

VTAC

Year 11 and 12 Guide

Researching courses and applying



VTAC institutions and open days

Academia Australia	academia21.com	La Trobe College Australia	Melbourne (Bundoora): 4 August 2019 latrobecollegeaustralia.edu.au
Academy of Information Technology	Melbourne: 3 August 2019 (10am-1pm) ait.edu.au	La Trobe University	Albury-Wodonga: 18 August 2019 Bendigo: 25 August 2019 Melbourne: 4 August 2019 Mildura: 14 August 2019 Shepparton: 2 August 2019 Sydney: 22 August 2019 latrobe.edu.au/open-day
Academy of Interactive Entertainment	Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra and Sydney campuses: 18 August 2019 (10am-3pm) 16 November 2019 (10am-3pm) aie.edu.au/open-day	LCI Melbourne	lciimelbourne.edu.au
Acknowledge Education	acknowledgeeducation.edu.au	Longerenong College	longy.com.au
Australian Catholic University	Melbourne: 11 August 2019 (10am-3pm) Ballarat: 25 August 2019 (10am-2pm) acu.edu.au/student-life/experience-uni-before-you-start/open-day	Macleay College	City: 11 August 2019 macleay.edu.au/events
Australian College of Applied Psychology	Melbourne: 11 August 2019 (10am-2pm) acap.edu.au	Marcus Oldham College	marcusoldham.vic.edu.au
Australian Guild of Music Education	Kooyong: 23 September 2019 (10am-3pm)	Melbourne Institute of Technology	Melbourne: 17 August 2019 (10am-2pm) Sydney: 24 August 2019 (10am-2pm) mit.edu.au/open-day
Box Hill Institute	Box Hill: 25 August 2019 (10am-3pm) Lilydale: 15 September 2019 (10am-3pm) boxhill.edu.au/bod-events/	Melbourne Polytechnic	Preston: 18 August 2019 (10am-3pm) melbournepolytechnic.edu.au/open-day
Charles Sturt University	Albury-Wodonga: 18 August 2019 futurestudents.csu.edu.au/unilife/campuses/campus-tours	Monash College	Clayton: 4 August 2019 (10am -4pm) monash.edu/open-day
Chisholm	chisholm.edu.au/students/secondary-school/expos-and-events	Monash University	Clayton: 4 August 2019 (10am-4pm) Caulfield: 4 August 2019 (10am-4pm) Peninsula: 3 August 2019 (10am-3pm) Parkville: 18 August 2019 (10am-3pm) monash.edu/open-day
Collarts (Australian College of the Arts)	Fitzroy: 31 August 2019 (10am-3pm) Collingwood (Wellington Street): 31 August 2019 (10am-3pm) Collingwood (Cromwell Street): 31 August 2019 (10am-3pm) collarts.edu.au/open-day	Moorabbin Flying Services	mfs.com.au
CQUniversity	Melbourne: 15 August 2019 (5pm-8pm) Online: 14 August 2019 (3pm-6pm) 28 August 2019 (3pm-6pm) cq.edu.au/courses/future-students/open-days	Northern College of the Arts and Technology	ncat.vic.edu.au
Deakin College	Geelong Waterfront: 18 August 2019 (9am-3pm) Geelong Waurn Ponds: 18 August 2019 (9am-3pm) Melbourne Burwood: 25 August 2019 (9am-3pm) openday.deakin.edu.au	Open Universities Australia	open.edu.au
Deakin University	Melbourne Burwood: 25 August 2019 (9am-3pm) Geelong Waterfront: 18 August 2019 (9am-3pm) Geelong Waurn Ponds: 18 August 2019 (9am-3pm) Warmambool: 4 August 2019 (10am-2pm) deakin.edu.au/openday	Photography Studies College	Melbourne: 4 August 2019 (10am-4pm) psc.edu.au
Eastern College Australia	eastern.edu.au/events	RMIT University	City: 11 August 2019 (10am-4pm) Brunswick: 11 August 2019 (10am-4pm) Bundoora: 4 August 2019 (10am-4pm) openday.rmit.edu.au
Elly Lukas Beauty Therapy College	ellylukas.edu.au	SAE Creative Media Institute	SAE Melbourne: 11 August 2019 (10am-2pm) sae.edu.au/news-and-events/events
Endeavour College of Natural Health	endeavour.edu.au/open-day	Southern Cross University	hotelschool.scu.edu.au
Federation University Australia	federation.edu.au/openday	Sunraysia Institute of TAFE	sunitafe.edu.au
Footscray City Films	20 August 2019 (1pm-4pm) footscrayfilms.com.au/open-day	Swinburne University of Technology	Hawthorn: 28 July 2019 (10am-4pm) swinburne.edu.au/openday
Gordon (The)	City (Geelong): 4 August 2019 (11am-3pm) thegordon.edu.au	The Masters Institute of Creative Education	headmasters.com.au
Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE	gotafe.vic.edu.au	Torrens University Australia	torrens.edu.au/about/open-day
Holmesglen	holmesglen.edu.au/opendays	University of Melbourne (The)	Parkville: 18 August 2019 (10am-4pm) Dookie: 22 September 2019 (10am-4pm) Werribee: 20 October 2019 (10am-4pm) openday.unimelb.edu.au
JMC Academy	jmcacademy.edu.au/events/open-days	Victoria University	Footscray Park: 18 August 2019 (10am-3pm) openday.vu.edu.au
Kangan Institute	kangan.edu.au	Victorian Institute of Technology	vit.edu.au
		Whitehouse Institute of Design	Melbourne: 24 August 2019 Sydney: 24 August 2019 whitehouse-design.edu.au/whitehouse-events
		William Angliss Institute of TAFE	City: 3 August 2019 (10am-3pm) angliss.edu.au/openday

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How to use this guide

While you are in Year 11 and Year 12 you will need to complete some research about what you would like to do after school.

If you are in Year 12 and want to go onto tertiary education, you also need to decide on the courses you would like to apply for. From Monday 5 August 2019 you will be able to submit your application. The deadline for timely applications is 5.00 pm Monday 30 September 2019. You may also want to apply for special consideration (SEAS) and scholarships, which close Friday 11 October 2019. All dates can be found on the [last page](#) of this guide.

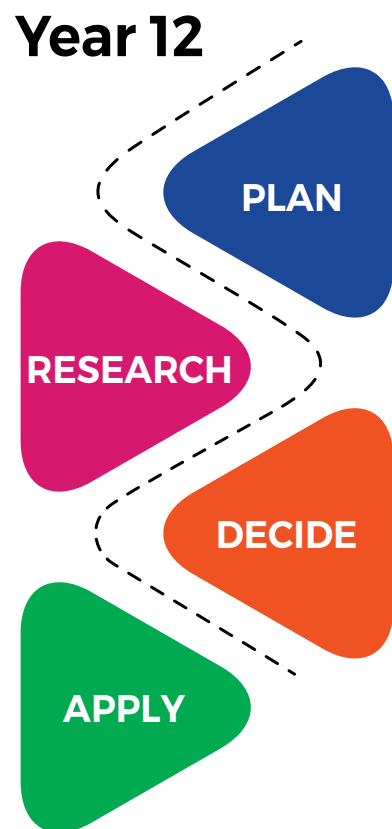
The *VTAC Year 11 and 12 Guide: Researching courses and applying* is designed to lead you through the course research and application processes. We want to make it as straight forward as possible for you, so we've broken the guide into four sections and provided you with some 'Action Plans' along the way.

Most Year 12 students will apply this year, for courses that commence in early 2020.

Most Year 11 students will apply in 2020, for courses that begin in 2021.

The course research and application process involves:

- » **planning** how and when you will research courses and institutions
- » **researching** courses and institutions that interest you and ensuring you are eligible for them—this might be a relatively short or long process, that's why we recommend getting started in Year 11
- » **deciding** on the courses that are right for you, and
- » when you are in Year 12, **applying** for up to eight courses, in order of preference. The preference list means you can only receive one offer in each round—that offer will be for the highest course on your preference list that selects you.



ACTION PLAN	
Year 11	Year 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The most important sections of this guide for you to concentrate on are 'Plan' and 'Research'. » Of course, you can read the other sections to get an idea of what comes next. » Ready to get into it? Turn the page and keep reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This entire guide is full of useful and important information for you. » You may have already completed a lot of course research but it doesn't hurt to go through the process from beginning to end to make sure you haven't overlooked anything.

Understand your VTAC journey



Research courses

Use CourseSearch to browse through over 1,700 courses to help you find those that suit you best. Make sure you check prerequisites and other essential requirements and admission criteria.



Learn the process

Use this guide and the VTAC website to read up on the process: who can apply, eligibility requirements, special consideration, scholarships and the steps to apply.



Create an account

Ready to apply? You'll need to create an account on the VTAC website. Once you've done that you can use the same account to apply for courses, special consideration (SEAS) and scholarships.



Apply for scholarships

There are lots of different scholarships and they are not all for academic achievement. You might be eligible for more than you think.



Apply for special consideration (SEAS)

If your education has been affected by circumstances outside your control, you can apply for special consideration through SEAS.



Apply for courses

You can apply for up to eight courses by listing them in preference order. Don't worry if you change your mind—you can change them throughout the application period.



Complete the essential requirements and admission criteria

Each course has its own essential requirements and admission criteria. Make sure you meet these for each course you apply to and complete any tasks listed.



Get your ATAR

VTAC will use your VCE results to calculate your Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). You can access your VCE Results and ATAR online or via the app.



Make final changes

Log in to your VTAC account to change your preferences or update your personal information.



Connect with VTAC

Stay updated on:

New and cancelled courses
Important dates
Helpful advice and tips.
Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/vtacguide](https://www.facebook.com/vtacguide)
Follow us on Twitter: [@vtacguide](https://twitter.com/vtacguide)
Visit our website: vtac.edu.au



Find out about offers

Offers are sent to your email and released via your VTAC account on specific dates (known as offer rounds).

What is VTAC?

If you're in Year 11 or Year 12 you've probably heard of VTAC. VTAC stands for the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre. But what exactly do we do?

VTAC is the central hub for tertiary course applications in Victoria. We represent all Victorian universities, most TAFEs and some independent tertiary colleges, which means we process applications for over 1,700 different courses.

When you submit your course application to VTAC you can list up to eight course preferences. Once submitted, VTAC processes your application and does a whole range of checks to help you maximise your chances of getting an offer. This includes advising you of any missing results, reminding you to submit any additional documentation, or drawing your attention to other services such as special consideration (SEAS) or additional admissions tests.

After applications close and VTAC has received all of your results, VTAC processes and forwards your application onto the tertiary institutions you have applied to. It's at that point VTAC advises institutions as to whether you've met the prerequisite requirements, or have submitted any additional forms such as the VTAC Personal Statement or SEAS. 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.

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. We look at all the offers you've received and send you the one that's highest on your preference list—that's why it's so important to always list your course preferences in the order you most want to study them (see [page 39](#)).

The order of your preferences is never used as part of the selection process. Institutions can't disadvantage you for putting their course at a low preference level.

Preparing your course application is not all VTAC does. In addition VTAC processes SEAS and scholarship applications, and VTAC is also responsible for calculating the ATAR at the end of the year.

If you're a bit worried about the application process, don't be. It's VTAC's job to make it easier for everyone, so if you've got a question, check out our Facebook page or Twitter, or if you just want to talk to someone, give us a call.

Glossary

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)	The overall percentile ranking reflecting comparative performance amongst the relevant age group in a given year. It allows tertiary institutions to compare students who have completed different combinations of Year 12 studies.
Campus	The location and grounds of an institution.
Commonwealth supported place (CSP)	A place in a degree course subsidised by the Australian Government.
CourseSearch	A function on the VTAC website that allows you to search or browse through courses at universities, TAFEs and independent tertiary colleges.
Essential requirements and admission criteria	Requirements and criteria that must be met to be eligible and assessed for selection into a course.
Major	A sequence of units in an area of specialisation completed as part of a Bachelor's degree.
Minor	A secondary area of specialisation completed as a part of a Bachelor's degree.
Prerequisites	VCE studies that Year 12 students must complete to be eligible for a course.

Scaled study score	The VCE study score after it has been scaled for inclusion in the ATAR.
Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS)	The umbrella program of special consideration for entry to tertiary courses at participating institutions.
Subject adjustment	Upward adjustments for undertaking VCE studies that are relevant to a particular course.
VCAA	The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority is the government body that administers the VCE and VCAL.
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VCE study score	Sometimes known as 'study score', is calculated by the VCAA showing how well you have performed in a Unit 3 and 4 VCE study compared to everybody else in Victoria who took that study.
VTAC	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
VTAC account	The secure section of the VTAC website where you apply and access your application information and other services.

Getting started

Finding the right course for you depends upon knowing yourself. Here are some activities to help you think about your strengths and interests.

Review your strengths and interests

In the *VTAC Year 10 Guide* we suggested you find your strengths and reflect upon the types of activities you enjoy doing and those you dislike. As you will discover new things and your strengths and interests may change, it's a good idea to review this activity regularly.

Set or refine 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.

Long-term goals

Imagine your life at 26 and think about the 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. The things you were imagining could be your **long-term goals**.

Medium-term goals

Next consider some **mid-term goals**. In most cases these will include the course you want to study, which will hopefully lead to your long-term goals.

Short-term goal

Finally, think about the **short-term goals** you need to achieve before you can obtain your medium-term goals? This might include completing prerequisite studies, researching the right courses for you and performing at a particular standard in Year 12. Note: it's statistically impossible for everyone to get an ATAR over 90. In fact, only about 10 per cent of students will. So be realistic about the expectations you place on yourself.

Write your personal course criteria list

You may already have a comprehensive check list of the criteria that your ideal course needs to meet. As you read this guide you may think of additional criteria to list. See [page 34](#) for examples.

My course criteria list	
Criterion 1	I have/will have the prerequisites
Criterion 2	It appeals to my interests and strengths
Criterion 3	
Criterion 4	
Criterion 5	
Criterion 6	

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"/>

My long-term goals



My medium-term goals



My short-term goals

ACTION PLAN

Year 11 and 12

- » Review your strengths, interests and goals.
- » Design the criteria for the right courses for you.

Put together your plan

You need to apply for tertiary courses before your Year 12 examinations have concluded, so it's important you don't leave your course research to the last minute.

Getting organised

Getting organised is something you learn. It comes easily to some, but many of us have to put our mind to it and make an effort to learn strategies and techniques. Mostly, being organised rests on the following four steps:

1. identifying priorities
2. allocating time to different tasks
3. writing a plan, and
4. keeping track of things and reviewing your plan.

