Australian Government
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Good Practice Note: *Making higher education admissions transparent for prospective students*

July 2019

TEQSA

Good Practice Note: Making higher education admissions transparent for prospective students – July 2019

Contacts

More information about the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, including electronic versions of this report, is available at teqsa.gov.au

Comments and enquiries about this report may be directed to:
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
Level 14/530 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3001
T: 1300 739 585
F: 1300 739 586
E: comms@teqsa.gov.au

Provider resources

TEQSA's role is to safeguard the interests of all students, current and future, studying within Australia's higher education system. We do this by regulating and assuring the quality of Australia's higher education providers.

In carrying out this work, we produce a number of resources aimed at supporting higher education providers understand their responsibilities under the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* (HES Framework).

HES Framework

The HES Framework is a legislative instrument that is structured to align with the student experience or 'student life cycle'. It sets out the requirements for provider entry to, and continued operations within, Australia's higher education sector. The Standards for Higher Education within the HES Framework apply to all providers offering courses leading to a regulated higher education award, irrespective of where and how a course is delivered. All providers are required to demonstrate their adherence to the HES Framework.

Guidance notes

Guidance notes are intended to provide advice and greater clarity when interpreting and applying selected areas of the HES Framework. They are not intended to be 'how to' documents, instead they outline what TEQSA will typically expect to see when assessing providers' compliance.

Good practice notes

Good practice notes offer practical advice and examples of good practice to guide operations in regard to specific, higher education issues. The best practice guides are intended to support and promote the quality assurance approaches of providers.

More information and guidance on the HES Framework and our regulatory approach can be found at teqsa.gov.au

Author’s note

It has been a pleasure to work with TEQSA in developing this *Good Practice Note* about admissions transparency. I feel strongly that the higher education sector must work together and help prospective students understand admission processes for them to make informed choices about their preferred provider and course. An Australia-wide approach with a consistent framework across the sector that allows individuality is vital; one which is student-centred rather than provider-driven, to help students succeed. Our aim must be to ensure that students make the best choices for themselves, are stimulated by their learning and educational experience, and can develop a career path that enables them to maximise their potential.

Work on admissions transparency came to a head in Australia in 2016 with examination by the Higher Education Standards Panel of the level of access by prospective students to clear, comparable information about course entry requirements and options across the Australian higher education sector. Much work has since been done; by the Australian Government, TEQSA and the sector itself. This *Good Practice Note* extends the *Advice on Admissions Transparency* that TEQSA released in February 2018 by including background information, links to key resources, and further suggestions illustrated with examples of good practice (current at the time of publication) that providers have put in place.

In reviewing websites, it is apparent that all providers have started implementing the commitments made through the implementation plan developed by the sector-led Admissions Transparency Implementation Working Group (July 2017). There are many examples of good practice throughout the sector, and the ones selected are examples that others may find helpful; it is not an exhaustive list. The providers whose examples are used have not necessarily put all the recommendations in place but they have made a good start, and I hope that this *Good Practice Note* will be helpful to all providers.

My thanks go to all those who contributed directly and indirectly. A special thank you to Australian higher education providers for taking on the important task of reorganising and updating their websites and other materials to improve admissions transparency for students. My thanks to Anthony McClaran, Dr Karen Treloar, Dr Jen Drysdale, Ashley Orr and Dr Carolyn Malkin at TEQSA for their help and feedback, which is much appreciated. Many thanks to my family (Kevin, Sally and Catherine) who have gone above, and beyond, in various ways to help finalise the *Good Practice Note*. Many thanks also to my colleagues Dr Lin Martin and Dr Kerry Ferguson who provided feedback on drafts and helped in many ways.

This *Good Practice Note* does not have all the answers to make admission processes transparent from a student’s perspective. However, I hope it helps higher education providers to think about their websites, brochures and other written information; about whether their staff have been trained, sufficiently, to communicate advice to prospective students effectively, regardless of their background; and, most of all, to consider getting current and prospective student input to help them ensure they provide effective advice that students will understand.

Janet Beard
Tertiary Education Consultant and Honorary Senior Fellow, LH Martin Institute for Tertiary Education Leadership and Management, University of Melbourne

Foreword

TEQSA's fundamental purpose is to safeguard student interests and the reputation of Australia's higher education sector. We do this by assuring the quality of higher education through a proportionate, risk-reflective approach to regulation – an approach that encourages diversity, innovation and excellence while allowing providers to pursue their individual missions. This good practice note, the second in a series of resources produced by TEQSA, aims to further support and promote the quality assurance approaches of providers in relation to admissions transparency.

Following its acceptance of recommendations from the Higher Education Standards Panel, the Government funded TEQSA to assist with the implementation of improved transparency of admissions processes from 2017 to 2021. TEQSA was also a member of the sector-led, Admissions Transparency Implementation Working Group, which was established to develop and oversee a plan to put the Panel's recommendations into action. The plan required TEQSA to conduct a formative evaluation in 2017 and then to conduct a summative evaluation of the sector's responses to the Panel's recommendations, later in 2019, with a report back to the Minister for Education in March 2020.

Admissions transparency means that prospective domestic undergraduate students can easily find good quality admissions information that allows them to compare courses and providers and make informed study choices. Without the right admissions information, prospective students may not even apply for a course, or they may make decisions that result in them dropping out, leading to poor student retention and reduced learning outcomes.

TEQSA engaged Janet Beard, an expert in higher education admissions policy and practice, to review provider implementation of the admissions transparency requirements and identify examples of good practice in April 2019. The publication of this *Good Practice Note* is timely as providers continue to implement the Panel's recommendations on admissions transparency in the period leading up to September 2019, when TEQSA will embark on its summative evaluation of the sector's success in a greater degree of transparency in admissions.

TEQSA remains committed to supporting providers to implement the admissions transparency recommendations. In addition to this good practice note and our *Advice on Admissions Transparency*, our Sector Assessment Team is available to answer any questions regarding implementation and the summative evaluation.

On behalf of all of us at TEQSA, I would like to thank Janet for her work and commend this *Good Practice Note* on admissions transparency for the consideration of all interested stakeholders.

Anthony McClaran
Chief Executive Officer
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Contents

Purpose

This *Good Practice Note* is intended to complement the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency's (TEQSA) *Advice on Admissions Transparency (February 2018).*

The phrase 'admissions transparency' refers to Australian higher education providers presenting clear information which helps prospective domestic undergraduate students, regardless of their background, understand the criteria and processes for admission to the providers' courses. Such information should be clear, transparent and easily understood. Prospective students must be able to understand the information and compare providers and courses to enable them to make informed study choices. Information should also be presented so that parents, teachers and career advisers are able to understand the information so that they can support and assist students to make decisions about courses and providers.

This *Good Practice Note* presents Australian higher education providers with exemplars and specific practical advice to assist them to make the processes for admission to higher education institutions transparent for prospective students. Admissions transparency relates to the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* (HES Framework) and the relevant standards are outlined in Attachment 1. The advice in this *Good Practice Note* is aligned with the HES Framework and is focused on four main areas:

- Accessibility
- Consistency and comparability
- Data presentation and quality
- How applicants are assessed

Context

In October 2016, at the request of the Minister for Education and Training, the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP) made recommendations to achieve greater transparency in higher education admissions for prospective domestic undergraduate students in a report called *Improving the Transparency of Higher Education Admissions.* A sector-led working group, the Admissions Transparency Implementation Working Group (IWG), was established to develop an implementation plan as a practical response (*Final Admissions Transparency Plan, June 2017*), the principles of which all key stakeholders endorsed. The Group subsequently provided updated common terminology and data definitions for use by providers, a glossary for public use, and admission information sets for each institution as a whole, and for their courses (*Admissions Transparency Phase Two Common Terminology and Information Sets, July 2018*).

Providers have been implementing the sector commitments and this Good Practice Note is intended to offer further assistance. The *Good Practice Note* is guided by the principles proposed by the HESP, which undertook the initial work on admissions transparency:

- A student-centred approach to the provision of information about admissions.
- Higher education providers have autonomy over their admissions policies, consistent with the requirements set out in the Higher Education Standards Framework.
- Access to clear information relating to admissions requirements and various entry pathways is to be made available to all applicants equally.
- The arrangements set out in [the] implementation plan apply equally to all higher education providers, universities and non-university higher education providers alike.
- Higher education providers are accountable for public claims against their stated admission policies.
- Improved transparency of higher education admissions policies and compliance with the terms of [the] implementation plan are not intended to add regulatory red-tape over and above what is necessary to comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework.

