permissible scaled study scores.

Increments

If available, a maximum of two increments are added to your primary four during the calculation of your aggregate

Increments could be:

- » ten per cent of a fifth or sixth permissible scaled score
- » a permissible unscored VCE or VFE increment
- » a permissible higher education study increment
- » Year 12 credit for studies completed interstate
- » an increment for legitimate one year students

Rules and restrictions

For the calculation of an aggregate, rules and restrictions apply to the inclusion of:

- » studies from the same study area grouping
- » equivalent studies
- » scored and unscored VCE VET studies
- » VFE block credit, and
- » approved higher education studies.

Study area groupings

There are restrictions to how many studies from the same study area grouping can contribute to your aggregate. This is to ensure diversity in your VCE program. Study area groupings include VCE, VCE VET and higher education studies and are listed below.

Study area group restrictions are:

1. At most, two results from the same study area grouping can be included in the calculation of the primary four.
2. At most, three results from the same study area grouping can contribute to the calculation of your aggregate.
3. If you have unscored VCE VET results, these can only be used in the calculation of your aggregate after all scored results in the same study area grouping have been used.

List of study area groupings

Some Study area groupings are listed below. VCE, VCE VET and higher education studies may be a part of each grouping.

To check which studies are included in each grouping visit:

vtac.edu.au/studyareagroupings

- » English studies
- » Entertainment
- » History studies
- » Hospitality
- » Information Technology studies
- » Languages (other than English)
- » Mathematics studies
- » Music studies

Equivalent studies

Studies with significant overlap between them are considered equivalent. Consult with your school when choosing your VCE program to ensure you are not studying equivalent units. For further information refer to the VCAA's *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*. However, if circumstances result in you studying equivalent units, only one of these units can be included in the calculation of your aggregate. This will be the unit with the highest permissible contribution to your aggregate. Example equivalent combinations follow.

- » English and English as an Additional Language.
- » The same language in any combination of: first language; second language; second language advanced; language, culture and society; or VET study.
- » Studies that have been replaced by a revised subject, such as National Politics replaced by Australian Politics, International Politics replaced by Global Politics, Information Technology replaced by Computing, and Food and Technology replaced by Food Studies.

VCE VET studies

Scored VCE VET studies

'Scored VCE VET studies' are VCE VET Unit 3 and 4 sequences with a scored assessment.

When calculating your aggregate, VCE VET Unit 3 and 4 sequences with a scored assessment are treated in the same way as other Unit 3 and 4 VCE studies.

However, if you choose not to take the scored assessment for a study when it is available, the study cannot be used in the calculation of your aggregate.

Unscored VCE VET studies

Unscored VCE VET studies are VCE VET Unit 3 and 4 sequences with no scored assessment available (it cannot be awarded if assessment was available but you chose not to take it).

Since there are no scores available for unscored sequences, VTAC may include the sequence as an increment (the fifth and/or sixth study). The amount of an increment is determined by calculating 10 per cent of the fourth study score of your primary four.

Up to two unscored VCE VET increments may contribute to your aggregate.

VFE block credit

VFE studies are VET courses that are not part of the VCE VET program but have been approved for block credit at Unit 3 and 4 level by the VCAA. VFE studies may count towards your ATAR as an increment (the fifth and/or sixth study). The amount of the increment is determined by calculating 10 per cent of the fourth study score of your primary four.

VCE and VCE VET results will take precedence over VFE block credit results in the calculation of your aggregate. VFE block credit can only be used in the calculation of an aggregate if there are fewer than six VCE or VCE VET studies available for calculation. Up to two VFE increments can contribute to the aggregate.

Approved higher education studies

The VCAA provides for very able students to undertake an approved higher education study as part of the VCE. The successful completion of a higher education study may be included as an increment (fifth or sixth study) in the calculation of your aggregate.

Higher Education studies are explicitly designed for credit towards the VCE and increments are not available for International Baccalaureate (IB) students.