Identify priorities

In Year 11 and 12 you have a lot of competing priorities: committing the right amount of time to each of your studies, exercising, eating properly, de-stressing with leisure time and sleeping well. You may have a job too. On top of that, you need to commit some time to researching what you want to do after school.

Write down your top priorities for the year, and which parts of your life might have to go on hold during your senior school years.

Allocate time

The amount of time it takes to research courses depends on the individual. It might be a straightforward or complicated process. Keep in mind you need to research more than one course as there are eight course preferences you can use.

You need to make time for:

- » online research
- » visiting institutions
- » talking through the courses and/or careers you're considering with allies or people who know about the course and/or associated careers, and
- » decision making.

If you're in Year 12, you also need to schedule time for applying to courses, researching and applying for scholarships, and if it's relevant to your circumstances, applying for special consideration (SEAS), which includes organising supporting evidence.

The worst time to research life after school is when you're facing immediate deadlines—although it can be a good time to occasionally *daydream* about life after school, to remind yourself the pressure will end.

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 reflect on these things regularly 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.

Write a plan

Your plan will depend on where you are on your course research journey, what year you're studying and your other priorities.

Here are some basics for writing a plan.

- » Get a planner—a diary, wall chart or online calendar.
- » Start by planning over a year or a semester. Mark in your school holidays, when assessments are due and opportunities to visit institutions such as open days.
- » Add the VTAC dates that apply to you, from [page 46](#) of this guide.
- » Think about how much time you will need to complete your assessment tasks and mark out that time before the due dates.
- » Add an extra week or two to the time you just marked out for assessments, to give yourself extra time to account for unforeseen changes.
- » Mark in other regular and/or important events, such as sports training, family commitments and time you'll be away from home.
- » Now look for the bits in your planner which are least cluttered—these could be the best times to work on your course research.
- » Block out time in your planner for course research and, if you're in Year 12, for applying.

Tips:

- » Make a folder on your computer, use an online annotated bookmark tool or keep a notebook for course research.
- » Online research can be done in short bursts but remember to make a note of what you've discovered so you can compare courses later.
- » Try to visit more open days in Year 11 than Year 12, when you might feel less under pressure.

Keep track of things and review your plan

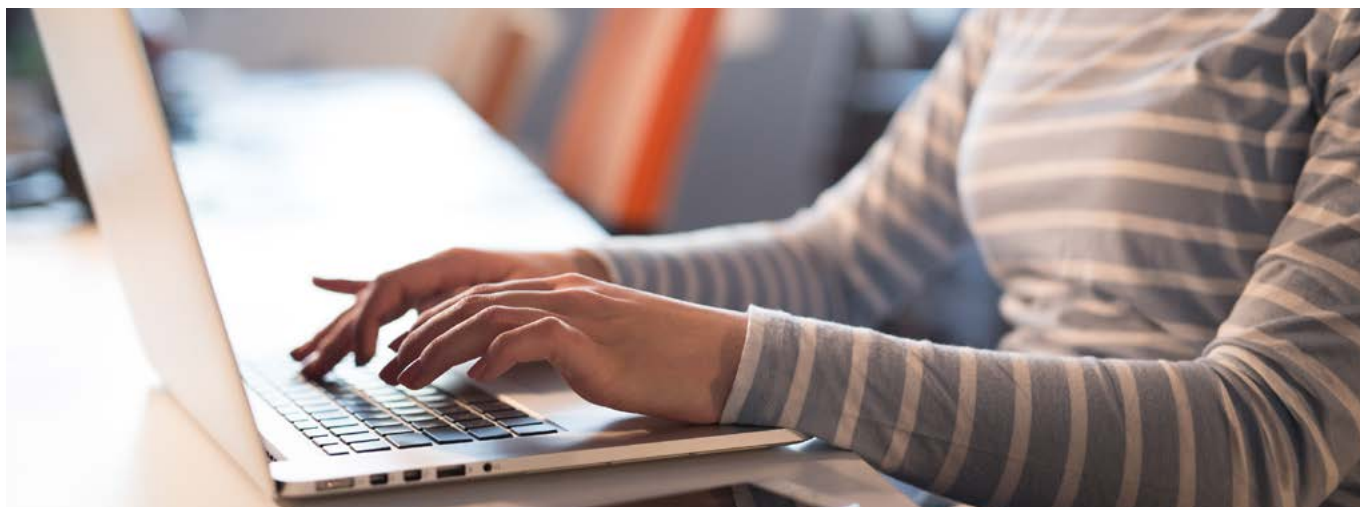
The most important part of planning is to follow your plan and, when it needs changing, change it. Keep your plan up-to-date and review your priorities every day.

You might also like to include a list of things to achieve so you can check them off as they are completed—this can remind you that you are making progress.

ACTION PLAN	
Year 11	Year 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Get a planner. » Fill it out with important dates and block out time for different activities. » Schedule time for course research including visiting several open days. » Make time to look after yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Get a planner. » Fill it out with important dates and block out time for different activities. » Schedule time for the application process as well as course research. » Make time to look after yourself.

Tertiary courses

Once you have an idea of the kinds of areas you're interested in, start looking at tertiary courses in those areas. During this process, keep your mind open to new possibilities and don't feel pressured to make an ultimate career decision right away—some people know what career to pursue early on, many others decide while completing tertiary study, or even afterwards.



There's a lot to consider when researching and comparing tertiary courses. Differences between courses include:

- » skills, capabilities and knowledge taught
- » course level and qualification
- » course structure and subjects offered
- » what the course can lead to
- » where and how the course is taught
- » opportunities while studying
- » entry requirements
- » pathways into the course, and
- » costs.

What is most important is that you look for courses that are right for you—courses that will help you reach your goals.

Look beyond the course title

The title of a course indicates the area and level of study, but it doesn't tell you what the course involves. In fact, three different courses could have the same title, but offer different subjects, teach differently and have different employment outcomes. They might also require different prerequisite studies.

Online research

You can use VTAC's CourseSearch to get a broad outline of a course and to find out about major areas of study, the length of the course, level of the course, and entry requirements (see [pages 14-15](#) for how to use CourseSearch). But to get a deeper understanding of what to expect, go to the institution's website. Here you can find out about a course's structure and subjects offered. As well as how the course is taught, where it might lead and the opportunities available to you while studying, such as exchange programs, work-integrated learning and student societies.

Face-to-face research

Don't do **all** your research online. It's important to visit institutions at events like open days, so you can see the facilities and get more information from staff and students. Also, talk to people you or your allies know and hear about their experiences.

Fixed and flexible courses

Some courses have very specific career outcomes—like nursing, accounting or commercial cookery. The structures of these courses are generally 'fixed', that is, you don't have a lot of space in your study plan to choose different subjects, rather they are set for you. Fixed courses are great if you know that specific career outcome is right for you.

Flexible courses allow you to develop strong skills and knowledge in a broader field, like business, the humanities or science. As you advance through these courses, you get to specialise in specific areas through one or two major studies. For example, marketing, history or chemistry—it depends on the course. You can find major studies listed in VTAC CourseSearch. Flexible courses also allow you to acquire a range of transferable skills that can be applied across different careers.

Where courses lead

Tertiary study offers many different outcomes. It gives you the opportunity to:

- » learn about yourself and grow as a person
- » make new friends
- » expand the way you think, your knowledge, the skills you have and your capabilities
- » discover new things through what you study and also through extracurricular activities
- » build social and professional networks
- » gain a qualification for your future career, and
- » in many cases, make connections that lead you to your first job.

Types of tertiary courses

Vocational education and training (VET)

VET focuses on practical skills 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.

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

This is the term for the system of institutions and courses that lead to professional qualifications, such as Bachelor Degrees. Higher education has a greater focus on theory than VET does, although practical skills are often taught as well. All universities and some TAFEs and independent tertiary colleges are part of the higher education system.

The different levels within the higher education system include:

- » **Undergraduate courses**— if you've finished high school, you can apply for undergraduate courses—usually **Bachelor Degrees**, but there are also some undergraduate **Diplomas** and **Associate Degrees**, which are shorter.
- » **Graduate-entry courses**—these are undergraduate degrees that are only available to applicants who have a Bachelor Degree or equivalent and include graduate-entry teaching courses. These courses are not available to Year 12 applicants.
- » **Postgraduate courses**—once you have a Bachelor Degree you are eligible to apply for postgraduate study—things like **Masters** and **Doctorates** (PhDs).

Types of tertiary institution

VTAC processes applications for three different kinds of tertiary institution. How are they different?

Universities

There are eight universities in Victoria, plus campuses for several interstate universities. Universities tend to have at least one large main campus offering a broad range of courses, plus a number of smaller campuses that often focus on one or a few particular areas. Many campuses are in the Melbourne metropolitan area, but there are also campuses at regional centres throughout Victoria. Bigger campuses tend to provide a range of services to students such as accommodation, health clinics, shops, cafes, and banking facilities—the biggest ones feel like a small town.

Some universities are dual-sector, meaning they offer both higher education and VET courses.

TAFEs and polytechnics

TAFE stands for technical and further education. TAFEs and polytechnics mainly offer VET courses with close industry ties, although they may also offer some degree and associate degree courses. Most TAFEs and polytechnics have multiple campuses, ranging in size. Bigger campuses will offer services such as cafes and fitness centres. VET courses often require more contact hours than university courses and you learn with the same group of people, so there is a chance to really get to know the campus community.

Independent tertiary colleges

There are lots of independent tertiary colleges offering both VET and higher education courses. They are usually much smaller than universities, TAFEs and polytechnics and tend to focus on particular industry areas, such as hospitality, photography, aviation, information technology or design. Independent tertiary colleges often have close industry relationships. Most don't tend to have a lot of services available on campus, but they are often located close to other businesses. Because of the smaller number of students, independent tertiary colleges can offer a close-knit community.



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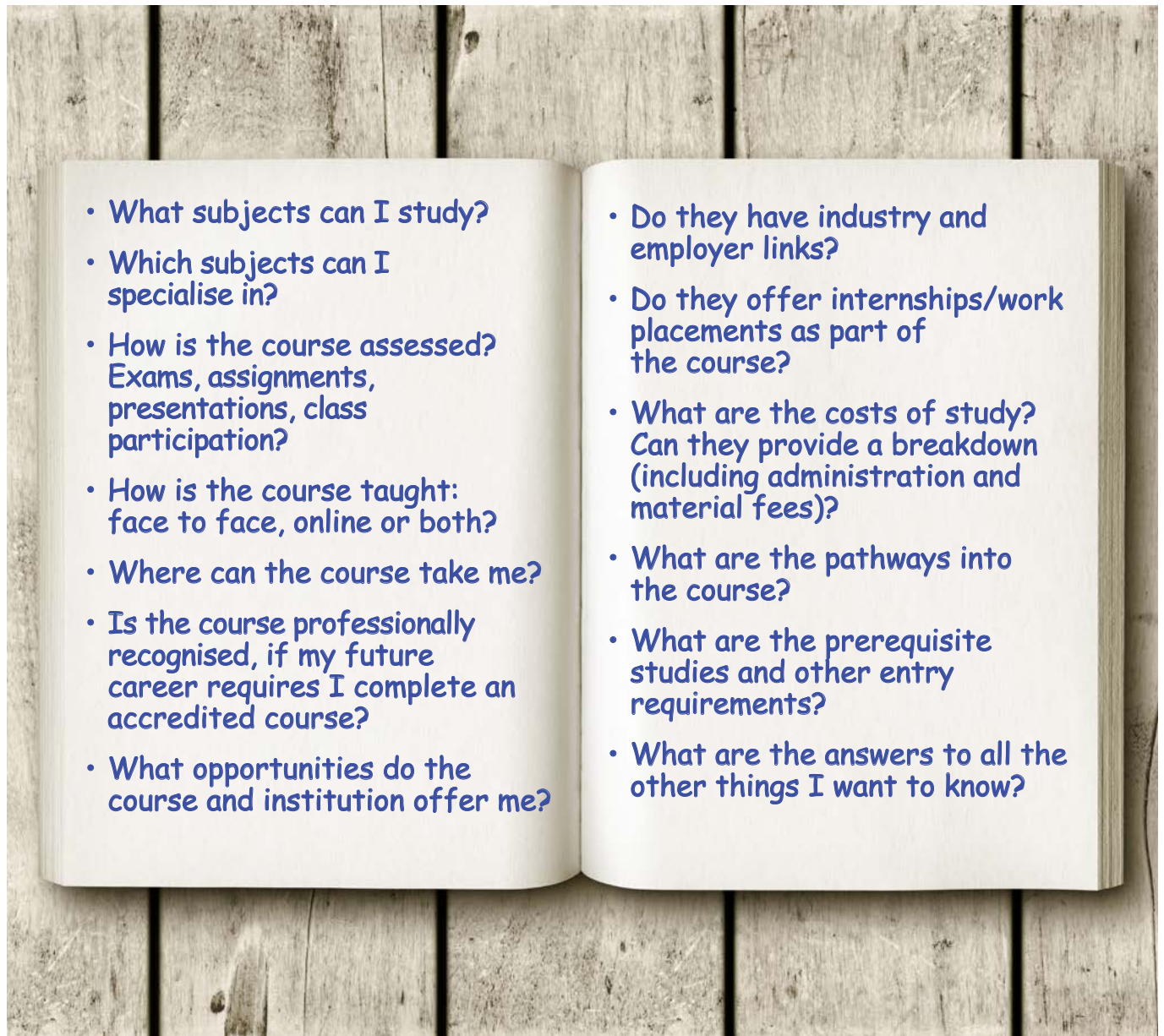


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Course research questions

For every course you seriously consider, research the answers to these crucial questions.



Your course research tool kit

Here are some essential resources for finding the courses that are right for you.

Websites

There's a wealth of information online. Every institution has a website with information about their courses. See [page 2](#) for a list of all VTAC institutions. 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.

CourseSearch

VTAC CourseSearch is an online tool for researching tertiary study options. From late July 2019, it will list all the VTAC courses that commence in 2020. Most of these courses will be available in 2021, 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. Turn the page for instructions on using CourseSearch.

VTAC Prerequisite and Course Explorer

The VTAC Prerequisite and Course Explorer lists prerequisites for courses in 2020, 2021 and 2022. It also allows you to enter your VCE program to find courses you meet the prerequisites for.

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 the device is connected to the internet. You can download the app from the App Store and Google Play.

Government sites

There are also useful government websites such as Youth Central (youthcentral.vic.gov.au), for study, training, career and life advice.

CourseSeeker (courseseeker.edu.au), allow you to discover on-campus and online courses across Australia in one place.

For all post-secondary VET courses, visit the Victorian Skills Gateway (skills.vic.gov.au/VictorianSkillsGateway).

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.