Background

An increase in the diversity of Australia's higher education provision and admission processes, especially following the introduction of the demand-driven funding system for undergraduate Commonwealth-supported places in 2009, has occurred. Under the demand-driven system, more Australians were able to gain entry to higher education, mainly public universities, by a variety of pathways. To add to the complexity of choice, there has been significant growth in independent and TAFE providers over the past 20 years. This expansion in the number and diversity of providers and courses provides welcome opportunities for prospective students. In the process, admissions requirements have become more complex and harder to understand, making it difficult for prospective students to make informed decisions about study.

The challenges have included a lack of comparable information about higher education entry requirements and the complexity of approaches, alternative pathways, career possibilities, support services available, and other student cohort information. In particular, there has been a lack of clarity about the use of the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) and the basis on which adjustment factors (previously known as bonus points) are awarded by universities. This lack of clarity has led to controversy and media commentary (Australian Associated Press 2018; Bagshaw and Ting 2016; Robinson 2018).

An important issue with admissions transparency is to ensure that entry into higher education is equitable, and that no type of student is favoured over another through admission processes based on gender, cultural background, socio-economic circumstances or demographic background. Harvey et al. (2016) note that with increasing diversity of admissions comes increasing opacity and a consequent risk of inequity. Harvey and Brett's (2016, p.2) submission to the HESP about tertiary admissions emphasises that 'The admissions system cannot be improved without recognising the importance of student equity'.

Harvey et al. (2016) also note the growth of 'contextual' admissions, where admissions pathways draw on contextual data such as the geo-demographic background of an applicant, school attended, and so on, to take account of the diverse circumstances of applicants and address any equity issues such as low socio economic status.

Similar to Australia, there has been a drive in both the UK and the US to move away from admissions systems depending on final school results and take other factors into account. In the case of the UK, the drive has been to use more contextual, individual data. The US has followed an 'holistic review' to use both cognitive and non-cognitive factors, in part to address race-conscious affirmative action to achieve cultural diversity. In Australia, around 70% of school leaver applications are still determined on ATAR alone.

In the UK, Steven Schwartz chaired the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group [AHESG] that made recommendations to the Government for good practice in admissions. Their report recommended that all universities and colleges should adopt six principles of fair admissions, the first of which was that 'a fair admissions system should be transparent' (AHESG 2004, p. 7). In the US, numerous newspaper reports exist about bias against race, with examples being the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Hoover 2019) and *The Conversation* (Perez-Felkner 2019). Other reports, such as those in *The Guardian* (Reeves 2019) and *The New York Times* (Medina, Benner & Taylor 2019), suggest that wealthy parents can buy a place in top universities and that legacy systems exist where the admission chances of children of alumni are boosted. Such reports indicate a concern about the lack of admissions transparency. Further information about the work undertaken to address admissions transparency and a timeline are in Attachment 2.

Implementation objectives

Australian Government-led initiatives

In February 2016 the Minister for Education and Training commissioned the HESP to advise 'on options to improve the transparency of higher education student admissions, while minimising regulatory burden'. Following extensive consultation with higher education and secondary education stakeholders, the HESP released its report *Improving the Transparency of Higher Education Admissions (October 2016).* The Panel's report placed students firmly at the centre of the admissions process and made 14 recommendations that the Panel advised were intended to:

- Achieve greater ***transparency*** through the use of common language about admissions processes and the publication of consistent information.
- Widen the ***accessibility*** of information to prospective students.
- Improve the ***comparability*** of information available from providers about their admissions processes and entry requirements.
- Enhance the ***accountability*** of higher education providers for the information they publish about their admissions policies.
- Ensure all higher education providers are subject to the same ***reporting*** requirements.
- Give students, parents, teachers and career advisors the knowledge and capacity to more easily ***navigate*** higher education admissions policies and processes.

One of the initiatives undertaken by the Government 'to make finding information on higher education courses easier than ever' is the development of the *Course Seeker* website. This provides information about providers and their courses from across Australia to enable, in effect, a 'one stop shop' for prospective students. *Course Seeker* also provides links to providers' websites for further information about their courses and services. Nearly half of Australia's providers are currently included in *Course Seeker* with the remainder being added progressively. The providers who are currently included are predominantly universities, which account for more than 90 per cent of the higher education student population, and hence the majority of prospective students are already being catered for by *Course Seeker* with the remainder to follow as further providers are included.

Course Seeker offers information about admission requirements by course and institution, and filters can be applied to help applicants narrow options by, for example, the state in which they wish to study, the type of course, the admissions criteria applicable to the prospective student, study mode, and so on. Up to four courses can be selected and compared side by side, similar to websites such as Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), which 'provides prospective students with relevant and transparent information about Australian higher education institutions from the perspective of recent students and graduates'. The QILT website is a further resource for students to make comparisons between institutions and study areas to help them select their preferred course and institution; data are provided on student experience, graduate satisfaction and graduate employment at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Providers are recommended to provide a link to QILT, as well as *Course Seeker*.

Upon requests from providers, TEQSA also developed a checklist (*Admissions Transparency Checklist)* which is designed to assist providers in developing information for prospective students to ensure they have covered all aspects of admissions transparency.

Sector-led initiatives

Over the course of 2017 and 2018, six agreed objectives were to be delivered through the actions set out in the IWG's *Final Admissions Transparency Implementation Plan (June 2017)* and the further report which provided an updated specification of requirements in *Phase Two Common Terminology and Information Sets (July 2018)* (hereafter, this document will be referred to as the *updated specification* and is available at https://docs.education.gov.au/node/51506). These objectives were to be adopted by providers by May 2018:

1. Consistent presentation of admissions information.
2. Adoption of common admissions terminology.
3. Revised ATAR-related thresholds and definitions.
4. Tertiary admission centres (TACs) to adopt more consistent approaches and reporting and streamline interstate application processes.
5. TEQSA monitoring and guidance on improved admissions transparency.
6. A new national admissions information platform (established and found at the Department of Education and Training's Course Seeker website).

The IWG also released quick reference documents regarding the changes that prospective higher education students will see in 2019 and beyond.

These documents are intended for different audiences and are available from the Department of Education's website, as follows:

- Student learner guide (https://docs.education.gov.au/node/51236)
- Student with work and life experience learner guide (https://docs.education.gov.au/node/51241)
- Career adviser learner guide (https://docs.education.gov.au/node/51246).

Examples of good practice

In addition to the materials developed around admissions transparency described in the previous sections, this *Good Practice Note* has been developed to highlight examples of good practice demonstrated by providers to help all providers fully implement the sector commitments to admissions transparency for prospective domestic undergraduate students. The examples provided are not necessarily consistent in every respect with the IWG recommendations but give very good examples of particular aspects of good practice. The examples are also not exhaustive; many other examples exist.

This document provides good practice examples and further advice, grouped into four categories:

- Accessibility
- Consistency and comparability
- Data presentation and quality
- How applicants are assessed.

A checklist to assist providers to implement admissions transparency requirements is in Attachment 3.

Accessibility

Admissions information on a website or in a brochure is considered transparent and accessible if a prospective student can easily find the information they need to make a decision to apply for a course and choose their preferred provider, and can readily understand the language used.

The most important thing is to use simple and clear language in describing how applicants are assessed for a course and how they apply, whether this is in written materials or is used by staff emailing or talking with prospective students. When preparing materials, it is helpful to try to put oneself in the shoes of a prospective student and try to view the information through their eyes, rather than describe everything the provider offers. That is, try to be student-driven rather than provider-driven in developing and presenting information.

Good practice example 1: Admissions information is presented for the four academic background categories

Information for prospective students should be grouped for presentation to students from the different academic backgrounds as per the glossary at Appendix B in the *updated specification* and also attached to this *Good Practice Note* in Attachment 4.