If the average mark for the higher education study is:

- » at least 90 per cent, the increment will be 5.0
- » at least 80 per cent but less than 90 per cent, the increment will be 4.5
- » at least 70 per cent but less than 80 per cent, the increment will be 4.0
- » at least 60 per cent but less than 70 per cent, the increment will be 3.5
- » at least 50 per cent but less than 60 per cent, the increment will be 3.0

If the average mark for the higher education study is less than 50, then no increment is available.

Which studies can be used in the primary four?

The primary four consists of:

- » the highest VTAC scaled study score in one of English, English (EAL), Literature or English Language, and
- » the remaining three highest permissible VTAC scaled study scores.

Permissible scaled study scores for the primary four may be from VCE Unit 3 and 4 studies or VCE VET Unit 3 and 4 sequences with a scored assessment.

At most, two results from the same study area grouping can be included in the calculation of the primary four.

Which studies may be used as increments?

Up to two increments are added to the primary four during the calculation of your aggregate.

Studies that may count as increments

Increments may include:

- » **VCE Unit 3 and 4 studies or scored VCE VET Unit 3 and 4 studies**—10 per cent of any fifth and/or sixth highest scaled subject score.
- » **Unscored VCE VET Unit 3 and 4 studies**—up to two unscored VCE VET increments. Unscored VET increments are calculated as 10 per cent of the fourth study score of your primary four. An increment is only awarded if no scored assessment was available. It is not awarded if you chose not to take a scored assessment.
- » **Higher education studies**—one higher education study increment (as calculated by the rules listed on this page).
- » **VFE increments**—up to two VFE increments can contribute to the ATAR. VFE increments are calculated as 10 per cent of the fourth study score of your primary four.
- » **Year 12 credit for studies completed interstate**—up to two increments, each equal to 10 per cent of the fourth study score of the primary four.
- » **Legitimate one year**—can only be used as a sixth contribution, equal to the value of the fifth contribution.

Study area grouping restrictions to increments

At most, three results from the same study area grouping can contribute to the calculation of your aggregate (the combination of your primary four and increment/s).

This means, if you have two studies from the same study area grouping in your primary four, only one study from that study area grouping may be included as an increment.

Key points

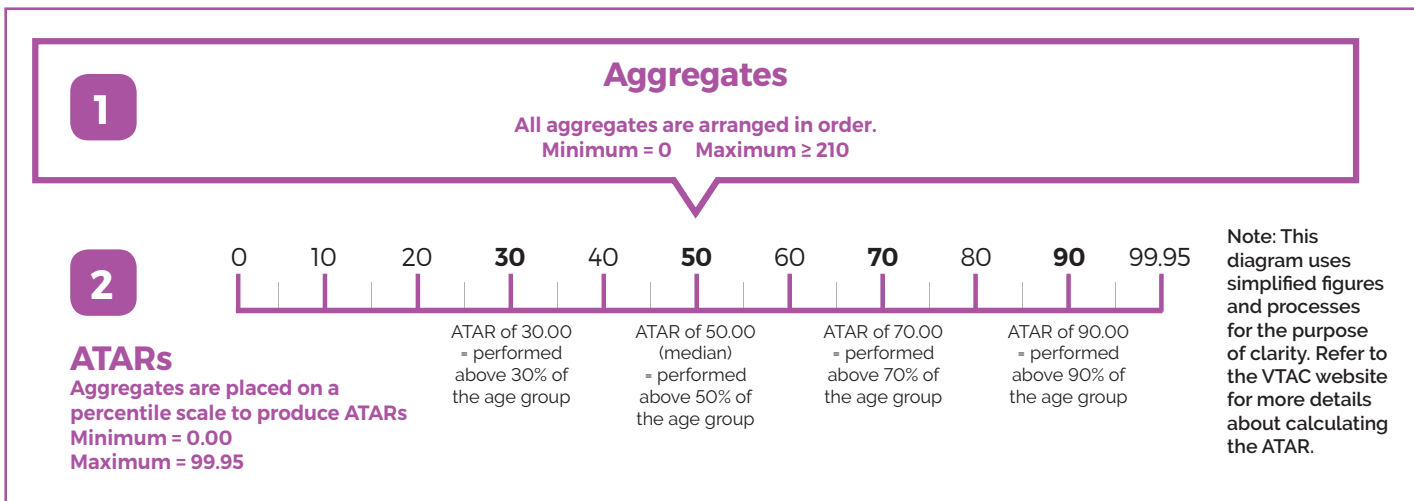
- » After your study scores are scaled VTAC calculates your aggregate: the total of all your permissible contributions to your ATAR
- » Be aware of the rules and regulations about what combination of permissible studies can be used in calculating your aggregate