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 to see facilities and ask questions. While campus tours are small events, open days can be like a festival, with teaching staff and student services staff on hand to answer complex questions. It's a good idea to visit several open days in Year 11. This is so you have less research to do when you're in Year 12.

People

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.

Also, make good use of your school career practitioner and your other allies. Talking things through can be a great way to make decisions.

Finally, teaching staff and student services staff at institutions are the go-to for detailed information on what to expect in a particular course or at a particular institution. Open days are the best opportunity to speak to them.

Open days

Open days give you the opportunity to learn how an institution works. You can meet staff and students, see facilities, experience the on-campus culture and ask lots of questions.

See [page 2](#) for open day dates, and start planning your visits.

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How to use CourseSearch

CourseSearch lists over 1,700 courses offered by VTAC. It's a powerful search tool and contains essential information needed during the application process.

Keyword search

When you go to CourseSearch on the VTAC website or the CourseSearch app, the first thing you'll see is a text box to search for keywords. You can type more than one search term, separated by a space—CourseSearch will look for all of them.

As well as searching for your keywords in the course title, groups and qualification level fields, CourseSearch will search the fields for the name of the institution and campus. So, searching for "economics Melbourne" will bring up results where the words "economics" and "Melbourne" are found in these fields.

You can also look for parts of words, so searching for "psych" will pick up courses which mention psychology, psychiatry, psychological, and so on.

Search by major

Some courses have broad subject offerings, such as a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts. To search disciplines you can take as a major (an area of specialisation)—such as biology, media studies or politics—select the "Include majors in keyword search" tick box.

Advanced Search

The Advanced Search section—accessed by clicking "more search options"—allows you to modify your search in several ways:

1. You can refine your search results by **institution**, **campus** and **qualification level**. You should use these filters if you are getting a large number of results which you want to narrow down, or if you have a particular institution or campus in mind.
2. If you want to browse a broad range of related courses, you can use the "Area of Interest" drop-down menu.
3. You can also filter by whether you apply for the course through VTAC, or directly to the institution—by default, CourseSearch will show you both application methods.

Shortlist

If you've gone through the list of courses and find a course you are interested in, you can add it to a shortlist by clicking on the "star" button in the top right corner of the course entry. This saves the course temporarily in your browser. To view your shortlist, and to remove courses from it, click on "View Shortlist". Once you close your browser, your list will be deleted. If you want to hang on to the list, you can email it to yourself by typing your email address above the list and hitting "Send". If you're using the app, the shortlist is automatically saved on your device.

Course codes and fee types

Every course that accepts applications through VTAC has a VTAC course code. Some have more than one. These codes are extremely important when applying for courses. You find them in course entries on CourseSearch and you will use them when you apply and complete your course preference list.

What are the fee types?

The last digit of the course code (1, 2, 3 or 4) shows you the type of course fees you will be required to pay if you get an offer:

- » codes that end in 1 are government-supported university places, so you only pay part of the cost
- » codes that end in 2 are domestic full-fee places, so you pay the full cost
- » codes that end in 3 are international full-fee places, so you pay the full cost
- » codes that end in 4 are VET courses. You may have to pay full fees or you may be eligible for a government-funded place. Contact the institution for more information

Why do some courses have no course codes?

If the course does not include any VTAC course codes, it means they accept applications directly to the institution (not through VTAC).

ACTION PLAN

Year 11	Year 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Try to get a head start on course research in Year 11.» Download the VTAC App and start making a shortlist of courses that interest you.» Don't do all your research online.» Try to attend several open days.» Be aware CourseSearch information may change next year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Try to have most of your course research completed before September.» Make sure you have visited the institutions you are most interested in.» Be aware you can change your course application during change of preference, including after you receive your ATAR.

The screenshot shows a course entry page with the following sections and callouts:

- 1 Course Title**: Points to the course name.
- 2 Sector**: Points to the sector dropdown menu.
- 3 Qualification/award name: minimum duration**: Points to the qualification name and duration.
- 4 Institution**: Points to the institution name.
- 5 Campus**: Points to the campus selection.
- 6 Course code**: Points to the course code.
- 7 FEE TYPE**: Points to the fee type dropdown.
- 8 FT/PT**: Points to the full-time/part-time mode dropdown.
- 9 VTAC/DIRECT**: Points to the application method dropdown.
- 10 COURSE OUTLINE**: Points to the course outline text.
- 11 Major studies**: Points to the major studies list.
- 12 Applicant groups**: Points to the five applicant group categories.
- 13 ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS AND ADMISSION CRITERIA**: Points to the main requirements section.
- 14 At a glance**: Points to the summary table of requirements.
- 15 ATAR PROFILE**: Points to the ATAR profile table.

9 Application method **VTAC/DIRECT**
 Most courses in CourseSearch require an application through VTAC, but some require you to apply directly to the institution.

10 Course outline
 The course outline gives you a summary of the course, and subsections may include career opportunities and pathway options. However, this is just an overview—to thoroughly research the course visit the institution's webpage and visit the campus to learn about the course structure and subject offerings.

11 Major studies
 Major studies are the areas you can specialise in. Note that courses with the same name may offer different major studies.

12 Select your applicant group
 A course may have different essential requirements and admission criteria for applicants depending on your educational history and work/life experience. If you are studying and aiming to complete Year 12 this year, choose the current Year 12 group. If you are in Year 11, select this group too for an idea of what to expect for next year. Be aware these requirements and criteria may change between years.

13 Essential requirements and admission criteria
 This is where you will find prerequisites and other requirements and criteria you must meet to be eligible for selection into a course. Essential requirements are criteria for a course that are compulsory for all applicants. Essential requirements for selection and application must be completed to be considered for entry. Essential requirements for enrolment or graduation are advisory; they are not required for selection, but the course requires them for enrolment or completion of the course. Admission criteria may only apply to certain types of applicant, or may not be compulsory.

14 At a glance
 The 'At a glance' table summarises the essential requirements and admission criteria for the applicant group you have chosen, and also tells you which ones are compulsory.

15 ATAR profile
 Courses that use the ATAR in selection publish an ATAR profile. See page 19 for more information on how to read and interpret the data.

Reading a course entry

- 1 Course title**
 The course title tells you the area of study.
- 2 Sector** **Sector**
 This tells you at what level the qualification is: vocational education and training, higher education, or higher education graduate-entry (for people who already have a Bachelor's degree).
- 3 Qualification/award name**
 The qualification/award name is the formal title of the course including the level of study (e.g. Certificate, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor's degree). However, it is really important to look beyond the title when researching a course, to ensure it meets your expectations.
- 4 Minimum duration**
 The minimum duration is the shortest time in which you can complete the course. Often this is as a full-time student. For part-time students it will typically take longer.

- 5 Institution and campus**
 This tells you which institution the course is offered by and, importantly, which of their campuses it is offered at. Some institutions have campuses all around Victoria, so as a part of your research, make sure you're able to get to/move to the campus.
- 6 Course code**
 This is important to note when you put in your application.
- 7 Fee type** **FEE TYPE**
 Fee types tell you if the course is government subsidised or if you are liable to pay for the entire course. Fee amounts can vary dramatically so this is a big thing to consider as a part of your research.
- 8 Mode** **FT/PT**
 FT tells you the course is offered on a full-time basis. PT tells you the course is offered on a part-time basis. Some courses will be restricted to one mode or the other.

Eligibility

To be considered for a course you must meet eligibility requirements.

Understanding eligibility

To be considered for courses offered through VTAC, you need to meet a number of eligibility requirements.

1. Residency requirements

To apply for a course through VTAC, you must be:

- » an Australian citizen, an Australian permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen, or
- » a temporary resident studying an Australian Year 12 or the International Baccalaureate (IB), or
- » living overseas, studying an Australian Year 12 and planning to obtain a student visa, or
- » living in New Zealand, completing the IB and planning to obtain a student visa.

2. 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 study at Certificate IV or higher.

3. Institutional requirements

Some institutions have additional requirements such as English language requirements or a minimum age for entry into their courses. Check the institution pages on the VTAC website for details (vtac.edu.au/institutions).

4. Course requirements

Course requirements are listed under each course entry in CourseSearch. They can be found under the headings 'Essential requirements' and 'Admission criteria'. See [page 15](#) for an example course entry.

Prerequisite studies

Essential requirements and admission criteria include the prerequisite studies required for entry to courses in the next intake. If you are in Year 11, see Prerequisite and Course Explorer for prerequisite studies for courses that commence in 2021.

See the [following page](#) for more information on prerequisites.

Select your category: Current Year 12 or recent secondary graduate

Essential requirements and admission criteria depend upon the education you have previously completed and so you will need to select the category that applies to you. Year 12s applying for courses that commence in 2020 should select 'Recent secondary education (current year 12 students)'.

If you are in Year 11 select this category too, as an indicator of what you may need to complete to apply in the following year. However, be aware essential requirements and admission criteria can change between years, so check again next year.

Essential requirements

Essential requirements need to be completed either before applying, before enrolling or during the course. For example, you may be required to complete a first aid certificate before enrolling or a police check before a work placement.

Admission criteria

Admission criteria details what will be considered when selecting applicants for entry into a course. The section 'Selection' on [page 18](#) explains these.

ACTION PLAN	
Year 11	Year 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Use CourseSearch to find essential requirements and admission criteria for courses that commence in 2020, but be aware they might change for the year you apply.» Use Prerequisite and Course Explorer to look up prerequisite studies required for courses in 2021.» If you are thinking of discontinuing a study in Year 12, use Prerequisite and Course Explorer to see how this will affect the number and type of courses you are eligible for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Use CourseSearch to search all courses on offer through VTAC.» For the courses you are interested in, read their course entries thoroughly.» Course entries include essential requirements and admission criteria.» Ensure you meet the eligibility requirements for every course on your preference list..

Prerequisites

Prerequisites are studies you need to have completed to be eligible for selection into a course.

Why you must check prerequisites

You have probably looked up prerequisite studies before, when you selected your Year 11 and 12 studies. As you get closer to finding your ideal course, and your other course preferences, you will need to check the prerequisites for every course that interests you. If you don't have a prerequisite for a course, you are not eligible for selection.

If you're in Year 11 you may also be thinking about which Unit 3 and 4 studies to complete. This might mean stopping a study after Unit 1 and 2. Before you decide what to stop, you may want to check if and how not taking a study affects the courses you are eligible for.

Where to find prerequisites

The prerequisite studies listed in CourseSearch are for the next intake into a course. By the time course applications open in August, CourseSearch will be updated for courses commencing in 2020. Prerequisites can be found under 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria' in each course entry.

Prerequisite and Course Explorer is another tool, specifically designed for looking up prerequisites. It contains prerequisites for course that commence in 2020, 2021 or 2022.

Minimum study scores

All Unit 3 and 4 prerequisites have a minimum VCE study score that you need to meet. This is the **VCE study score**, not the scaled study score.

While prerequisite studies are listed two years ahead of time, the minimum study score for each prerequisite is set in the year you apply.

Prerequisite statements

Prerequisites statements do vary: some courses specify particular studies, others list a group you must complete one or two studies from. You should also check the level at which studies must be completed. The table below explains some common prerequisite statements.

Using Prerequisite and Course Explorer

The Prerequisite and Course Explorer is a version of CourseSearch which allows you to enter the VCE studies in your actual or proposed Year 12 program, to check your eligibility for courses based on their prerequisite studies.

Whole VCE program

With this option, enter a program of Year 12 studies—these can be the actual studies you are studying, or if you are in Year 11, studies you are thinking of taking for Year 12.

Pick the year in which the tertiary courses will commence, so current Year 12 students would select 2020. If you are in Year 11 choose 2021.

Press the 'list courses' button to see the list of courses you will be eligible for if you successfully complete and pass the studies you have listed. The number of courses will usually be very large, and includes courses with no prerequisite studies.

Comparison

You can save this search profile, and compare it to another search to see the effect of adding or removing studies from your program. For example, removing a study will mean you will no longer be eligible for a course which requires that study as a prerequisite. Conversely, adding a study will add any courses which require that study to the list of courses you are eligible for.

Single VCE studies

If you are studying a particular VCE study and you want to see a list of courses which list that study as a prerequisite, choose the 'Single VCE Subject' option.

CourseSearch

vtac.edu.au/CourseSearch

Prerequisite and Course Explorer

vtac.edu.au/explorer

Example prerequisite statements from CourseSearch

Units 1 and 2: satisfactory completion in two units (any study combination) of maths: General Mathematics, Maths: Mathematical Methods or Maths: Specialist Mathematics or Units 3 and 4: any Mathematics.

A study you must have successfully completed at Units 1 and 2 level or Units 3 and 4 level.

Units 3 and 4: a study score of at least 25 in English (EAL) or at least 20 in English other than EAL.

A study you must have successfully completed and obtained a minimum VCE study score in.

Prerequisites: Units 3 and 4: any English; Units 3 and 4: two of Biology, Chemistry, Health and Human Development, any Mathematics, Physical Education, Physics or Psychology.

Two studies you must have completed from a specified group of studies.

Selection

Meeting eligibility requirements 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.

Understanding selection

The selection process is completed by institutions—not VTAC. The process is competitive and involves:

- » an assessment of your capacity for success in a course, and
- » ranking you against others who have applied to the course.

A range of criteria is used to assess your attributes and the criteria can change from course to course. These are listed in the 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria' sections of each course entry in CourseSearch.

Depending on the course, these criteria might include an assessment of your previous academic performance. For Year 12 applicants, this is represented by the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Not all courses use the ATAR in selection, and many use the ATAR alongside the assessment of other attributes such as:

- » a positive attitude towards study
- » a passion for the chosen discipline
- » discipline-specific knowledge
- » interpersonal skills, and/or
- » artistic talent.

The ATAR in selection

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is designed specifically to assist some tertiary institutions in selecting applicants for courses. The ATAR is a rank, not a score. Therefore, your ATAR represents the percentage of the Year 12 age group that you performed higher than in your Year 12 studies. Your ATAR is used as one indicator of your capacity to succeed in a course and it is also a tool for comparing your potential with that of other applicants.

Minimum ATAR

A handful of courses set a minimum ATAR. If the minimum ATAR is listed as a prerequisite, you must achieve this ATAR or above to be eligible for selection.

If a 'minimum ATAR including adjustment factors' is cited elsewhere in the course entry, you must meet the adjusted ATAR or above, either through your ATAR or your ATAR plus adjustment factors, such as SEAS, regional and subject adjustments.

Subject adjustments

These are upward adjustments added to the aggregate of your ATAR for specified studies. In some cases, different points are awarded to the aggregate according to the VCE study score you achieve in the study. Subject adjustments are course specific and taking these studies is not compulsory, but because they receive an adjustment they can help improve your chances of receiving an offer.

Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS)

Many institutions participate in the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS). SEAS allows institutions to:

- » consider difficult circumstances that have had an impact on your study when making selection decisions
- » identify applicants from under-represented groups when making selection decisions.

Assessment of a SEAS application may result in upward adjustments to your ATAR for selection into a course.

Other attributes considered in selection

The ATAR is not the only tool used in selection. To assess other attributes, such as a positive attitude towards study, a passion for the chosen discipline, discipline-specific knowledge, interpersonal skills, and/or artistic talent, other assessment tools are used. These may include:

- » an interview
- » a test
- » completion of an additional form
- » an audition, and/or
- » a folio and folio presentation.

The requirement to complete any of the above, or other tasks, is listed under 'admission criteria' or 'essential requirements'. Check with institutions for advice on preparing for these tasks, and check deadlines for these tasks—some might be due before VTAC applications close.

For advice on preparing for auditions and folio presentations see our fact sheet (vtac.edu.au/publications).

Non-compulsory requirements

There are some items that are not compulsory but can help strengthen your application. This may include the personal statement—an opportunity to outline things like work experience, motivation to study and community leadership. Again, check course entries to see if these apply to the courses you are applying for.

ACTION PLAN

Year 11 and 12

- » Entry to courses is competitive and a range of attributes are considered.
- » The ATAR is only one tool used for selection. Look up admission criteria in CourseSearch for courses commencing in 2020. This may change for 2021.
- » For courses that use the ATAR in selection, look up the lowest selection rank in each course's ATAR profile. This gives you an indication of the minimum selection standard required for entry into that course. The published lowest selection rank is from the last selection period and can vary up or down from year to year.

ATAR profile

Courses that use the ATAR in selection publish an ATAR profile. This is a summary of selection data from the previous selection round.

The profile shows the highest, median and lowest ATARs of applicants to whom offers were made: firstly for the 'raw' or unadjusted ATAR before any adjustments such as SEAS or subject bonuses are applied, and secondly for the selection rank—the ATAR after adjustments are applied.

The ATAR profile displayed on VTAC CourseSearch entries is the data for the main offer round in January. Institutions may also publish further tables on their websites which adjust the profiles based on subsequent offers made through VTAC or directly to the institution.

Courses which make a small number of offers based on the ATAR may publish "<5 offers", "-" (not published) or the unadjusted ATAR range only, as the data for a small number of offers is not meaningful.

The lowest selection rank

The piece of data in an ATAR profile that is most useful to applicants is the 'lowest selection rank'. This represents the minimum selection rank (ATAR or adjusted ATAR) needed to have been sure of selection into that course in that selection period (if course requirements including prerequisites were also met).

Lowest selection ranks are not set ahead of selection—they are produced as a result of the selection process. Applicants can use the lowest selection rank from the previous year as a broad indicator of how competitive entry into a course was that year, and it can assist them to evaluate their chances of an offer in the next selection period. Keep in mind, that if your ATAR is below the lowest selection rank, it may still be worth listing this course as a preference as you might be eligible for adjustment factors such as interviews, tests, auditions, and/or special consideration for access and equity schemes, and the lowest selection rank might be lower in the year you apply than the year before.

The ATAR profile provides an array of other data which you can read about in The ATAR Profile Explained fact sheet (vtac.edu.au/publications).

ATAR PROFILE

Course code	Campus	ATAR (excluding adjustment factors)			Selection rank (ATAR plus any adjustments)		
		Highest	Median	Lowest	Highest	Median	Lowest
1234567891	City	81.70	62.20	53.05	89.75	69.95	60.70



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Planning pathways

Planning pathways is an important part of your course research. It helps you prepare other options for if you don't get the course offer you hope for.



Sometimes, when travelling, getting from one place to the other involves taking a direct path. But at other times it's not so straightforward. You can't always travel directly to your destination—you might need to switch transport, or travel in one direction before heading in another. You may even need to make a stopover in another place. Likewise, when it comes to courses and careers, sometimes you'll have to take some extra steps if you want to reach your goal.

Why plan pathways?

Because entry into tertiary courses is competitive, there is always the chance you'll miss out on a place in the course you want. Fortunately, you get more than one shot at applying to tertiary courses and there are often many ways to achieve your goals.

If you do some research before you submit your VTAC application, you can ensure you use your preference list to include "pathway courses"—courses that have previously been less competitive than your ideal course to gain entry to.

The idea of a pathway is you use your success in your first course to transfer into your ideal course, or another course that helps you meet your goals. Therefore, your first priority is to do your best in your pathway course, because your level of success will be considered when you apply for your next course.

Pathway courses might share similarities with your ideal course, and lead to similar outcomes. They might also allow you to complete some of the same subjects as your ideal course, allowing you to gain "credit" if you succeed in transferring over.

No matter what, when selecting pathway courses, an important thing to consider is if you would be happy completing that course, should you not succeed in transferring to your ideal course.

Pathway options

VET pathways

The VET system is designed so that qualifications in the same discipline from Certificate I level up to Advanced Diploma level build upon each other. If you aren't confident you'll be accepted into an advanced diploma straight away, you should also apply for the diploma or a certificate level of the course. Once that is successfully completed, you may be able to immediately commence the next level.

VET to undergraduate study

VET study can lead to higher education undergraduate study in several ways.

Pathways with advanced standing (credit)

Many undergraduate courses will recognise VET study in a related area and offer advanced standing. This means the undergraduate course recognises some, or all, of the VET study as equivalent to some of the undergraduate course content and awards you 'credit' towards your degree.

Some VET providers have guaranteed agreements with higher education providers regarding these pathways, but that doesn't mean you have to choose that VET provider to get the advanced standing. Speak to the higher education provider to research other options.

Pathways without advanced standing

There are many more pathways from VET to undergraduate study that don't involve advanced standing. Some students aren't sure of what they ultimately want to study and complete VET to try out an area of study. Or they have multiple interests and plan to obtain a VET qualification in one area and a higher education qualification in a completely different area. Again, when taking this pathway your academic achievement in your VET study will be considered when applying for your next course.

Undergraduate pathways

A large number of students transfer between undergraduate courses—at the same institution or between institutions. If you research undergraduate course structures you will notice courses in similar areas might share subjects. Another thing to look out for when researching pathway courses is whether you can take elective studies from other areas.

If you are planning a pathway strategy between undergraduate courses, look into how many subjects from your ideal course you can study as a part of your pathway course. This way you will get a head start in completing your ideal course.

Undergraduate to postgraduate or graduate pathways

Another pathway is from undergraduate to postgraduate or graduate courses. This pathway is commonly used when planning to complete a flexible undergraduate course to get a broad education in a range of subjects, before specialising in a profession through a fixed graduate or postgraduate course.

Another undergraduate to postgraduate pathway is followed by those pursuing research careers, often involving a PhD.

Other pathway options

» Bridging courses—these help fill the gaps in your education if you need to meet certain subject requirements for a course.

» Foundation courses—these help you develop important study skills like research and essay writing. These courses are often tailored to include subjects from the area you ultimately want to study. Sometimes they count as the first year of the course you want to do.

» Single studies—sometimes you can take a single subject from a VET or undergraduate course without committing to the full qualification. Later, if you enrol in the full course, you can apply to get credit for the subject.

Don't have a prerequisite?

If you've finally found a course you really want to do, but haven't completed the prerequisites, don't despair. Talk to the institution about how you can complete equivalent subjects.

Four ways to complete prerequisite equivalents:

- » Bridging courses are offered by some institutions. These are designed specifically to allow you to complete a prerequisite equivalent.
- » If your ideal course is at undergraduate level, ask about other undergraduate courses that will allow you to complete the prerequisite equivalent while also completing subjects that will contribute towards your ideal course.

- » Single study enrolments are another way to complete a prerequisite. This is when you are only enrolled in a subject, not a full course.
- » If you need to develop your study skills while completing a prerequisite, a foundation course might be right for you.

Don't have an ATAR?

If you complete VCAL or an unassessed VCE and don't have an ATAR, there are some VET courses you can apply to. If you want to keep studying after that, you can use your achievements in those courses to apply to other VET courses. If you want to ultimately complete an undergraduate degree you will need to demonstrate your academic potential through your VET study. Speak to the providers you are interested in for advice on planning these pathways.

What to research

These are important things to research if you are planning a pathway strategy.

1. The grades/level of success you need to achieve in your first course to transfer to your ideal course.
2. How much of the first course you need to complete before you can hope to transfer.
3. Any subjects you can study in the first course that will provide you with credit towards the course you want to transfer to.
4. The different courses—including those at other institutions—that students have previously used as pathways to your ideal course.
5. That you have the prerequisite studies (or are obtaining the equivalents as a part of your pathway strategy) for your ideal course.
6. What costs are involved? Some pathway courses are part of the HELP scheme, while others charge up-front fees.
7. What if you change your mind midway? What other options are available?

Make sure you get everything in writing, especially if the institution makes any claims about guaranteed entry to a course. It's important to always get the facts so you can evaluate the best options for you.

ACTION PLAN

Year 11 and 12

- » Research pathway options for the courses you most want to get into.
- » Look for pathways that include credit or advanced standing as well as pathways that don't.
- » If you haven't completed a prerequisite study, research pathways through which you can complete an equivalent unit of study.
- » Only plan a pathway through a course you would be happy to complete—not everyone is successful in transferring between courses.

Researching campus life

Tertiary study is more than just going to classes. It's also about your lifestyle: opportunities for you to meet new people and explore other interests. When choosing a course, keep in mind that the campus size, location, services and opportunities available can make a big difference to your experience as a student.



When choosing which studies you want to pursue next year, it's easy to get caught up in course information without even thinking about where you will be studying and whether this campus or that institution is right for you.

Most institutions offer a range of free or low-cost services to their student and staff community, because they know that studying is more than doing a course—it's also an opportunity to enrich your life with new experiences, find support when you need it, and stay motivated to successfully complete your goals.

Being involved in campus life is a great way to explore all of your interests. Maybe you're studying a maths degree, but you also really enjoy being on stage: a student theatre club could be perfect for you.

If you're thinking of studying online, make sure you understand which services will be available to you. Can you access support services online, or will you need to attend a campus?

What types of services are available?

Most institutions and student associations offer a range of services across several areas, including

- » welfare support, for those struggling with financial and other life pressures
- » study support, which is particularly useful when getting used to the kind of assessment tasks you're asked to complete (they can be very different to those at school)
- » public services, such as a bank or post office, and
- » other support services such as accommodation, employment assistance and childcare facilities.

Not all institutions offer all services, so depending on your situation, it's worth checking out a few things before adding them to your course preference list.

Disability support: If you have a disability, whether it be physical, mental, temporary or permanent, most institutions will have a range of support services to assist with your learning. These services may include special seating arrangements, support

with tutorials, sign language interpreters, adaptive technologies, note-takers or disability assistants. Speak with the institution's disability liaison officer who will create a plan and provide you with information on how the program will be delivered and assessed to take into account your particular needs.

Indigenous support: Most institutions have a dedicated Indigenous centre providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with cultural and academic support.

Religious areas: Religion is a part of some people's everyday lives, and in respect of this many institutions provide areas for reflection and ritual.

Counselling: Counselling is available to students who need help with academic, personal and work issues that may be affecting their study and life. These are conducted one-on-one by professionals and are confidential and often free. If you do struggle with your study, seek help sooner than later. These counsellors can often help you work out a plan to overcome such hurdles.

Clubs and societies: Interested in chess, singing, languages or religion? Want to join a sports team? Appreciate chocolate or anime? Larger institutions often have clubs and societies you can join to enrich your social life by meeting others with the same interests. Even if the institution you're going to doesn't have these facilities on site, many will have affiliations with local groups or clubs which will welcome your participation.

Financial and employment support: Often studying starts out well but circumstances can change. For some, it can be a struggle to make ends meet. If this is a concern of yours, then it's important to choose an institution which can provide you with support and advice to help meet your financial obligations. This support can include help with budgeting, or short-term loans to cover unexpected costs. Longer term help can involve helping you apply for scholarships, or finding part-time work—you may even get a job on-campus!

Banks, post offices, and other services: Some larger campuses have businesses operating on campus, so you can get all of your errands done between classes.

Cafes and bars: Most campuses have at least one café so you can refuel between classes. Plus, restaurants and bars on campus make it easy to hang out with friends after class.

To find out more about the types of services offered at institutions, check out the VTAC website and institutional websites. Attend open days and orientation to get a feel for the institution, and speak to staff and students about the services available—you'll be spending a lot of time there, so make sure it's the right choice for you.

How will I get there?

Found a great sounding course at an institution that suits you? Excellent! The next questions to ask is 'can I get there?'

Transport

Is your preferred institution accessible by public transport and is that mode of transport convenient for you? Online maps can help you find railway stations, and bus and tram stops in the area. If you're studying a full-time undergraduate course, you may also be eligible for a concession myki, which entitles you to a 50 per cent discount on public transport.

If public transport isn't an option for you, what are the cycling and parking options? Is there on-street parking available, or does the institution offer a designated car park? Will finding a spot for your car be difficult after, say 9am, or should you be arriving early? What are the costs of parking your car, on street or in the car park? Furthermore, they might have a carpooling system and bike lockers and showers.

Each institution will have sections on their websites outlining public transport and parking options that can be accessed through a quick online search.

Accommodation

For some, undertaking tertiary study will require moving away from home. Many institutions offer on-campus accommodation with different options to satisfy different needs. Anybody interested in living on-campus should contact their chosen institutions for advice. On-campus accommodation usually fills quickly, so don't leave organising your stay until the last minute – you don't want to miss out.

On-campus accommodation isn't for everybody, some prefer to rent privately or enter a share-house with friends. Most institutions will have residential services that can help you navigate the accommodation options. They might even help you find other students in your situation.

The financial aspect of living away from home is a significant consideration. Search for budgeting advice on different institutions' pages, and for information on study support, see the [next page](#).

ACTION PLAN

Year 11 and 12

- » Visit institutions you are considering studying at.
- » Find out about student life, support services, facilities and services.
- » Plan how you would travel to each institution you are considering, or where you would live and the costs.

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What does tertiary study cost?

When researching courses, you need to consider how you will meet the costs of tertiary study. There are several government programs designed to support students while they are working towards their qualification.

Course fees

Commonwealth supported places (CSP)

Most people enrolling in a university course straight out of high school will go into a Commonwealth supported place (CSP). These are offered at all public universities (and a few private higher education providers) across the country to domestic students. CSPs are subsidised by the Australian Government—the remainder is paid by the student and is known as the student contribution. Many students will defer this payment via HECS-HELP.

The amount of your student contribution, which accrues each semester, depends on your study load. It also depends on the area of study—the government classifies courses into three bands, each of which has a different annual contribution amount. To see the current amounts, search for 'student contribution' on the Study Assist website.