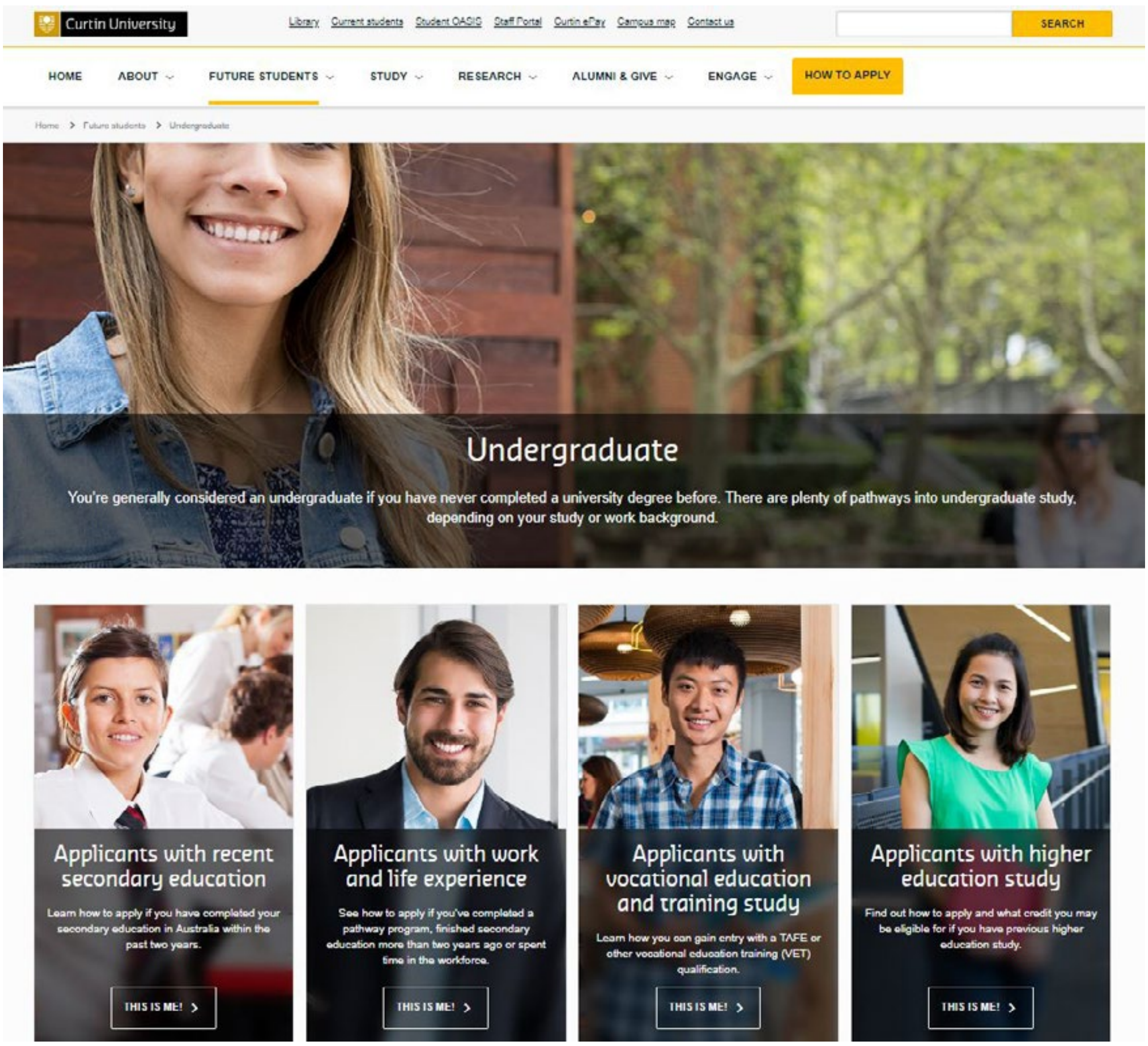
- Group A – Higher education study
- Group B – Vocational education and training (VET) study
- Group C – Work and life experience
- Group D – Recent secondary education (within the past two years).

A description of each category should be provided so that prospective students can decide which category best applies to them. For example, ATARs are only used in admissions for applicants whose secondary education is within the last two years. If a student has an older ATAR, they should look to the information under the other three categories to find the information best suited to their needs.

Curtin University's home page has a clear heading of 'Future Students' at the top of the page, from which a prospective student can choose 'Undergraduate' as an option and land on the page shown in Figure 1 which clearly establishes at the outset the four backgrounds from which students can search for further information. Alternatively, the student can select 'How to Apply' from the home page and reach the same page with just one click.

Curtin lists the four backgrounds in a different sequence to that above which is fine in this context as they are being used as a springboard for a person to find more information depending on their academic background. This is consistent with the advice given in the information set mock-ups (Appendices C and D of the *updated specification*) that the order is optional. If displaying information about the student and ATAR profiles described in Appendices C and D, then it is recommended to follow the order in the templates to make it easier for prospective students to compare providers. These profiles will be discussed in more detail throughout this *Note*.

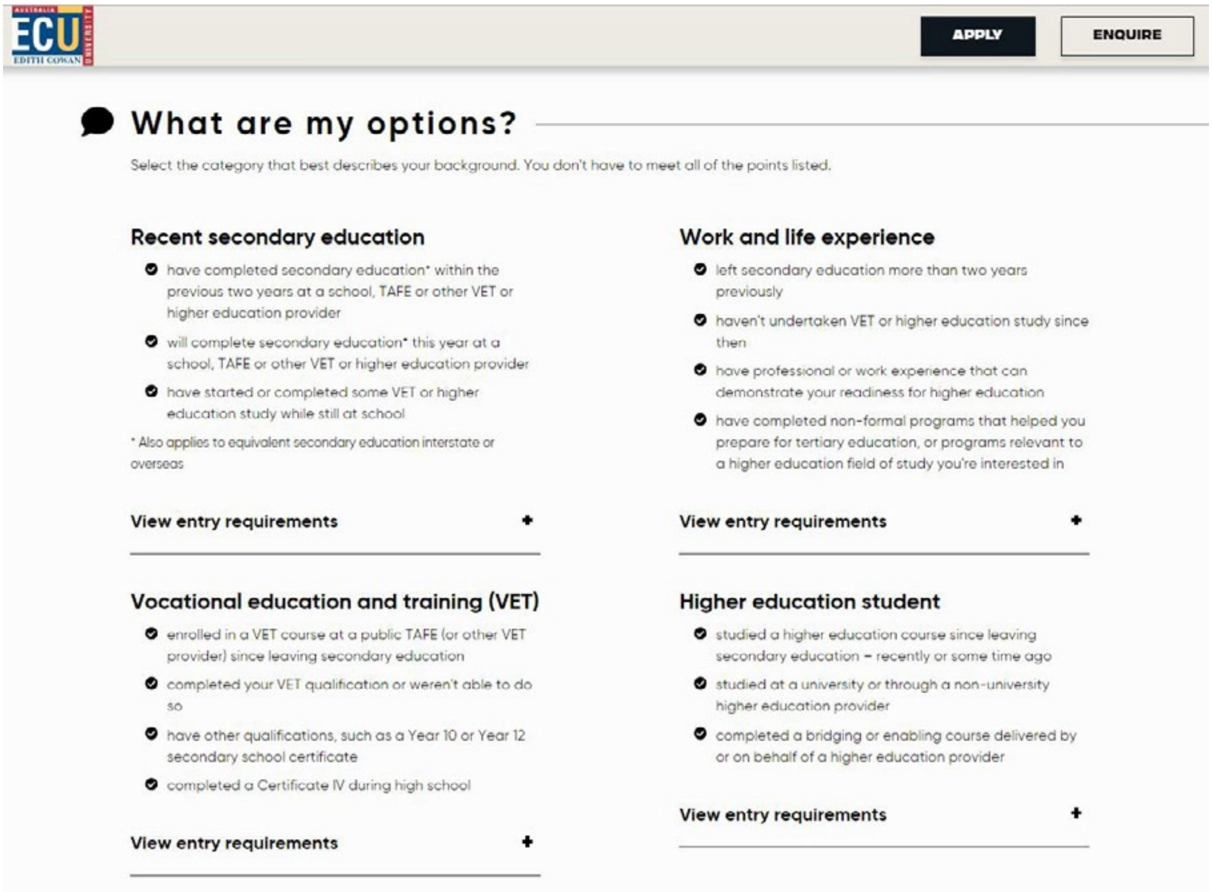
Figure 1: Curtin University's General Admissions Landing Page



Source: https://futurestudents.curtin.edu.au/undergraduate/

Edith Cowan University (Figure 2) explains the options for prospective students and a little about each category whilst noting at the start that ‘you don’t have to meet all of the points listed’, which is encouraging for prospective students. A drop-down menu under each academic background elaborates on the entry requirements.