From aggregate to ATAR

Once the cohort's aggregates are calculated they are placed in order on a percentile scale with intervals of 0.05, converting aggregates to ATARs.

Your aggregate is the total of your permissible scaled study scores, which can range from 0 to over 210 (in exceptional cases). Your aggregate will be reported on your ATAR statement. Aggregates are then placed in order on a percentile scale.

The group of students with the highest aggregates will be assigned the highest ATAR of 99.95. ATARs below 30.00 are reported as 'less than 30' on printed ATAR statements, however the actual ATAR is available through the online results service.



Year	Study	Unit 3/4 Results	GA 1	GA 2	GA 3	VCE Study Score	VTAC Scaled score	2018 Aggregate Contribution
2018	Literature	SS	A	A+	A+	42	43.38	43.38
2018	Algorithmics (HESS)	SS	A+	A+	A+	44	48.93	48.93
2018	Philosophy	SS	A+	A+	A+	47	48.01	48.01
2018	Specialist Mathematics	SS	A+	A+	A+	36	47.44	47.44
2018	Approved Higher Education Study							5.00
2018	Physics	SS	A+	A+	A+	43	45.15	45.15
Aggregate								197.27
Aggregate converted to an ATAR of								99.40

The aggregate is the total of all contributions to your ATAR.

Notes:

- Studies from any year can be used in the calculation of the ATAR.
- All permissible VCE and VCE VET studies can be used. See 'rules and restrictions' on pages 18-19.
- You must pass Units 3 and 4 for a study to be included in your ATAR.
- Your Graded Assessment results are used by the VCAA to produce your study score.
- The study score is calculated by the VCAA, with an average score of 30 for each subject.
- All study scores are scaled by VTAC before use in the ATAR to adjust for competition. See pages 16-17 for information about the scaling process.
- You must have at least four permissible scored studies to receive an ATAR. If you have more than four studies available, we will use the highest eligible four studies. These are known as a 'primary four'.
- Up to two more eligible studies can contribute as increments, which for scored VCE subjects is 10% of the scaled study score.
- Your ATAR is a percentile rank determined by your aggregate. For example, an ATAR of 60 means that your aggregate was higher than 60% of the Year 12 age group.

Why isn't there an ATAR of 100?

Because the ATAR is a percentile ranking it ranks you against everyone in the Year 12 age group. Your ATAR represents the percentage of people you performed higher than. Therefore, it's statistically impossible for the students with the highest result to perform better than themselves.

Key points

- » Your ATAR is produced from your aggregate
- » To achieve this, all aggregates are placed in order and assigned to a percentile scale
- » The lowest ATAR is 0 and the highest is 99.95

ATAR snapshot: Nadja

Nadja knew what she liked, what she was interested in and good at. Nadja chose studies based on all of these factors and focussed on studying. She was in the top six per cent of the state even though four of her six studies were scaled down.

Nadja completed Dance in Year 10 so her study score was scaled in 2016, and Health and Human Development in Year 11, which was scaled in 2017. Her result for Dance was included as an increment because it was one of her lowest two scaled scores (apart from English, which must be in her primary four).