To be eligible for a CSP you must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or the holder of a permanent visa.

CSPs have a course code ending with 1.

Skills First

Skills First is a Victorian Government initiative to subsidise certain courses, based on the needs and priorities of industry and government. The subsidy is only available to Australian and New Zealand citizens, or holders of a permanent Australian visa. You are eligible for a place under Skills First if you are under 20 years of age. If you are 20 or over, further criteria apply.

Courses covered by Skills First have a course code ending with 4. This means if you take up an offer for a Type 4 course, your eligibility for a subsidy will be assessed by the institution at enrolment.

For more information about Skills First, visit <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/funding>

Free TAFE for Priority Courses

The 2019/20 Victorian State Budget commits funding towards free TAFE courses in priority areas.

The program covers tuition fees for students who are eligible for government-subsidised training.

For more information, visit: freetafe.vic.gov.au

Full-fee paying places

Full-fee paying courses are not subsidised by the government, so you will need to pay the full cost of the course.

Full-fee paying places have course codes ending in 2 (domestic students), 3 (international students) and some of the courses ending in 4 will be full-fee paying if you're not eligible for a government subsidy.

The fees payable for a course will be set by that institution. You should check their website for information about fee amounts.

Paying your course fees

Pay upfront

If you are not eligible for one of the loan programs below, or you do not wish to defer payment of your fees, you will need to pay the course fees upfront. Usually, the tertiary institution will issue you an invoice at the start of each semester for the subjects you are taking in that period. Check with the institution for more information about upfront payments.

Loan programs

HECS-HELP

Students with a Commonwealth supported place (CSP) can choose to defer the payment of their student contribution by using HECS-HELP (Higher Education Loan Program). Under the HELP system, the government loans you the amount needed to cover your student contribution. When you enter the workforce and your income reaches the repayment threshold, the Australian Taxation Office will deduct regular amounts from your salary via the tax system to repay the debt. There is no interest charged on the HELP amount owed, however the amount is indexed to the CPI (Consumer Price Index).

HECS-HELP is available to Australian citizens and holders of a permanent humanitarian visa. New Zealand citizens without Australian citizenship are not eligible for HELP loans unless they meet Special Category Visa requirements, having entered Australia as a dependent child and been a resident in Australia for at least ten years.

FEE-HELP

FEE-HELP is a loan program which covers the tuition fees for approved full-fee higher education courses which do not offer Commonwealth supported places.

Eligibility rules are similar to those for HECS-HELP, but the program is also open to permanent visa holders undertaking bridging study for overseas-trained professionals. There is a lifetime FEE-HELP limit in place, so there is only a certain amount of fees you can defer under the scheme.

VET Student Loans

Not all courses in the VET system are subsidised, or you may not meet the eligibility requirements for a subsidy. However, approved courses may be covered by the Commonwealth Government scheme, VET Student Loans. Like FEE-HELP, this is an income contingent loan which allows you to defer payment of course fees and repay them later. Amounts borrowed under VET Student Loans are applied to your lifetime FEE-HELP balance.

Other costs

As well as living expenses, tertiary study comes with costs associated with study such as purchasing textbooks and lab materials. You can learn more about expenses like these by asking the institution, or any current students you may know.

Additionally, universities charge a services and amenities fee which covers the cost of student services run by the institution or the student union. You can also choose to add this fee to your HELP loan amount if you cannot pay it up front and are eligible for the loan scheme.

Student income support

There are some financial support programs available to students undertaking tertiary study. While most are government based, some scholarships are administered by non-government organisations.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available for a range of reasons, including financial need. See [page 41](#) for information on applying for scholarships.

Youth Allowance

Youth Allowance payments are made to people aged between 16 and 24, enrolled in full-time study or a full-time apprenticeship, or looking for full-time work.

ABSTUDY

For Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians enrolled in an approved course or apprenticeship and not receiving any other financial assistance.

Pensioner Education Supplement

Those in receipt of payments from the Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans' Affairs may be eligible for the Pensioner Education Supplement to help cover the costs of study.

Student Start-up Loan

The Student Start-up Loan is a \$1,077 loan for eligible students who get Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY. It is a tax-free loan that can be paid up to two times per year and will be added to your HECS-HELP balance.

For more information about HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP and VET Student Loans visit studyassist.gov.au

For information about Victorian Government VET subsidies visit: <https://www.skills.vic.gov.au/victorianskillsgateway/Students/Pages/vtg-eligibility-indicator.aspx>

ACTION PLAN

Year 11 and 12

- » Look up the cost of each course you are considering.
- » Consider how much money you will need to live day-to-day and the income you will need.
- » Research scholarships and how to apply for them.
- » Research other opportunities to receive income.
- » Visit the Study Assist website if you are researching CSPs and Commonwealth loans.



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Research careers

Whether or not you know the career you want to pursue, it's recommended that you research where courses can lead and what the employment opportunities are for graduates.

To research careers visit MyFuture (myfuture.edu.au)

For projected demand for jobs in different industries visit Job Outlook (joboutlook.gov.au)

Graduate Careers Australia conducts and publishes research on graduate employment outcomes and opportunities (graduatecareers.com.au)

Get the latest information that will help you make decisions about your future career and your life beyond school (careershub.vtac.edu.au)

Some secondary students know exactly what career they want, many others work that out as they complete their tertiary education—by studying a flexible course in a broad field and narrowing down their best options as they go.

We recommend you begin your career research by investigating what a career involves, what the current and projected employment opportunities are, what the pay and

working conditions are like, how these might change during your career and what qualifications are required or preferred. The websites listed above will assist you to find the answers to many of these questions.

We also recommend you make the most of work experience opportunities and talk to people—keep reading to see how this can be done.

SERVICES

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- Job search skills
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Find a 30-minute mentor

The opportunity to talk to someone about their career can support your decision making. To make the most of it, prepare your questions before you begin.

When you're trying to decide on a course, job or career to pursue, talking to someone who works in the industry can be a big help. Finding out about everyday life on the job can help you focus on the right pathways and opportunities. If you're not sure about your plans or just want to get more detailed information, think about asking someone in the industry for a few minutes of their time on the phone or over coffee. The conversation could change your life!

Here are some tips for setting up your own interview.

Pick your target

The first step is to figure out who you want to talk to. Research organisations and businesses you might want to work for when you've completed your studies, and let friends and family know that you're looking for people to talk to. Once you've got a few ideas, see if you can find contact details for the people you'd like to interview. If you don't have anyone in mind, the human resources department of big organisations can sometimes help.

Introduce yourself

Send a short email to your target explaining who you are and why you want to talk to them. If someone gave you their contact details, make sure to mention it. Always be polite—remember you're asking for a favour—and proofread your letter because it's true that first impressions count. Here's an example:

Dear Ms/Mr [surname],

I am a student at [school/institution] where I am studying [school year or course]. When I finish my studies I plan to work in [industry]/find a role as a [job title]. I am trying to learn as much as I can about the field and [name of your contact] suggested you would be a good person to speak to. I am wondering if I could please ask you a few questions, either over a coffee or on the phone. It would only take around 30 minutes and I would really value your insight.

Thank you for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

[your name]

Plan your questions

Once you've made a time to talk, think about the questions you want to ask. List ten or twelve questions and highlight the ones you most want to ask and plan to ask them first—so that you don't miss them if you run out of time. Do your research beforehand so you don't waste time asking about things you can find out on your own.

Be safe

Never agree to meet with anyone without taking a responsible adult with you.

Be professional

Be on time, dress neatly and be polite. If you meet in person, it's your job to pay for the coffee! Be respectful of the fact that they are busy and may have other engagements—don't drag out the conversation if it looks like they need to move on. And don't forget to thank them for their time.

Follow up

Send a thank you note after the interview and let them know if anything in particular helped you or if you tried something they suggested. People like to know that their advice has been useful.

Lots of people in the workforce are happy to share their knowledge with those who are new to their industries. While professionals are busy people and you may get some knock backs, with perseverance you should be chatting with an expert before long.



Australian Government

StudyAssist

How will you pay for your study?

Visit studyassist.gov.au to find out your options.

Pathway in focus: Trent Mahoney, **landscape designer**



Photo: Trent Mahoney

Lots of people study at TAFE before moving on to university, but landscape designer Trent Mahoney flipped the script – after completing his degree in landscape architecture, he decided to go back to basics and take on an apprenticeship.

Studying at both university and TAFE gave Trent a wide variety of skills and he says that starting with the degree really enhanced his learning during the apprenticeship.

"My degree taught me discipline, commitment, and vital design skills like understanding space, scale, functionality and movement within a space. That helped me understand how space works when I did my apprenticeship," he says.

"The apprenticeship taught me how to build those spaces. I'm really glad I decided to do an apprenticeship later in life!"

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2002-2007

Year 7-11, Koonung Secondary College

The first stop on Trent Mahoney's study pathway was switching from school to TAFE to complete his VCE. "I felt that VCE cut out important social and life learning and focused too much on academia," Trent says.

Year 12, Box Hill TAFE

Year 12 subjects: English, Multimedia, Photography, Visual Communication

"Year 12 at TAFE was awesome. I made new friendships, and there was less pressure."

2009-2012

Bachelor of Design (Landscape Architecture), RMIT University

Trent worked in a plant nursery throughout high school, so he knew exactly what he wanted to study. Even though his ATAR was only 49, Trent had a strong folio of landscape plans and garden photography. That and his enthusiasm for the industry and work experience got him into his first preference – the Bachelor of Design (Landscape Design) at RMIT.

Four years of intense study later, Trent felt like he needed to get his hands dirty again. "For me, the degree focused too much on the functionality of civil and public space, and not enough on domestic landscape design and construction know-how," he says. "My passion has always been about creating little oases in people's gardens."

2014-2017

Certificate III in Landscape Construction (by apprenticeship), Swinburne Wantirna/ Avoca

He took a breather for a year before embarking on an apprenticeship with Avoca Landscape Construction, which included a Certificate III in Landscape Construction at Swinburne. For the first three years Trent studied on campus for one day each week, and worked full-time in the final year of the apprenticeship.

Trent's hard work paid off when he won Apprentice of the Year at the Landscaping Victoria Industry Awards in 2017. During the final year of his apprenticeship, he also had the chance to work on an exhibit called 'I See Wild' by Phillip Withers at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show which went on to win two awards.

"Winning that award still makes me so happy," he says. "I felt like I had won at life, the life I had been working so hard to build."

2018

Career and the future

Trent has enjoyed a few more career highlights since then. In 2018 he travelled to the UK where he joined the teams on two garden show exhibits – one called 'On Point' for the Ascot Spring Garden Show, and another called 'Skin Deep' for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Working on the Chelsea Flower Show had been one of Trent's lifelong dreams.

These days Trent is working on his next big project – building his own business. His business, Reflective Scaping, focuses on creating special outdoor spaces for people's homes. He wants to keep entering (and winning!) garden shows, and is well on the way to growing a thriving career.

"The best thing is knowing how high I set my goals and worked towards them," he says.

Pathway in focus: Marwa Ahmed, the road to dentistry



Photo: Marwa Ahmed

Initially Shepparton high school student Marwa Ahmed thought she wanted to become a nurse, but after experiencing placements with a wide variety of allied health professionals like physiotherapy and paediatrics, she discovered an interest in dentistry.

"I was never interested in dentistry because everyone is afraid of the dentist," Marwa says. "But once I got into my dental placement, I loved it there. I love the way they treat their patients, and how they help patients deal with their emotions. Some of the other students went in wanting to be dentists, but came out wanting to be paramedics or nurses. It gave us exposure and played a vital role in choosing our preferences."

While her fellow VCE students were in class, Marwa was busy learning how to take blood samples.

A large advertisement for CQUniversity Australia. On the right, a young woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black blazer over a blue patterned top, smiles while holding a folder with the CQUniversity logo. The background is a blurred indoor setting. On the left, there is a large yellow box with the text 'ENJOY A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION' in bold blue letters. Below this, there is a white box with text about study options and university rankings. At the bottom right, there is a dark blue box with the text 'BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE' and 'cqu.edu.au' in white and yellow.

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* Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2019. Visit www.cqu.edu.au/reputation.
^ The Good Universities Guide 2019.

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2017-2018

Certificate III in Health Services Assistance & Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance, GOTAFE (VET in Schools program)

One day in November 2016, Marwa was thrilled to find out that she had been accepted into GOTAFE's highly competitive VET in Schools Allied Health program. Over 70 students applied, and Marwa was one of three students from her school to get one of the 17 places in the course.

Throughout Year 11 and 12, Marwa spent her Wednesdays either studying theory at GOTAFE's Shepparton campus, or learning about the daily workings of the local hospital. While her fellow VCE students were in class, Marwa was busy learning how to take blood samples and deal with patient enquiries.

2018

Year 12, McGuire College

Year 12 subjects: English, Further Maths, Biology, Health, VETiS

After finishing Year 12 with two VET certificates under her belt, Marwa says she was happy with her ATAR. However, it wasn't quite enough to get into her first preference, which was dentistry. Instead, Marwa got an offer for her second preference, Biomedicine at La Trobe University, which she accepted.

She was also excited to receive a scholarship from You thrive Victoria. Knowing that Year 12 would be a busy time, Marwa started researching scholarships when she was in Year 11, looking online and asking the Year 12 students above her for advice. She applied for the You thrive scholarship directly, but says she also put in a scholarships application through VTAC.

You thrive selected Marwa out of 200 applicants thanks to her leadership skills and commitment to community service. Over the years Marwa has participated in a huge number of community activities, including joining the police youth committee, tutoring disadvantaged children, and organising Taste of Africa events. And if that's not enough, she was also school captain.

2019

Bachelor of Biomedicine, La Trobe University

Marwa still goes back to Shepparton on the weekends to keep up with her volunteer work. Meanwhile, she has been discovering the differences between high school in the country and university in the city.

"University life is way different to Year 12," she says. "You don't always have a teacher who's going to nag you about what's due. Everything is online. And it's really crowded - we have 500 people in one of our lectures."

The things Marwa learned as part of the GOTAFE program have also helped give her a head start. "One of our classes in second semester is all about anatomy and physiology - it was a major part of our VET exam."

2019

Future study and career goals

Marwa has not given up on her dream of becoming a dentist - or possibly an optometrist. Either way, she has a plan. "I'm going to see if they'll take me at mid-year. If they don't, then I'll try at the end of the year. And if they don't then, I'll finish the degree and do a masters."

Pathway in focus: Sarah Gross, graphic designer



Photo: Sarah Gross

Sarah Gross took the scenic route on her path to becoming a graphic designer. Now she's working from the road, travelling around Australia in a converted minibus while her partner studies psychology by correspondence.