Figure 2: Edith Cowan University – What Are My Options?



Source: https://www.ecu.edu.au/future-students/applying

Good practice example 2: Admissions information is easily accessible from the homepage

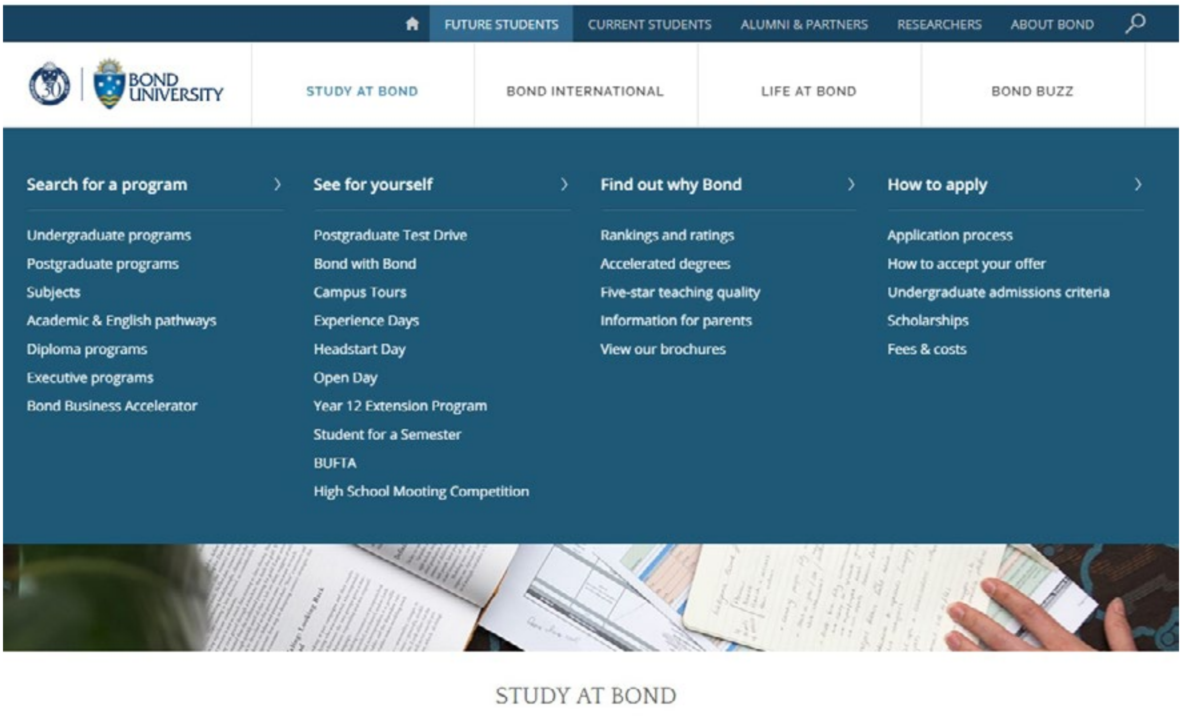
It is vital to enable prospective students to easily understand information about admissions by having a clear and simple provider website with features as follows:

- Make the location of admissions information obvious from the provider’s homepage using suitable headings, for example: ‘Future Students’, ‘Admissions Information’, ‘Apply’, ‘How to Apply’ or ‘Study’ (Curtin University is an example as shown in Figure 1).
- Avoid the use of jargon which is used in the sector and by providers as headings such as ‘Admissions Transparency’ or ‘Information Sets’ as this will mean little to prospective students as a trigger to find out more. Such language could be used in text, if elaborated. Also, avoid headings that assume that students understand TEQSA’s existence and its role, for example: ‘TEQSA information’ or ‘TEQSA Admissions’.

- Remove any obstacles to easy access, such as the need to register and provide contact details before access to information is made available. This can be off-putting and deter people from going further. People may be concerned about their privacy, and/or concerned they will be hassled and pushed to make a decision before they are ready.

Bond University has an example of a clear and easily navigable website (Figure 3). 'Future Students' is a clear heading at the top of the home page. When 'Future Students' is selected, the mouse can hover over 'Study at Bond' where the reader has a range of options and can decide whether they would like to look at, for example, 'Undergraduate programs', 'Open Day', 'Campus tours' or 'Undergraduate admissions criteria'. In addition, the narrative under 'Experience Bond University' is warm and welcoming with phrases to attract prospective students ('You are always visible', 'Your lecturers will know you'), and their parents who are encouraged to feel their children will be looked after.

Figure 3: Options to choose from 'Future Students' at Bond University



Source: https://bond.edu.au/future-students

Good practice example 3: Websites are easily navigable to access information about admissions to different courses

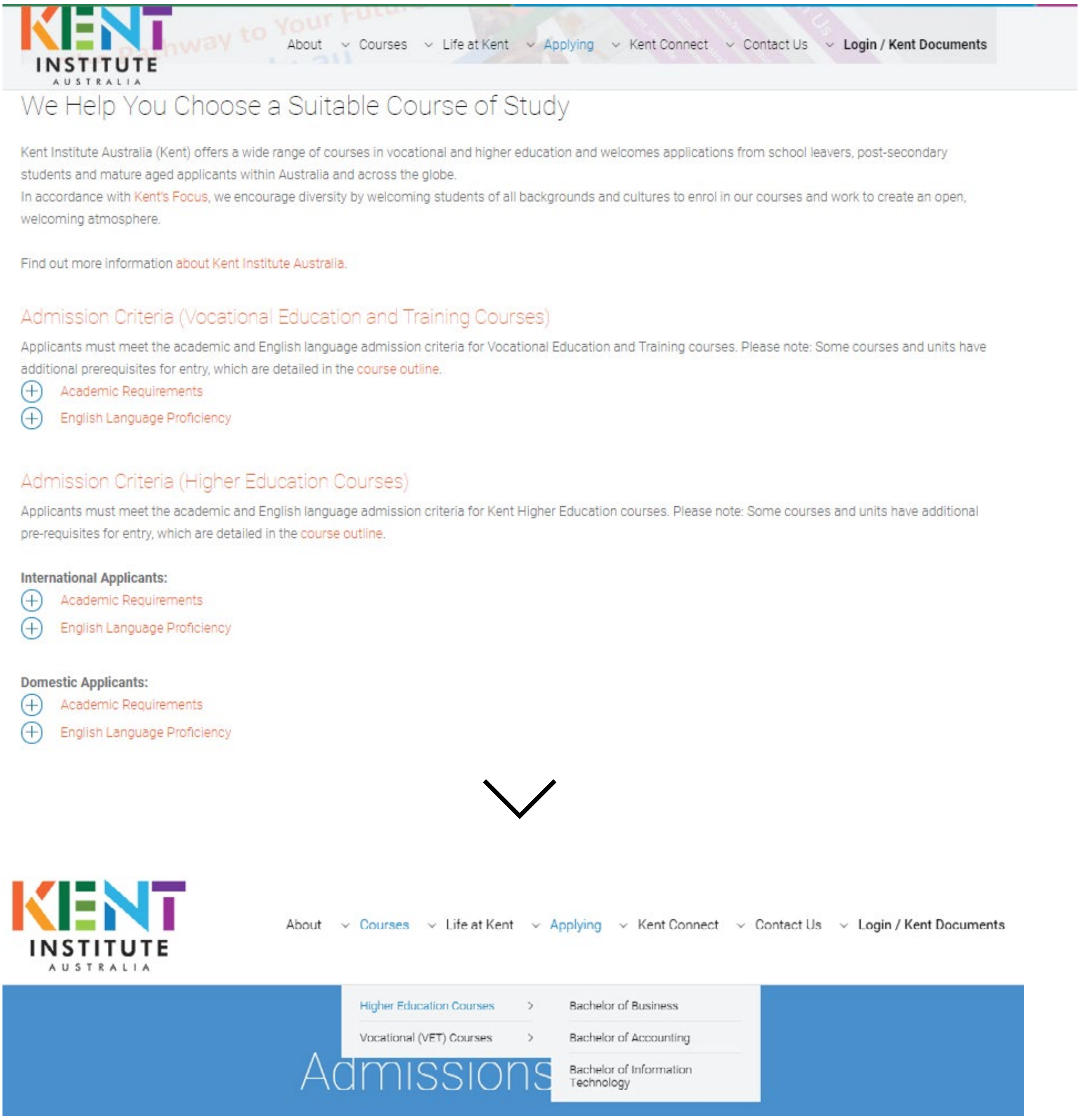
In addition to landing on a home page and finding a heading that takes the reader to information about admissions, there are further things to consider in terms of navigating the website. An overarching consideration is to minimise the number of clicks required to navigate the website.