Year	Study	Study Score	Scaled Score	2018 Aggregate Contribution
2018	English Language	35	37.69	37.69
2018	Visual Communication Design	48	47.68	47.68
2018	Further Mathematics	43	41.29	41.29
2018	Psychology	41	40.08	40.08
2017	Health and Human Development	40	37.15	3.71
2016	Dance	27	25.12	2.51
Aggregate				172.96
Aggregate converted to an ATAR of				95.25

ATAR snapshot: Colin

Colin didn't know what he wanted to do when he left school, so he chose a wide range of studies that he was good at. He performed well across all of his studies, met the prerequisites of the course he was interested in and was offered a place.

It is also interesting to note that all of Colin's studies were scaled down but this didn't prevent him getting the ATAR he was aiming for.

Year	Study	Study Score	Scaled Score	2018 Aggregate Contribution
2018	English	31	28.86	28.86
2018	Health and Human Development	40	37.08	37.08
2018	Psychology	34	32.23	32.23
2018	Business Management	35	31.90	31.90
2018	Visual Communication Design	35	31.30	3.13
2018	Further Mathematics	28	25.38	2.53
Aggregate				135.73
Aggregate converted to an ATAR of				76.80

ATAR snapshot: Amina

Amina completed an approved higher education study and performed very well in it. Results in higher education studies can only contribute as an increment and not as part of the primary four. Amina's result in this study was greater than 90, therefore the increment is 5.0.

Year	Study	Study Score	Scaled Score	2018 Aggregate Contribution
2018	Literature	42	43.38	43.38
2018	Algorithmics (HESS)	44	48.93	48.93
2018	Philosophy	47	48.01	48.01
2018	Specialist Mathematics	36	47.44	47.44
2018	Approved Higher Education Study			5.00
2018	Physics	43	45.15	4.51
Aggregate				197.27
Aggregate converted to an ATAR of				99.40

ATAR snapshot: Laszlo

Laszlo didn't choose subjects based on his interests. He chose four studies that had previously been scaled up, even though he wasn't very interested in or good at them. Laszlo did not excel in these studies, and even though four of his six studies were scaled up (including a VCE Language study) his ATAR was not as high as it could have been if he had chosen studies based on what he was good at, interested in and enjoyed.

Year	Study	Study Score	Scaled Score	2018 Aggregate Contribution
2018	English	17	14.02	14.02
2018	Languages: Chinese Second Language	28	38.84	38.84
2018	Specialist Mathematics	17	22.52	22.52
2018	Algorithmics (HESS)	18	20.41	20.41
2017	Accounting	18	17.62	1.76
2018	Physics	17	17.23	1.72
Aggregate				99.27
Aggregate converted to an ATAR of				47.05

Choosing Year 11 and 12 studies

Now it's time to bring your research together and choose the Year 11 and 12 program that is right for you.

How to choose

By going through this booklet, we hope you've had a chance to reflect upon the important things to consider when choosing your Year 11 and 12 subjects.

The ideal combination is made up of studies that:

- » you enjoy ([page 4](#))
- » you are good at ([page 4](#))
- » reflect your study interests ([page 5](#))
- » help you meet your goals ([page 5](#))
- » meet any prerequisites ([page 11](#))
- » meet VTAC's rules and restrictions for specific combinations, if you wish to obtain an ATAR ([pages 18–19](#)), and
- » provide you with options.

Get advice

Talk to other people about their experiences and watch our video: *Choosing your Year 11 and 12 studies: the basics* for helpful hints on planning your VCE program: [youtube.com/vtacmedia](https://www.youtube.com/vtacmedia)

It's your decision

What you study is YOUR decision. Not your teacher's, your parent's or your friend's. They might have good advice, but when it comes to deciding what to study, it's up to you.

What if I just don't know!?

If you have no idea which studies you want to take up after school, don't panic! Keep your VCE study program broad across a range of different studies and go back to basics: what you love doing, and what you are interested in.