"I was surprised to get that scholarship. I think people don't apply for scholarships because they assume they won't get it."

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2008–2009

Year 11, Certificate II in Community Services Year 12, Oberon High School

Year 12 subjects: Health, English, Studio Arts, Photography

Sarah wasn't always sure what she wanted to do in her career. In Year 11 she was considering becoming a youth worker, and completed a Certificate II in Community Services as part of her VCE. This meant that she only had to do four subjects in Year 12, which gave her more time to work on her other passion – photography.

At the end of Year 12 Sarah was dux of her photography class, but she still looks back and thinks she could have done a bit better. "I kind of choked on one of my exams, but my results were still quite good," she says. "I have quite high standards for myself, so I think they could have been better. But at the same time, I knew that I wanted to go into something folio based, and I think my ATAR reflected that."

2010

Gap year

When offers were released Sarah received an offer for her first preference, a visual arts course, but decided that she didn't want to do it anymore. She called VTAC to try and get a supplementary offer, but it wasn't to be. Instead, Sarah took a year off to work in a mattress store, while also continuing to build her folio by working as a street press photographer on the weekends.

2011–2012

Diploma of Graphic Design, The Gordon

Now thinking that design was a better fit, Sarah enquired about studying the Diploma of Graphic Design at The Gordon. Then, after a particularly bad day at work, she made an application. She was invited to an interview on the following Monday and told to be ready to start classes straight away.

Not only did she get in, she also received a scholarship that helped her buy a new laptop and camera. "I was surprised to get that scholarship," says Sarah. "I think people don't apply for scholarships because they assume they won't get it. I think people should just do their best and apply, because they might be surprised."

Sarah loved the hands-on environment at TAFE, as well as the opportunity to do work placements. "Being a graphic designer is very competitive, so any kind of hands-on experience you can get will set you apart from other job candidates." One of her placements, at Cotton On, even turned into a part-time job.

2013–2014

Bachelor of Design (Visual Communication), Monash University

Towards the end of her diploma Sarah started thinking about her next steps, and she decided to apply for Monash University's Bachelor of Design. Because she had completed a diploma, she was able to enter at second year level. During her two years at Monash, Sarah also took some electives in business and marketing to supplement her design skills.

University offered a very different experience to TAFE. "TAFE has smaller class sizes and is a lot more hands-on," says Sarah. "Because you're with the same group, it almost has a high school feel. At university, because everyone is doing different electives you're not with the exact same people all the time."

2015

Career, freelancing, and travel

Since completing her degree Sarah continued to work at Cotton On in packaging, marketing and apparel, with a couple of breaks to work at an agency in the UK and with a typographer in Sydney. Then, in November last year, she decided to leave office life behind and become a freelancer. Sarah's partner had recently left the travel industry to study psychology, so the pair decided to take their dog on a road trip around the country.

Along the way she has met up with clients so they can get to know her face-to-face. "I understand that some people might be hesitant to contract out big jobs to someone who lives in a bus," she laughs. "But I'm doing the right thing for me at the moment, and that's good."

Decide

Deciding on which courses to apply to is up to you. Other people might want to tell you what to choose, but ultimately you need to be happy with the decisions you make.

When you apply for courses you are given the opportunity to select eight courses—in order of preference—to be considered for. However, you can only receive an offer for one course in each offer round. If you receive an offer, it will be for the highest preference that selects you. This is why it is important to get your preference list in order. But how do you decide on what to put on your preference list?

1. Ensure you meet the prerequisites and other requirements
2. Create your own criteria for your ideal course. Some examples are listed below
3. Compare courses against this criteria
4. Identify the most ideal course and place it on the top of your preference list
5. Follow this course with the next best course
6. Consider adding some alternative courses with similar outcomes
7. Look for some suitable 'pathway courses' that could lead into your ideal course or qualification (see [page 20](#))

See the Apply section for more information on prerequisites, preferences and your opportunities to change preference.

Example course criteria

- » I meet the prerequisites and other requirements.
- » It appeals to my interests.
- » It appeals to my strengths.
- » It leads to a career that interests me.
- » It will teach me knowledge I want to know.
- » It will teach me skills and competencies I want to learn.
- » The institution offers me extra opportunities I want to pursue (e.g. overseas exchange, student theatre, work-integrated learning, sporting clubs).
- » I can get there easily.
- » The teaching style suits my needs.
- » It offers the support services I need (e.g. disability support, numeracy support, counselling, mentoring).
- » I feel comfortable on campus.
- » The costs are manageable.
- » It provides the qualifications I need.
- » It provides the pathway I need to another course.
- » I am confident I will be offered a place.

ACTION PLAN

Year 11 and 12

- » List your own course criteria.
- » Use your criteria to assess each course you consider.

Decision making tools

If you're not gifted with reliable gut instinct, a decision making tool might help you compare courses. There are many approaches to this task, and an online search will deliver you a range of tools. Two we think are effective are T charts and the more complex weighted decision making matrix.

T charts

T charts are a simple way to compare the pros and cons of a course. If you have your course criteria worked out, you can use these as a way to look at the advantages and disadvantages of each course you are considering.

Course A	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » I meet the prerequisites and other requirements. » It pretty much appeals to my interests and strengths. » It offers me quite a lot of opportunities, like an international exchange year. » It's easy to get to by public transport. » I'm confident my grades will allow me to get a place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It doesn't offer a major in Psychology which is one of the subjects I'm interested in.

Course B	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » I meet the prerequisites and other requirements. » It appeals to my interests and strengths, and offers a major in Psychology. » It offers an international exchange program. » I'm not 100% sure I won't get a place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It doesn't offer me sporting opportunities. » It's a long way away, but I could get there if I can get a lift to the station, or if I can live out of home. » I'm not confident I'll get a place.

Course C	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Everything is perfect about this course, except... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » I don't meet the prerequisites and other requirements.

A weighted decision making matrix

A more sophisticated decision making tool is a weighted decision making matrix. You allocate a raw score for how well each course fits each criterion, but you also allocate each a weighting to indicate how important that criterion is to you: 3 = essential, 2 = preferred, 1 = moderate. Raw scores are 0-10. To get the weighted score, multiply the raw score by the weighting.

Criteria	Weighting	Course A		Course B		Course C	
		raw	weighted	raw	weighted	raw	weighted
Criterion 1 I meet the prerequisites	3	10	30	10	30	0	0
Criterion 2 Appeals to my interests and strengths	3	7	21	9	27	10	30
Criterion 3 Offers me lots of opportunities	2	8	16	6	12	10	20
Criterion 4 Location is convenient	2	8	16	2	4	8	16
Criterion 5 I'm confident I'll get a place	1	9	9	5	5	7	7
Raw score/weighted score		42	92	32	78	35	73

While it's a good idea to include courses you are confident about getting a place in, don't omit a course you are highly enthusiastic about just because you are concerned about getting in. That's why the weighting on this criterion has been rated 1.

If you don't meet the prerequisites, it's not worth applying for a place in the course. Consider planning a pathway, instead.

Your pathway to Deakin University is within reach

Don't miss out on university.

Deakin College diplomas can help you enter second year of a bachelor degree at Deakin University. Courses are available in the following areas of study:

- Business
- Commerce
- Communication
- Construction Management
- Design
- Engineering
- Film, Television and Animation
- Health Sciences
- Information Technology
- Science

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Applying in 2019

Current Year 12 students can start their course applications from 5 August 2019. The deadline for timely applications is 5.00 pm 30 September 2019.

This section covers the application process for Year 12 students applying in 2019 for courses commencing in 2020.

Year 11 students may find this section useful to familiarise themselves with the process. An update of this publication will be produced in 2020 and will contain new dates and any changes to the process.

Application deadlines and processing fees

VTAC opens for applications at 9am on 5 August 2019.

The cost of the application processing fee depends on when you submit your application. While you need to apply by these deadlines, you don't have to pay your fee straight away—see vtac.edu.au/dates for more information.

There are no additional fees for submitting a SEAS or scholarships application, or for changing your preferences.

Timely applications

Fee \$39 for current Year 12 students

Deadline 30 September 2019 (5.00 pm)

Late applications

Fee \$113

Deadline 1 November 2019 (5.00 pm)

Very late applications

Fee \$148

Deadline 6 December 2019 (5.00 pm)

Post main-round applications

Applications for a limited range of courses will be accepted after the main round of selection has been completed. For more information check the VTAC website in early January 2020.

Refund policy

VTAC does not issue refunds on course application processing fees (except as required by law). You remain liable for the fee even if you withdraw your course application.

Applying interstate and overseas

If you are applying interstate you will need to apply through the relevant tertiary admissions centre—there is one in most states and your ATAR is treated the same way across Australia. Visit Course Seeker (www.courseseeker.edu.au) for a list of courses available across Australia.

If you're interested in applying to study overseas visit www.studyoverseas.gov.au for a wealth of information.

- » **ACT/NSW:** Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) (www.uac.edu.au)
- » **NT:** To apply for undergraduate and postgraduate courses at Charles Darwin University, you must apply through South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC) (www.satac.edu.au)
- » **QLD:** Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) (www.qtac.edu.au)
- » **SA:** South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC) (www.satac.edu.au)
- » **TAS:** University of Tasmania (www.utas.edu.au)
- » **WA:** Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) (www.tisc.edu.au)

Taking a gap year

If you're thinking of taking a gap year, you might want to consider applying for a course and deferring your start for a year. That way you've already got a place and you can apply for a different course the following year should you change your mind. To find out what the deferment policies are for the courses you're interested in, check out 'deferment' under 'courses and institutions' on the VTAC website.

Practice application

Want to practise a course application before you do the real thing? Go to vtac.edu.au/applying/demos to try out demonstration versions. Just remember that the information you enter in a demo is not submitted to VTAC, and is not considered a valid application.



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Make your VTAC account

You use your VTAC account to apply for courses, the special entry access scheme (SEAS) and scholarships.

Setting up your VTAC account

Before you can apply for courses, you need to set up a VTAC account.

Setting up your VTAC account takes a few more steps than the average online account, but once you're in, you can use it to:

- » apply for courses, SEAS and scholarships, and change your course preferences
- » upload documents required for your applications
- » check your messages from VTAC
- » submit a VTAC personal statement
- » manage your contact details and PIN, and
- » view your ATAR and course offers when they come out

Before you start

Read VTAC's privacy policy. It will tell you who can access your information. You can find the privacy policy on the VTAC website.

What you will need

To register for a VTAC account, you will need to provide:

- » your full name, date of birth and contact details
- » any previous names you have used
- » your visa details (if you are not an Australian or New Zealand citizen),
- » your passport number (if you are not an Australian citizen, New Zealand citizen or don't hold an Australian permanent residency visa), and
- » your student number, if you are currently studying an Australian Year 12 or the International Baccalaureate (IB)

Other names

Provide your name and any other names you've used. This is so we can find any previous results, and we can ensure all your applications for courses, SEAS and scholarships are linked to you.

Check your date of birth

Make sure your date of birth is registered correctly with your school. If it isn't, ask your school to correct it and contact VTAC to have it changed.

If it's wrong at your school, it may mean you can't create an account and your results won't be matched to your application.

Contact details

Don't use your school email address as they are often closed after the school year ends. Use an email address you intend to use after finishing school, so you don't miss out on important messages, like offers, in January and February.

Citizenship and residency details

Born here? One of your parents is a citizen or permanent resident? You're a citizen. Have residency? Is it permanent or temporary?

If you are in Australia on a visa, make sure you have your visa details on hand.

Change in citizenship, residency or visa status

The type of course codes you can add to your application depends on your citizenship or visa status as indicated when you created your VTAC account. If your citizenship, residency or visa status change during the VTAC application period, please contact VTAC immediately for advice on updating your information and any preferences you have entered as part of your course application.

Your student number

VTAC uses the details you enter into your account, including your student number, to identify you in the list of current Year 12 students provided by the VCAA. If any of the details you enter don't match those records, you will receive a message. If this happens, check that you have entered everything correctly. If there is still a problem, don't choose to apply as another category of applicant—if you do you won't receive an offer. Instead, check that your full name and date of birth have been recorded correctly at your school. If you still have problems, contact VTAC.

Account security

As part of setting up your account you will be asked to choose a four-digit PIN and two security questions that only you know the answer to. VTAC will ask for your PIN to identify you if you make any enquiries over the phone, so make sure you keep it secure.

Keep your login details safe and don't share your PIN or questions with anyone. If you need someone else, such as a parent or guardian, to be able to make enquiries to VTAC on your behalf, you can add them as an authorised nominee at the application stage.

Create a course application

Once you have a VTAC account you can start applying for courses. Creating a course application can take up to 30 minutes. The best way to minimise that time is to be prepared.

What you need

To complete your course application, you will need:

- » details of your secondary studies including your Year 12 number
- » up to eight course preferences
- » contact details and date of birth of your authorised nominee, if you wish to use one.

How to apply

1. Read and agree to terms and conditions

You will need to read, understand and accept the terms and conditions for submitting a VTAC course application. You should also review the VTAC privacy policy again (which you would have seen when setting up your VTAC account).

2. Complete your educational history

In this section, you will enter details of your senior secondary schooling (for example VCE, VCAL (senior) or IB).

You will be asked:

- » Where you completed your senior secondary schooling
- » Your student number
- » If you completed any VCAL study
- » If your year 12 study was the IB (and if so you will be asked some questions about this)
- » If your secondary qualification is considered "non-standard" (e.g. you were home schooled)
- » If you also completed studies from any other senior secondary curriculum, for example, you completed some International Baccalaureate subjects in addition to your VCE subjects, you will need to enter the details of these studies.

Because VTAC takes applications from non-Year 12 students, you will also be asked if you have attempted or completed any post-secondary (tertiary) study or admissions tests such as the STAT. Most of these questions will not be relevant to current Year 12 students.

You will then be asked to confirm a summary of all educational history claims you have entered. If there is something wrong or missing, simply use the back button to return to the relevant section and enter the correct information.

3. List course preferences

You can list a minimum of one and maximum of eight course preferences by using the institution, qualification and course drop down menus. Once you find the course you are looking for press 'Add to course preference list'.

It's important to note that this is a preference list. You can only receive a single offer in each round of offers, and this will be to the highest preference that selects you. This is why you must make sure you put the course you most want at the top, the course you second most want in second place, and so on. Use the arrow buttons to rearrange courses on your preference list.

You must ensure you meet prerequisites and complete all relevant requirements for the courses you apply for. For details, see the course information in CourseSearch on the VTAC website. Also, look closely at the course code to ensure you've selected the right course.

You don't have to complete or finalise your preference list in one go, you can make changes until the application deadline. See the next article for more information on preferences.