- Consolidate similar information on one page rather than spreading it across a number of pages. That is, in order to obtain the information a prospective student requires, keep the number of pages the student needs to access to a minimum.

- A common style should be maintained across academic and administrative divisions to make it simple for prospective students to navigate easily between information about courses offered by different academic divisions. Clear links should be provided from the homepage to admissions information that is presented on a provider's website, especially where that site has different styles or domains from the homepage, or from the homepage to other providers where relevant.
- Ensure that information about whole-of-institution admissions is located at a higher level, or on a separate page, than course-specific admissions information. Where relevant, links from course-specific admissions information to whole-of-institution admissions information should be provided.

Kent Institute Australia (Kent) illustrates locating whole-of-institution information on one page with course specific information on a separate page. Figure 4 shows a summary page of admissions information for Kent as a whole, which is reached by holding the mouse over 'Applying' at the top of the home page and clicking on 'Admissions Criteria'. If the mouse hovers over the heading 'Courses', followed by 'Higher Education Courses', then information can be followed through for each course offered by Kent. For each course offered, the student is directed back to the whole-of-institution admissions information via a drop-down under 'Academic requirements' shown in Figure 5 using the four academic backgrounds discussed in Good Practice Example 1. If expressions such as 'mature age' are used in a higher education provider's description of student background, then they should be linked to the relevant academic background category, which is 'work and life experience' as is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 4: Whole-of-Institution Admissions Information on Separate Pages from Course-Specific Information – Kent Institute Australia



Source: http://kent.edu.au/kent3/entry-requirements/

Figure 5: Whole-of-Institution Admissions Information Obtained From Course-Specific Information (Bachelor of Business) – Kent Institute Australia

Domestic Applicants:

Academic Requirements

Applicants with Recent Secondary Education (within the past two years)

Australian Year 12 Students
Kent will admit students who have an Australian Certificate of Education, successful completion of Year 12 (Sound or Satisfactory achievement in all subjects, UAI 54.1 or ATAR 58.00).

Interstate Year 12
For students who have completed their year 12 in Queensland, Kent recognises an OP score of 17 for admission.

Applicants with Higher Education Study

Applicants who have undertaken any higher education study, within the last ten years since leaving school, may be eligible for admission to a Kent course with credit transfers (advanced standing). For more information on this process, see Course Credit/Recognition of Prior Learning.

Applicants with Vocational Education and Training (VET) Study

Applicants who have undertaken any VET study within the last ten years since leaving school may be eligible for admission to a Kent course with credit transfers (advanced standing). For more information on this process, see Course Credit/Recognition of Prior Learning.

Kent has approved articulation agreements in place for certain VET courses which specify the number of course credits you may be entitled to. (View our Articulation Agreements Register for the complete list).

Mature Age Students Applicants with Work and Life Experience

Kent understands that preparation for study is not restricted to formal educational attainment and that valuable intellectual and skills development can be gained through wide ranging experiences. Kent will review applications on a case-by-case basis from persons of at least 21 years of age, who do not have formal qualifications for entry but who seek admission to courses on the basis of their educational and skills development through experience and informal study.

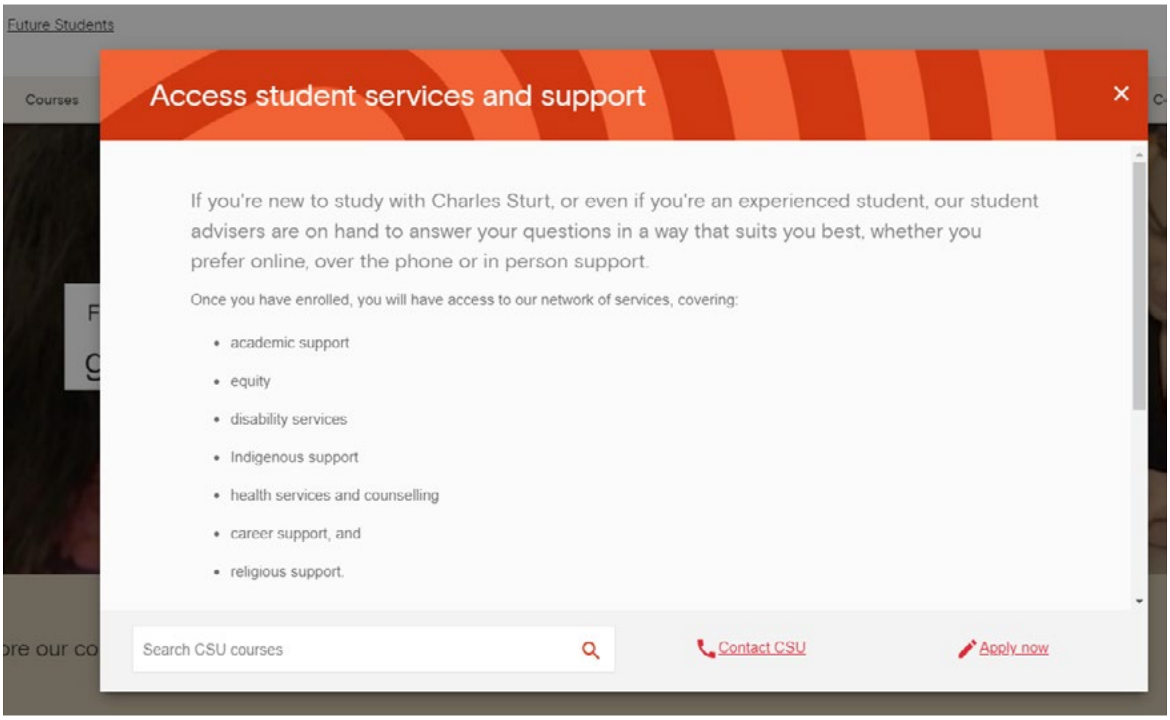
Source: http://kent.edu.au/kent3/course-bachelor-of-business/

Ensure that all information relevant to prospective students is accessible to the public and not in course information for current students. This should include information about:

- Course and unit details (often provided in handbooks)
- Important dates (including closing dates for applications)
- Appeals and grievances procedures
- Deferral
- Fees and charges
- Student services that may support a prospective student to study (for example, access to childcare, disability support, student grants, scholarships, and links to study allowance).