The decisions you make about your studies now are important, but they're not the only chance you'll have to choose or change your future studies or career. There are many avenues to tertiary study and the career you want.

How not to choose

Don't choose a subject just because you think it will help your ATAR. Choosing studies simply because of how they were scaled last year doesn't guarantee you a 'good' ATAR. Students typically perform lower in studies they don't like or aren't good at—most often this performance gap is lower than any upward scaling a study may receive (see 'Laszlo' on [page 21](#)).

My Year 11 studies

Study and level	Reason

My Year 12 studies

Study and level	Reason

Your next steps

Download the VTAC App

If you haven't already, download the free VTAC App for offline access to CourseSearch and the Prerequisite and Course Explorer. The app is available from the App Store and Google Play.



Connect with VTAC

Subscribe to our social media. VTAC provides regular updates via social media. Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter or check out our YouTube channel.



facebook.com/vtacguide



twitter.com/vtacguide



youtube.com/vtacmedia

Keep researching

Researching courses and institutions can be a time consuming activity, especially if you're not sure about what you want to do. That's why we encourage you to start in Year 10. Here are things to continue doing:

- » keep talking to your allies about your strengths
- » continue to explore your interests
- » make a record of what you don't like as well as what you do like
- » find out about other peoples' experiences
- » browse courses online through CourseSearch and institutions' websites, and
- » be aware that your interests and strengths may change.

Visit an open day

Whether you know what you want to do or not, visit open days or make an appointment for a campus tour. Studying is much more than the course you're interested in—it's also about finding an institution that is the right fit for you.

Find relevant work experience

Work experience gives you a preview of working life and is an excellent opportunity to experience a workplace and ask questions—make the most of it.

Do your best and look after yourself

No one expects you to have it all worked out—and many people are still searching for a preferred course or career well into adult life. If you make time to start reflecting on these things in Year 10, it can make decision making easier later on.

If you are feeling stressed out, make sure you talk through what's going on with one of your allies or a school counsellor. Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) and Youth Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636) also provide free telephone counselling.



© Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre 2019

VTAC Year 10 Guide – Choosing senior school studies for the right reasons

ISSN - 2206-5571

VTAC is the owner of the copyright in this publication. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced or extracted by any process without written permission from VTAC. Enquiries should be addressed to the Director, Communications and Publishing Services, VTAC.

VTAC has no objections to schools and tertiary institutions reproducing this publication provided it is ONLY for use within their own institution and this copyright statement is included. If the document is not reproduced in full sections, it should not be copied out of context where information could be incomplete and/or misleading. Schools and tertiary institutions **MUST ENSURE** that this information is not transmitted to any other person or body without prior permission from VTAC.

The content of this publication is provided as general information only. It is not intended as advice and does not address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. Every reasonable effort has been made to present current and accurate content, however the information within this publication is subject to change. VTAC reserves the right to update the information without prior notice. All updates will be published and made available on the VTAC website or in the VTAC Bulletin. To confirm times and dates please refer to the VTAC website (www.vtac.edu.au).

PUBLISHED BY:

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)
ABN: 83 837 024 255
40 Park Street, South Melbourne, VIC 3205

Facebook: facebook.com/vtacguide

Twitter: twitter.com/vtacguide

YouTube: youtube.com/vtacmedia

Telephone: (03) 9926 1020

www.vtac.edu.au

EDITING AND LAYOUT:

Communications and Publishing Services, VTAC

DESIGN:

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)

PRINTER:

Fuji Xerox Document Management Solutions Pty Limited

Acknowledgements:

VTAC would like to thank Catherine Jones from the CEAV and the many other careers practitioners who kindly shared their ideas for this guide.



VICTORIAN TERTIARY ADMISSIONS CENTRE

40 Park Street, South Melbourne, VIC 3205

Telephone: +61 3 9926 1020

www.vtac.edu.au

Facebook: facebook.com/vtacguide

Twitter: twitter.com/vtacguide

YouTube: youtube.com/vtacmedia