4. Fee summary

After you've completed your preference list, you'll be given a summary of the application processing fee you will need to pay.

5. Authorised nominee

You'll then be asked if you'd like to nominate someone to act on your behalf on matters pertaining to your course application.

An authorised nominee has your permission to enquire about your application, on your behalf. You will only need an authorised nominee if you are going to be unable to make enquiries yourself.

Authorisation is not an access-all-areas pass, so details about your results, medical information and ATAR will never be discussed with anyone except you.

A lot of Year 12 students think they must put their mum, dad or guardian down as the authorised nominee. NOT SO! Your course application, VTAC ID and PIN are owned by you. It's up to you to decide if you authorise a nominee or not.

6. Additional information

Finally, you will be asked some questions for statistical purposes. In the first instance, this information is not connected to your course application and does not affect selection in any way. It is provided in an aggregated format to institutions and the Department of Education and Training (DET).

However, if you complete a SEAS application you can give VTAC permission to access this information to assess your eligibility for access and equity SEAS consideration.

7. Submission and payment

Check the summary of your preferences, nominee and statistical information. If this is correct, tick the checkbox and press the submit button.

You will see a summary, with a receipt number, confirming the information you have entered on your application. You can print or save this summary, but you will also receive a copy by email and in the 'Message Centre' in your VTAC account.

Once the application is submitted, you will be asked to pay the processing fee. You can pay this straight away, or pay it later using the payment function in your VTAC account. If you don't pay by the deadline, your application will not be forwarded to institutions.

Payment can be made via PayPal with VISA or MasterCard credit/debit cards.

Get your preferences in order

Understanding the preference system is crucial if you want to get the best offer available to you.

VTAC allows you to select up to eight course preferences. You must list each course in order of preference, with the one you most want at the top of your list.

You can only receive one offer in each round and that will be the highest listed course you are selected for. This is why you must list your courses **in order of preference**.

Here are some tips on how to list your preferences:

- » Only list courses you meet the essential requirements and admission criteria for.
- » Only list courses you would be happy to study.
- » Always list the course you most want to do at the top.
- » Include some 'pathway courses' in your list too.

List your courses in the order you want to get into them.
For example:

Preference 1	1234567881	My ideal course
Preference 2	1234567781	My second best course
Preference 3	1234567681	A 'pathway course' with similar subjects to my ideal course, which could give me credit if I transfer into my ideal course at a later date (although I would be happy to complete it if that doesn't happen).
Preference 4	1234567891	Another 'pathway course' like preference 3 but with fewer opportunities to gain credit.
Preference 5	1234567651	A course in a similar field to my first and second preference, but without credit options.
Preference 6	1234567641	A course in a similar field to my first and second preference, but without credit options and traditionally less competitive than my higher preferences.
Preference 7	1234567541	A course in a similar field to my first and second preference, but without credit options and traditionally less competitive than my higher preferences.
Preference 8	1234567341	A broad course which provides me with a good foundation through which to apply for further study later on.

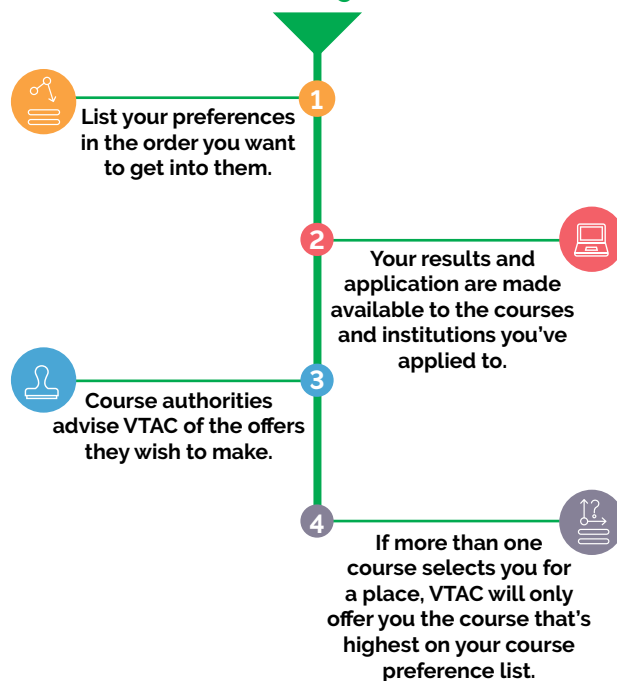
The following scenarios could occur, with the preference list above:

Scenario 1: You receive an offer for your ideal course. Congratulations!

Scenario 2: You receive an offer for your second best course, and are still automatically eligible for a higher offer (your ideal course) if there are vacancies in later rounds.

Scenario 3: You receive an offer for a 'pathway course'. You will still be eligible for an offer for your ideal course if there are vacancies in later rounds.

How the offer system works



What if I can't decide between two courses?

If you can't decide between two courses then look deeper, visit the campus and talk to students. Check out the elective subjects offered by each of the courses.

What if my ATAR isn't good enough?

Still list your ideal courses! Remember, the lowest selection rank from last year may not be the same this year. Also, most courses consider a range of factors in addition to the ATAR. These factors can include subject or SEAS adjustments.

What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind, change your preferences. Change of preference is open for most of August until December, in early January and, for emergencies, in between offer rounds until the end of February.

Will institutions ignore my application if I don't put them first?

Preference listings are only used by VTAC to determine which course you want the most. Course authorities don't make selection decisions based on where you've listed the course on your preference list. They want applicants who have listed them, will succeed, and want to do their courses.

Why can't I receive an offer from all my preferences?

You will only receive an offer for the highest course that wishes to make an offer. You won't find out about any lower preferences, because those places have already been offered to someone else. This is why it is important to list your preferences in the order you most want to do the courses.

Apply for special consideration (SEAS)

If there have been circumstance that have made it hard for you to do your best at study, it's worth putting in an application for special consideration via VTAC's Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS). SEAS also allows institutions to identify applicants from under-represented groups when making selection decisions.

What is SEAS?

The Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) is designed to make sure institutions get a sense of your full potential if you have experienced difficulty during your education. It enables institutions to consider these circumstances and their impact when ranking eligible applicants for a course before making offers.

However, SEAS is not just about life's difficulties—there's a whole category that looks at under-represented demographics in courses, and to apply for this category you simply tick a box.

SEAS does not change your educational results or qualifications. And if you are granted special consideration it does not guarantee you an offer. If you apply for SEAS, you still need to meet the 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria' for a course, including prerequisite studies.

Does every institution use SEAS?

Not all institutions use SEAS, and different institutions recognise different categories. Also, some institutions offer special consideration outside of SEAS. For information about other programs see the VTAC website: vtac.edu.au/SEAS

How to apply for SEAS

1. Make sure you've lodged a course application—SEAS is only available after a course application has been lodged.
2. Log in to your VTAC account using your VTAC ID and PIN.
3. Select 'Special consideration (SEAS) application' in your VTAC account. Click the SEAS application link at the top of the page.
4. Fill in the SEAS application. There are four categories that make up SEAS. You only need to fill out the sections that are relevant to your circumstances.
5. Click on 'Submit'. You will be sent an email acknowledging that your application has been submitted, including a receipt showing the contents of your application. You can also access your receipt through your VTAC account.
6. Check if further evidence is required. You will be advised if you are required to submit any further evidence to support your application such as a supporting statement from a 'responsible person'.

Providing evidence

Most SEAS categories require you to provide evidence. Including:

- » a written statements that you complete
- » a statement of support from a 'responsible person' who has specific knowledge of your circumstances, and/or
- » financial documentation:

See [page 42](#) for detailed information on providing evidence.

What is considered under SEAS?

There are four categories in SEAS. You can apply for all the categories that are relevant to your situation, so long as you apply to each category for a different reason.

Category 1: Personal information and location

This category covers a range of under-represented groups, so institutions can ensure that their students come from a wide range of backgrounds. All of these details can be drawn from your course application so all you need to do to apply is tick a box. However, you should also check the VTAC website to see if individual institutions require any further evidence. Subcategories include:

- » Age—this mainly applies to mature age students.
- » Gender—for applicants who are applying for a course that has historically been dominated by applicants from the opposite gender.
- » Living or school location—for applicants who live or study in a rural or isolated area.
- » Non-English-speaking background—for applicants who were born outside of Australia in a non-English speaking country, who speak a language other than English at home or who arrived in Australia on, or after, 1 January 2009.
- » Under-represented school—institutions determine which schools are under-represented amongst their students. This may change from year to year.
- » First in family to attend university—for applicants whose parents did not attend university.

Category 2: Disadvantaged financial background

For applicants who have been prevented from reaching their educational potential because of financial disadvantage.

Category 3: Disability or medical condition

For applicants who have experienced educational disadvantage as a result of any learning, physical, sensory or psychiatric medical condition, illness or disability.

Category 4: Difficult circumstances

For applicants who have been prevented from reaching their educational potential due to difficult circumstances other than those described above, for example, problems at home, a death in the family or other life circumstances.

Find out more

More information on the SEAS categories is available on the VTAC website: vtac.edu.au/SEAS

SEAS applications open on 5 August 2019 and close 5:00 pm 11 October 2019.

You can practise a SEAS application at vtac.edu.au/applying/demos. Just remember that the information you enter in a demo is not submitted to VTAC, and is not considered a valid application.

Apply for scholarships

Scholarships help with the cost of study and are awarded for many different reasons: community involvement, academic achievement and where you live are just some of them.

Why apply for a scholarship?

Why wouldn't you apply for a scholarship? You have nothing to lose and a lot to gain. While the value of each scholarship varies, it can help you pay for books, study materials, moving expenses, course fees or other costs associated with tertiary study.

What kinds of scholarships are there?

There are lots of scholarships you can apply for through VTAC. Others require you to apply to tertiary institutions or the organisation sponsoring them. It's worth spending an afternoon online, searching for scholarship opportunities. For example, a local community group might offer one that would be ideal for you.

Scholarships through VTAC

The scholarships VTAC takes applications for are generally awarded under three categories:

- » Institutional scholarships
- » Merit scholarships
- » Commonwealth scholarships

Institutional scholarships

Institutional scholarships are most often awarded for access and equity reasons, including financial disadvantage, relocating from regional and rural areas or being part of an access equity group.

Merit scholarships

Merit scholarships are awarded for achievement. This may be assessed by a range of criteria, not only your ATAR.

Commonwealth scholarships

Commonwealth scholarships are awarded by the Commonwealth of Australia and are subject to income test regulations.

When do I apply?

Applications open on 5 August 2019. The scholarship application – and all supporting evidence – must be submitted by 5:00 pm 11 October 2019.

What are my chances?

Your chances firstly depend on whether you apply or not.

Then it depends on how many scholarships in a category are available, your eligibility and how you are assessed compared to other eligible applicants. For example, Commonwealth scholarships are based on an income assessment – if you meet the criteria, you will get a scholarship. For other scholarships, chances vary more widely. Many of the scholarships through VTAC are based on equity and access, leadership abilities and community experience, so don't be deterred if you're not a straight A student.

How do I apply?

Applying for scholarships offered through VTAC is straightforward. You just need to complete one application and you'll be matched with all the scholarships you are eligible for.

The scholarship application is within your VTAC account. It's simply a matter of following the prompts and entering any relevant details.

Most questions require concise written responses. These have strict character limits so it can be a good idea to write a draft first.

As part of your scholarship application you may also be asked to provide:

- » details of your financial circumstances
- » your Centrelink Reference Number (CRN) and/or your parent or guardian's details, if you don't receive payments directly into your bank account
- » other income details

You may also be required to provide supporting evidence such as an impact statement, statement of support or Centrelink documentation to complete your scholarship application. There is detailed information on the VTAC website for how to provide this information (vtac.edu.au/scholarships)

The scholarship application has similar questions to the SEAS application...

Which is why every person submitting a Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) application should also submit a scholarship application. You can even use the same supporting evidence, just make sure you submit each item twice: once in the SEAS application and again in the scholarships application.

Find out more

See [page 42](#) for advice on completing your application.

You can practise a scholarship application at vtac.edu.au/applying/demos. Just remember that the information you enter in a demo is not submitted to VTAC, and is not considered a valid application.

More information on the scholarship categories is available on the VTAC website: vtac.edu.au/scholarships. This includes a list detailing the institutional scholarships available, including who's offering it, the scholarship type, the criteria and approximate value.

Provide evidence for SEAS and scholarships

SEAS and scholarship applications may require that you provide additional evidence of your circumstances. Quality, not quantity, is the key to providing good and useful evidence.

When completing your SEAS or scholarship application you may be required to provide evidence. If you don't your application will not be considered. Evidence requested may include:

- » your description of your circumstances
- » your explanation of the impact of the circumstances on your education (or everyday life for scholarships awarded for financial disadvantage), and/or
- » a statement of support from a 'responsible person'.

There are strict character limits (including spaces) for written content, so it can be a good idea to draft what you write before you submit it.

Providing your own statement

Write it yourself

Write the application yourself, in your own words. This is your story, not somebody else's interpretation. Also, it is not an English test! Just write clearly and honestly.

Description of circumstances

Keep it short and to the point. Summarise what happened and when. You can write this as a timeline of dates and events, or you can present it in another way that clearly details your circumstances and when they occurred.

Impact statement

Your impact statement is an essential and significant part of your application. It provides assessors with the information required to understand the impact the disadvantage has had on your educational performance (or everyday life for scholarships awarded for financial disadvantage).

Focus on **how** your circumstances have affected you and prevented you from meeting your potential. It is important to describe the educational impact of the circumstances, not just the situation or condition.

Evidence is about quality not quantity.

Providing a statement of support

You may be required to submit a statement of support from a responsible person who has specific knowledge of your circumstances and is able to describe them. Choose a responsible person who knows about your circumstances and can comment knowledgeably about your situation.

Statements of support may be submitted electronically or mailed to VTAC. If a statement of support is required but not submitted, your application for SEAS or the relevant scholarships will not be considered.

Make sure your 'responsible person' understands what they need to include in the statement and that their understanding matches your own. The key element is that they detail how your circumstances have affected you and prevented you from meeting your potential.

A good supporting statement is written by a responsible person who can:

- » provide a brief overview of your medical condition, disability or circumstances
- » provide a time line of the duration of the circumstances, and
- » provide current information on how your circumstances have affected your ability to reach your potential.

VTAC produces a 'Providing a statement of support' fact sheet, which you can forward to your responsible person. This fact sheet explains the purpose of the statement and gives tips on what to include. Visit vtac.edu.au/publications

Definition of 'a responsible person'

A responsible person is:

- » an Australian citizen or permanent resident who is 21 years of age or older
- » has known you for at least 12 months or for the entire duration of the circumstance(s), whichever is shorter
- » is not related to you by birth, marriage, or de facto relationship, and
- » does not live with you.