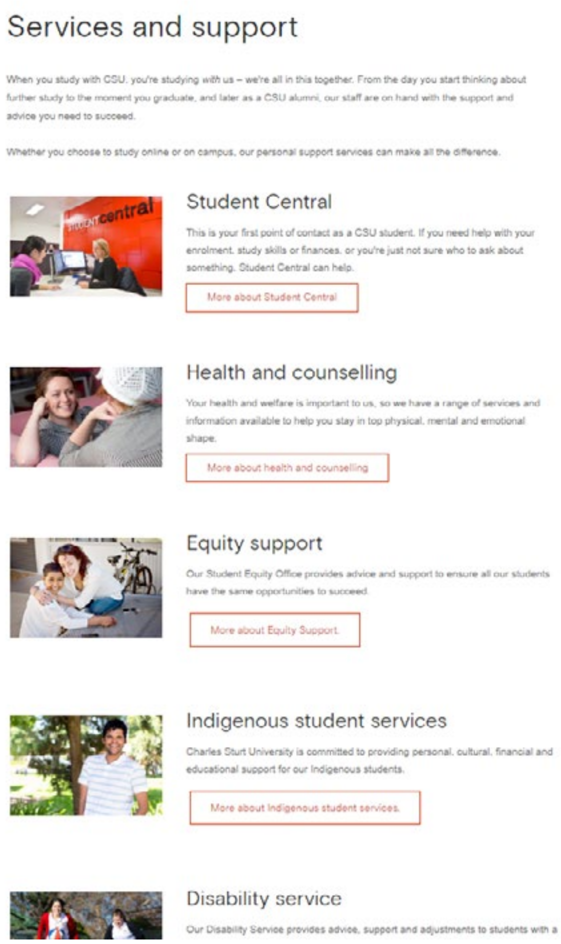
An option to explore the support services that Charles Sturt University (CSU) offers can be found with two clicks from the home page (Figure 6). A further click, or access via Uni Life from Future Students, leads the reader to a summary list of services shown in Figure 7 with the option to find out more information about each. A helpful addition to this, and the websites of other providers, would be to include childcare services as this can be a deciding factor for many prospective students, and helps to encourage diversity and opportunity.

Figure 6: Summary Advice About Support Offered by Charles Sturt University



Source: https://futurestudents.csu.edu.au/undergraduate#3093073

Figure 7: Support Services Offered by Charles Sturt University



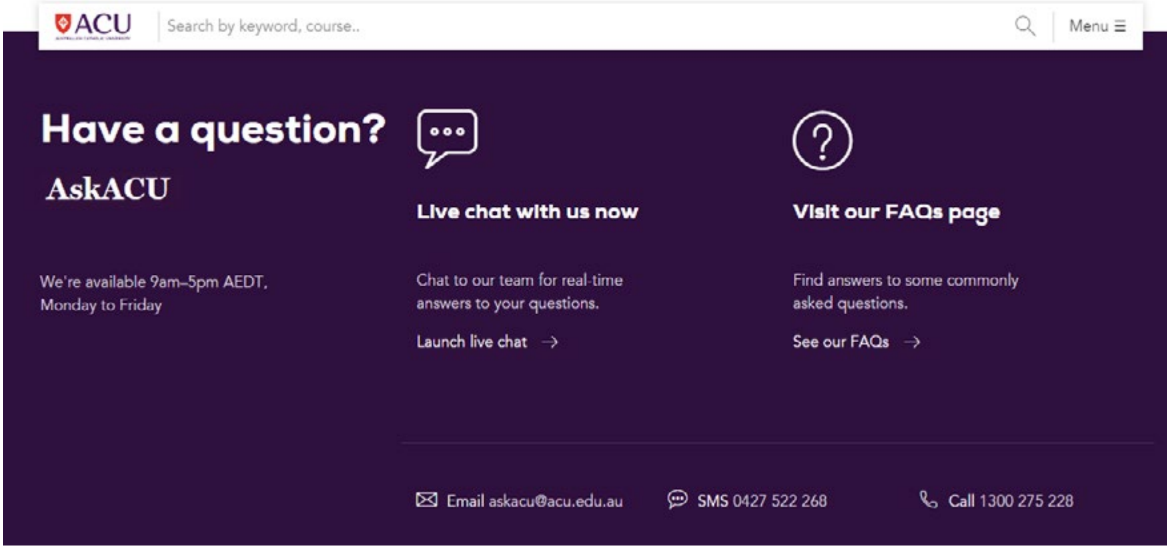
Source: https://futurestudents.csu.edu.au/unilife/support

Good practice example 4: Provide simple opportunities to obtain additional information

Other useful features to consider which would assist people to obtain further information about admissions are:

- Consider facilitating access to information about admission requirements by providing a search function, a site map or a course finder facility. Many providers have a drop-down finder option whilst searching for information on specific topics in case the reader decides to change track and follow another lead. The drop-down appears whenever the reader starts scrolling down a new page. An example of the search function appearing at the top is shown in Figure 8 for the Australian Catholic University (ACU).

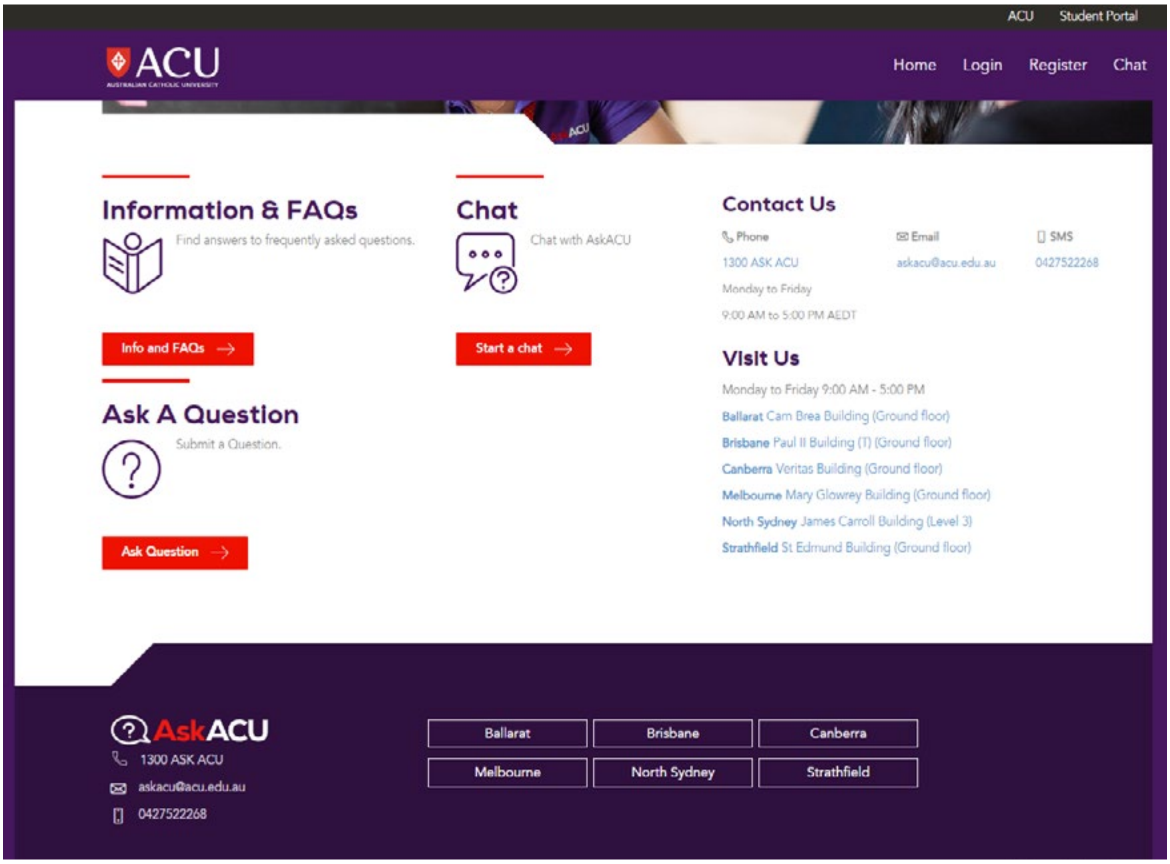
Figure 8: Opportunities for Further Information at Australian Catholic University



Source: https://www.acu.edu.au/study-at-acu/admission-pathways

ACU also provides opportunities to ask questions and find out more information via 'Frequently asked questions' (FAQs), email through AskACU, live chat, phone or SMS shown in Figure 8. If AskACU is accessed, it provides all these opportunities for further information and includes face-to-face enquiries at the University's various campuses as well (Figure 9). The drop-down finder described earlier enables a further search of ACU's website in case a student decides to do this before contacting the University.