For SEAS Category 3: Disability or medical condition, and for any questions related to medical conditions on the scholarship application, a responsible person is defined as a health practitioner who also meets the criteria outlined above. Example health practitioners include general practitioners (GPs), psychologists, counsellors, school nurses and physiotherapists.

Providing financial evidence

Financial disadvantage is most often demonstrated with documentation from Centrelink. If you receive payments directly into your account, and you give VTAC permission, VTAC can access your Centrelink records electronically. However, if the payments are paid to your parent or guardian, you must provide VTAC with hard copy or uploaded copies of Centrelink documents.

If you need to provide other financial documents such as payslips, you will need to provide these to VTAC.

Receive your results

You will be able to access your VCE results and ATAR from 7.00 am on 12 December 2019.

Accessing your results

When do I receive my results?

You will be able to access your VCE results and ATAR via web, app and mail. Results will be available via web and app from 7.00 am on Thursday 12 December 2019. The paper documents should arrive in the mail within ten business days.

How do I access my results online?

You can access your results via the VCE Results and ATAR Service website or the Results and ATAR app. The app is available from Google Play or the App Store.

You will need to register prior to results being released via <https://resultsandatar.vic.edu.au> or by using the app. Registration opens on Monday 5 August. You will need your VCAA student number and personal details to register. You will select a secure password when registering, which you will use to access your results on Thursday 12 December. You only need to register once. The password you create can then be used for both the internet service and mobile app.

You are encouraged to complete registration by 5.00 pm Wednesday 11 December to ensure the fastest access to your VCE Results and ATAR at 7.00 am when they are released.

If you have created a VTAC account, please note that this is separate from your registration for the VCE Results and ATAR Service.

Can I speak to someone about my results?

Absolutely. VTAC and VCAA run a joint Post-Results and ATAR Service (PRAS) every year. In 2019, the services will operate at the following times:

- » 7.00 am – 5.00 pm Thursday 12 December
- » 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Friday 13 December and Saturday 14 December
- » 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday 16 December

You can contact the service by:

- » visiting pras.resultsandatar.vic.edu.au
- » phoning (03) 9032 1717 or the toll-free number 1800 653 080
- » emailing pras@edumail.vic.gov.au

Understanding the ATAR

The ATAR stands for Australian Tertiary Admission Rank. It is important to note that the ATAR is a rank and not a score. It is represented as a number between 0 and 99.95 in intervals of 0.05 and 99.95 being the highest rank.

Because the ATAR is a rank, there is no pass or fail ATAR. Everyone who receives an ATAR has successfully passed the VCE. The ATAR simply demonstrates each student's achievement in relation to all other students in the Year 12 age group. Someone receiving an ATAR of 55, for example, has performed better than 55 per cent of the Year 12 age group that year.

How is the ATAR used?

It is a tool used for tertiary selection, a way for institutions to distinguish between applicants where there are more people applying than there are places in the course.

Once the ATAR has been used for its purpose, entrance into your chosen course, it becomes irrelevant. No one's going to ask for you ATAR once you're already studying, and future employers will be far more interested in your skills and experience than any of your high school results.

Why do you scale subjects?

Subjects aren't scaled because of how 'hard' or how 'easy' we think they are. In reality, every subject is scaled in the same way: based on the strength of the competition in a particular year.

VCE Study Scores are standardised rankings, or relative positions, reported on a scale between 0 and 50, with a middle ranking of 30. So, a student with a Study Score of 30 has performed better than half the students in that subject for that year. Scaling is applied to determine the difficulty in achieving the middle ranking - the median study score of 30 - in each subject. The issue here is VCE Study Scores are not standardised against other VCE subjects, they only measure the achievement relative to other students in the same subject.

The competition to achieve the median study score varies between individual studies - in some subjects it is harder to get a 30 because of the cohort of students undertaking it - not because of any inherent difficulty of the subject. So to be fair to all students, no matter what subjects they choose, we scale all subjects against each other to produce a result as though all Year 12 students had taken the same subjects.

I was hoping for a higher ATAR

Remember, the ATAR is only a tool used for tertiary selection, it does not define you as a person, nor does it determine your capabilities.

If your ATAR isn't high enough to get you into your dream course, it's worthwhile contacting the institution to discuss alternative pathways. More often than not, there will be another pathway into the course you want to study. You do have options.

Change of preference will remain open for a time after the results release, so you will have time to make calls, do your research and add in any 'pathway courses' in time for offers.

Learn more about the ATAR

For detailed information on the ATAR and scaling, see the *ABC of Scaling*, available from vtac.edu.au/publications

Change of preference

If you change your mind about the course you want to study or get different Year 12 results to what you were expecting, don't worry—you can change your course preferences.

What is change of preference?

During specified periods you can add, remove or re-order the course preferences in your VTAC course application.

You may want to change your preferences if you have changed your mind about which course you most want to study, if a new course has become available and you would like to add it to your preference list, or if a course you had applied for has been cancelled and you want to replace it on your preferences list.

There is no cost involved in changing your preferences. As long as you have paid your course application processing fee, you can change your preferences as many times as you like within the specified periods.

How to change your course preferences

To change your course preferences, log in to your VTAC account and follow the prompts. You can add, delete or re-order your preferences using the up and down arrows.

Some courses do not accept new course applications after a certain date, so check the course description and selection criteria carefully for any new courses you want to add.

You will also need to make sure you meet the requirements for any new courses you add. If you have missed a selection requirement deadline contact the institution to see if you can still apply.

All change of preference dates are listed on [page 46](#).

When can I change my preference?



Straight away

Once you've applied, you can keep doing this as many times as you like, free of charge, until the closing date.



After your ATAR is released

After you get your ATAR, you will have a short amount of time to change your preferences.

Finalise your preferences at this point to maximise your chance to receive the offer you want.



After offers come out

You can also change your preferences between offer rounds, but some courses may already have filled all their places.

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Offers and enrolment

Most offers will be released on 15 January 2020.

How are offers released?

Most offers will be released on 15 January 2020. Emails will be sent from the morning right through until 2 pm, at which point you will be able to log into your VTAC account and view your offer in the 'Course offers' section. Because of the volume of offers going out on that day, VTAC will stagger the email roll out throughout the morning and early afternoon, so don't stress if it's 12 noon and you haven't received an email but your friend has.

Your offer email is a notification of an offer being made. The institution will contact you separately with instructions and deadlines for enrolling—usually within two business days. If you do not receive these instructions, you need to contact the institution and not VTAC. Remember, you must enrol by the deadline set by the institution—make sure that you don't miss out.

For all dates for all offer rounds, see the [next page](#).

Accept an offer by enrolling

To accept an offer you must enrol in the course. Enrolment procedures will be outlined in the offer email sent by the institution. These instructions differ across each institution, in some cases you may be required to attend in person at a specific date and time, others might require you to enrol online.

Enrolment is generally held in the final weeks of January (for January Round offers) or second week of February (for February Round 1 offers). If you are unable to attend at these times you should check with the institution about what other arrangements are available. Don't leave this too late, as you may be required to organise documentation and someone to act on your behalf.

All offers are provisional

Any offer you receive is subject to you:

- » meeting eligibility requirements
- » having provided full and correct information on your VTAC application, and
- » attending enrolment at the time and date specified in your offer message.

If you don't meet these requirements, your offer may lapse or be withdrawn.

Thinking of deferring to take a gap year?

Gap years can be a great way to take a break from studying to do some travel or some work experience. If you're applying for courses with the intention to defer the place, make sure that you check the institutional and course policies on deferment, as not all courses will allow it.

If the institution agrees to defer your place, make sure to get an agreement from them in writing. If you eventually decide not to take up the deferred place, you must inform the institution so that they can offer the place to another applicant.

Have mixed feelings about the course or interested in something else?

You can accept your January Round 1 offer and still be eligible for offers from higher preferences in future rounds. Just make sure that whichever course you're hoping to get an offer from is listed higher on your preferences than what you've been offered. So, if

you received an offer from your third preference, you'll be eligible for offers from preferences one and two.

Change of preference opens between the offer rounds, so you can move the offered preference down your list to open up your eligibility for more courses—these could be courses that were previously lower on your list or new ones you add. Should you receive a preferred offer in a future round, you can accept that and withdraw from the previous one.

VTAC recommends that you accept your January Round offer as it will lapse before the release of February Round 1. You will not be able to accept an offer after it has lapsed. By accepting your January Round 1 offer, you will at least have that course to fall back on if no further offers are made. If you don't accept the offer because you want to see what happens on future dates, you run the risk of not receiving any offers at all.

No longer interested in the course you've been offered?

Accepting an offer for a course is your choice. If you have absolutely no desire to enrol in that course, then simply ignore the offer. The offer will lapse and the place go to somebody else. Just be sure about any decision to not accept a course offer—offers cannot be accepted once they have lapsed.

Didn't get an offer?

If you didn't receive an offer in the January Round, you may still be eligible for an offer in the February Round 1. However it's important to know most offers are made in January Round . So while you might wait in hope for a February Round 1 offer it's also a good idea to do some strategic research.

You can change your preferences between the January Round and February Round 1 and institutions are available to talk to you about pathway courses and to help you identify other courses you might want to add to your preference list before change of preference closes.

Also, make sure you give permission for institutions to give you supplementary offers.

Supplementary offers

Some institutions may make supplementary offers after February Round 1 if they have places available.

You may receive supplementary offers if you have:

- » not received an offer listed on your course preferences, and
- » given VTAC permission to release your application to all courses with vacancies.

You give this permission either at the time of applying, or later in your VTAC account. Supplementary offers will be processed weekly after February Round 1.

December offers

In late December 2019, after the release of VCE results and ATARs, some institutions will make offers to Year 12 applicants in Victoria and Queensland. A list of courses participating in this round will be published on the VTAC website. All courses will participate in the January round, and applicants are still eligible for January offers regardless of whether or not they receive an offer in December.

2019 application dates

The following key dates are for current Year 12 students. For all VTAC dates visit vtac.edu.au/dates.

Current Year 12 (Domestic and International students)			
Course applications	Open	Close	Fees
Timely course applications	5 August (9am)	30 September (5pm)	\$39.00 processing fee (YR12)
Late course applications	30 September (5.30pm)	1 November (5pm)	\$113.00 Late processing fee
Very late course applications	1 November (5.30pm)	6 December (5pm)	\$148.00 Very late processing fee
New January applications	3 January 2020 (10am)	Check VTAC website	\$58.00
VTAC Personal Statement and supporting documentation for course applications		Close	
Final submission date to ensure consideration for December and subsequent offer rounds		6 December (5pm)	
Final date to edit VTAC Personal Statement for January round offers		2 January 2020 (5pm)	
Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS)	Open	Close	
SEAS application and supporting documentation	5 August (9am)	11 October (5pm)	
Scholarships	Open	Close	
Scholarship application and supporting documentation	5 August (9am)	11 October (5pm)	
Current Year 12 (Domestic students)		Current Year 12 (International students)	
Payments	Pay processing fee by	Payments	Pay processing fee by
To be considered for December round	14 December (4pm)	To be considered for December round	14 December (4pm)
To be considered for January round	19 December (4pm)	To be considered for January round 1	3 January 2020 (4pm)
To be considered for February round 1 and subsequent rounds	Check VTAC website	To be considered for January round 2	8 January 2020 (4pm)
		To be considered for January round 3	13 January 2020 (4pm)
		To be considered for January round 4	16 January 2020 (4pm)
		To be considered for January round 5	21 January 2020 (5pm)
Offers (Domestic)	Offers released	Offers (International)	Offers released
December round (Victoria and Queensland only)	18 December (Victoria and Queensland only)	December round	18 December
January round	15 January 2020	January round 1	7 January 2020
February round 1	3 February 2020	January round 2	10 January 2020
February round 2	10 February 2020	January round 3	15 January 2020
February round 3	17 February 2020	January round 4	20 January 2020
February round 4	24 February 2020	January round 5	24 January 2020
» Offers are emailed to applicants on the day of release, and available in the VTAC account from 2pm the same day		» Offers are emailed to applicants on the day of release, and available in the VTAC account from 2pm the same day	
» Supplementary offers commence from February round 2			
Change of preference windows	Change of preference windows	Change of preference windows	Change of preference windows
5 August (9am) – 14 December (4pm)	5 August (9am) – 14 December (4pm)	5 August (9am) – 14 December (4pm)	5 August (9am) – 14 December (4pm)
18 December (4pm) – 20 December (4pm)	18 December (4pm) – 20 December (4pm)	18 December (4pm) – 20 December (4pm)	18 December (4pm) – 20 December (4pm)
2 January 2020 (9am) – 2 January 2020 (4pm)	2 January 2020 (9am) – 2 January 2020 (4pm)	2 January 2020 (9am) – 2 January 2020 (4pm)	2 January 2020 (9am) – 2 January 2020 (4pm)
IB applicants only: Change of preference will remain open until 4 January 2020 (4pm)	IB applicants only: Change of preference will remain open until 4 January 2020 (4pm)	IB applicants only: Change of preference will remain open until 4 January 2020 (4pm)	IB applicants only: Change of preference will remain open until 4 January 2020 (4pm)
16 January 2020 (10am) – 24 January 2020 (4pm)	16 January 2020 (10am) – 24 January 2020 (4pm)	10 January 2020 (4pm) – 13 January 2020 (4pm)	10 January 2020 (4pm) – 13 January 2020 (4pm)
4 February 2020 (10am) – 4 February 2020 (4pm)	4 February 2020 (10am) – 4 February 2020 (4pm)	16 January 2020 (10am) – 16 January 2020 (4pm)	16 January 2020 (10am) – 16 January 2020 (4pm)
11 February 2020 (10am) – 12 February 2020 (4pm)	11 February 2020 (10am) – 12 February 2020 (4pm)	20 January 2020 (4pm) – 21 January 2020 (5pm)	20 January 2020 (4pm) – 21 January 2020 (5pm)
18 February 2020 (10am) – 19 February 2020 (4pm)	18 February 2020 (10am) – 19 February 2020 (4pm)		
Current Year 12 (Domestic and International students)			
VCE results and ATAR	Online	Post	
Closing date for change of address and payment to receive ATAR statement by mail (Victorian current Year 12 only)	9 December (5pm)		
VCE results and ATAR	12 December (7am)	from 18 December	
IB Notional ATAR	3 January 2020 (3pm)	from 8 January 2020	
Permissions for offers	Close		
Last date to change permission to publish offers		10 January 2020 (12noon)	
Last date to change permission to receive supplementary offers		4 February 2019 (10am)	



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