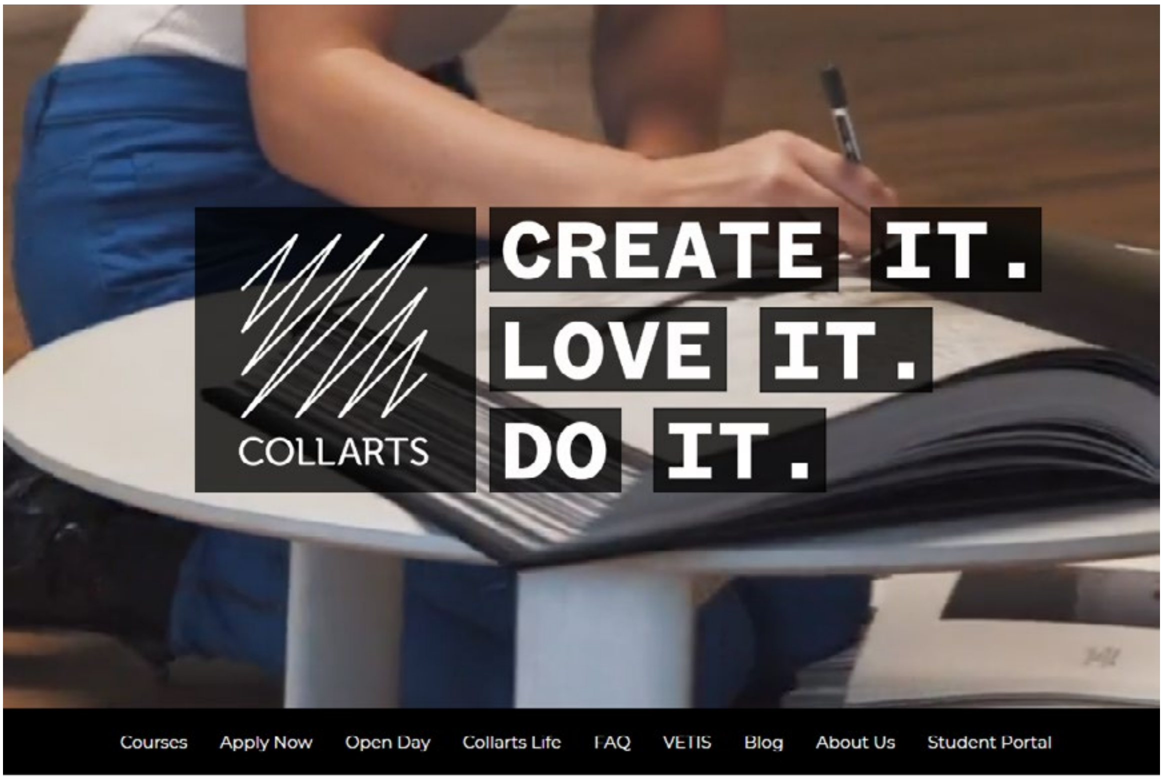
Figure 9: AskACU - Australian Catholic University



Source: https://acu.service-now.com/askacu

- Consider providing an email address and contact number for prospective students to ask questions about admission and describe the location of student administration offices which deal with queries from prospective students and the campus where relevant; ACU is a good example (Figure 9).
- Consider providing a link to the Open Day page all year round so that prospective students know what date it will be and can plan accordingly. Figure 10 shows an example from Collarts; an Open Day drop-down option is an option on the home page. Scrolling down below the image shown there is a heading which says 'Begin your career in...', below which it describes the nine creative areas in which Collarts offers courses describing them in terms of 'learn how to create / mix / manage / implement.....' depending on the creative area. These are practical descriptions of what a student could expect to learn and achieve from the courses, and the Open Day option on the same page lets them know when they could visit Collarts to find out more.

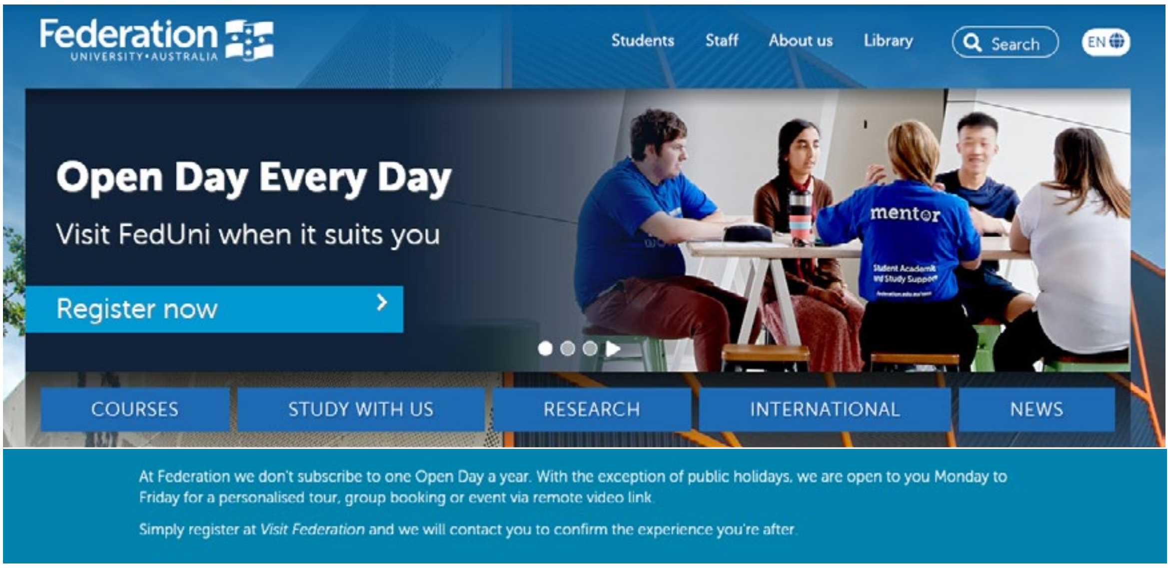
Figure 10: Collarts (College of the Arts Pty Ltd) Home Page With Open Day as an Option to Select



Source: https://www.collarts.edu.au/

Federation University adopts a different approach. A banner on the home page shows several highlights, one of which advertises 'Open Day Every Day' as shown in Figure 11. When 'Register Now' is clicked, a warm and inviting message is shown. Whilst it requires registering, its message is about showing you around and filling you in on options. If you prefer to search the website for information, that is also available by area of interest or course, so it doesn't feel like a sales pitch.

Figure 11: Open Day Every Day – Federation University



Source: https://federation.edu.au and https://federation.edu.au/openday

- If appropriate, include information about other ways in which prospective students can get to know the provider and the courses they offer, through information nights, virtual tours, campus tours, 'student for a day' sessions, or maps for self-guided tours.

  Returning to Figure 3, Bond University is a good example of providing links to an array of information for prospective students. Bond University is also a good example of a provider demonstrating engaging with parents ('Information for Parents') and secondary schools (eg 'Experience Day', 'Year 12 Extension Program', 'Headstart Day'). The activities also demonstrate ways of involving current students, for example, the Campus Tours are led by a Bond Student Ambassador.

Good practice example 5: Links from the provider's page to the Tertiary Admission Centre should be direct to the provider's page

It would be very helpful to prospective students if a link from a provider's web page to the relevant TAC takes them to the provider's page on the TAC, and not the TAC homepage. This would save them then having to navigate through the TAC's website in order to find the relevant institution and course. A smart-link can be obtained from the TAC so that if the TAC rearranged its website in some way, the link would still transfer the student from the provider's website to the relevant TAC page in which they were interested.

Figure 12 illustrates this navigation for Charles Sturt University (CSU) and the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) in New South Wales. The links shown require three clicks from CSU's home page to reach CSU on the UAC website whether the reader goes via 'Undergraduate' and searches for a course, say Bachelor of Arts, to the UAC page with information about CSU, or if they start with entering, for example, Arts into the search engine on the home page.

Figure 12: A Link from CSU's Website Takes the Viewer Directly to CSU on the UAC Website, Not UAC's Home Page

Source 1: https://futurestudents.csu.edu.au/courses/humanities-social-sciences/bachelor-arts

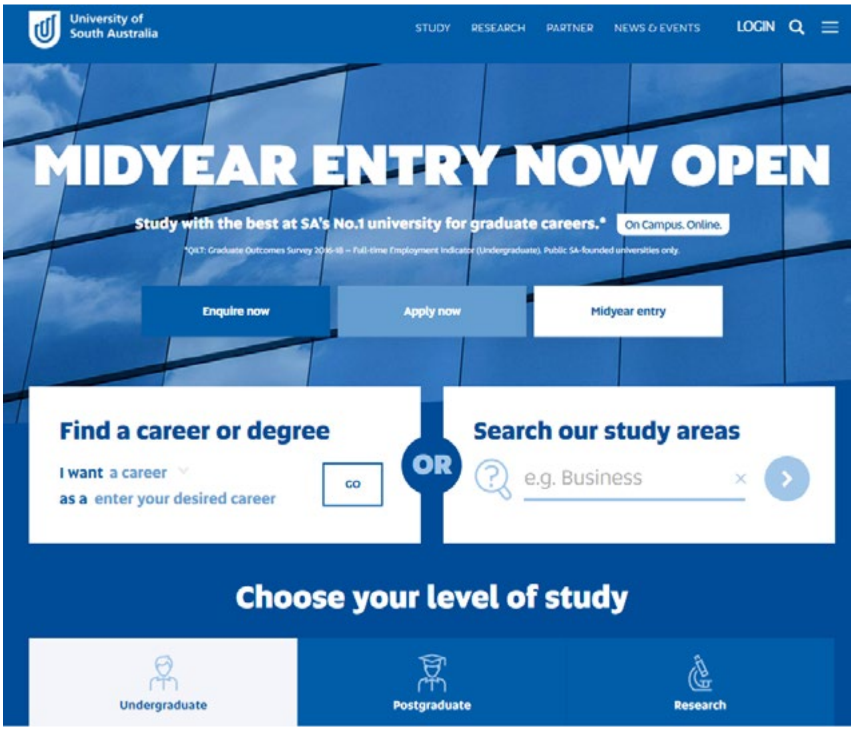
Source 2: https://www.uac.edu.au/index.php/future-applicants/institutions/charles-sturt-university

Good practice example 6: Provide information for students with different needs

Prospective students who have different needs must be able to access information which would help them with their application and understand how they would be supported if admitted to the institution. For example:

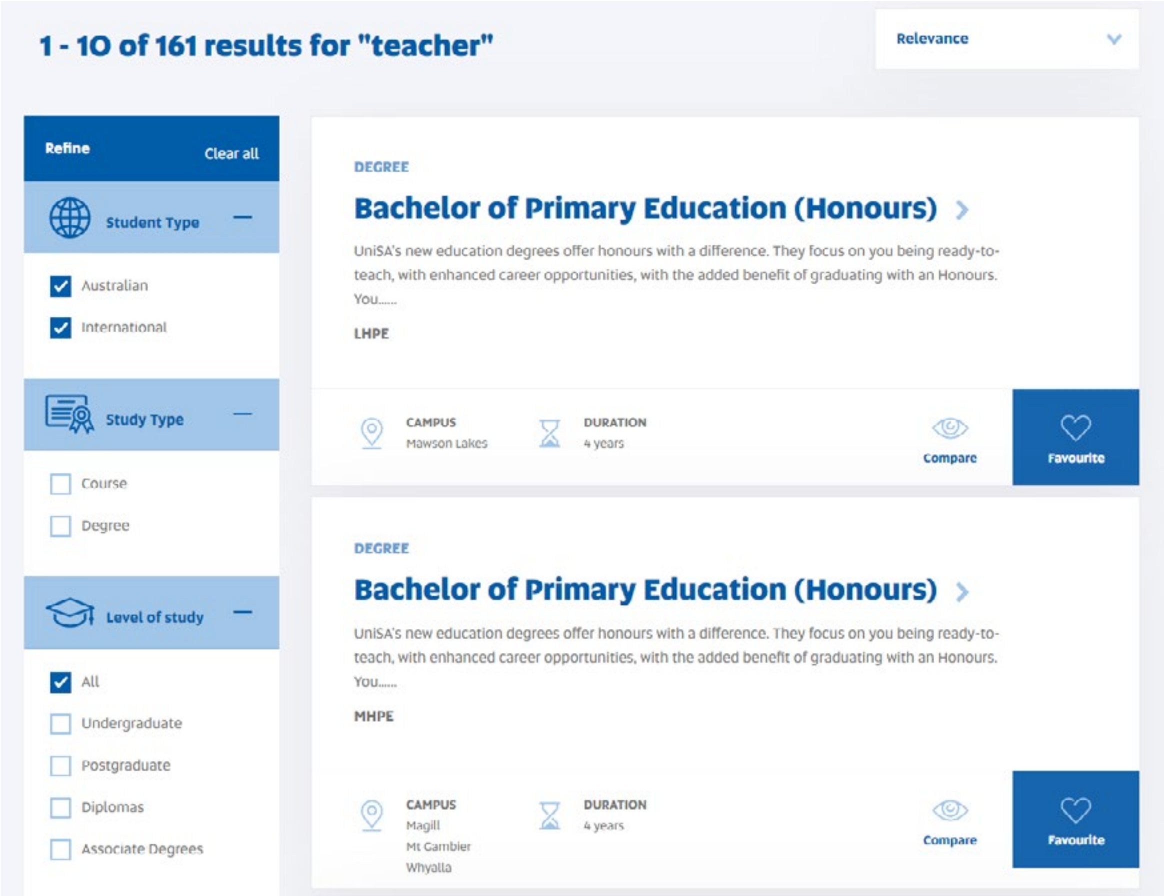
- Information on websites should be accessible to a wide range of people with disability. Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Australian Government agencies are required to ensure information and services are provided in a non-discriminatory accessible manner.
- The Australian Government provides information at Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.0 (www.australia.gov.au/accessibility). These Guidelines cover 'a wide range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible. Following these guidelines will make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and combinations of these. Following these guidelines will also often make your Web content more usable to users in general.'
- Consider providing a function which allows searching for information via entering a career rather than a specific course or study area. For someone who has little or no idea about higher education such as a first in family person, they may not know what course they need to do but may know that they are interested in a particular career. The University of South Australia adopts this approach very effectively, so a search for information can be done using career, course or study area (Figure 13). Figure 14 shows the result if 'teacher' is entered in the career search. No filters have been applied in this example but could be applied to narrow the options.

Figure 13: Find a Career or Degree – University of South Australia



Source: https://study.unisa.edu.au/

Figure 14: Find a Teaching Career – University of South Australia



Source: https://study.unisa.edu.au/

- Consider providing tailored products and support for prospective students such as Indigenous people, people with disability, people from a disadvantaged financial background, or people who would be the first in their family to undertake higher education. Ensure that this information is easy to find and access. Figure 7 (Charles Sturt University) provided some useful examples.

  Using the case of first in family, it is important to think about how to help someone who may have no knowledge of higher education, and how they could best be helped to access and, importantly, understand admissions information. Providing information on a website alone may not suffice. In addition to making the information as simple as possible on websites and in brochures, provide opportunities to make an appointment to meet a staff member who literally takes them through the process step by step in a supportive environment, ideally in person, but alternatively via phone or teleconference. If face-to-face, this might be in small groups, but in some cases an individual approach may work better. Involving a student ambassador with a similar background may also be helpful either with a staff member, or alone if appropriately trained and employed on a casual basis. Many providers have a chat line prompt throughout their websites and/or offer the opportunity to visit the provider and discuss matters (ACU is an example shown in Figures 8 and 9).

  Similarly, for applicants with disability, a personal approach may be required to assist them to understand how they can be supported, what mechanisms exist to help them with their application (if needed), what services exist to support them if they go ahead with their application and are successful, and what, if any, limitations may exist in their studies as a result of their disability.

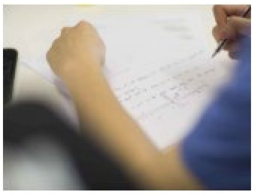
The University of Adelaide lists its entry pathways (Figure 15) with one click from the home page which includes two avenues of support. These are the four academic backgrounds described in Good Practice Example 1 plus two preparatory /access programs. The 'University Preparatory Program' is designed for people who have never been to university or have not studied for a long time. The University also has a preparatory program and an access scheme for people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. If admitted, the University has a number of support mechanisms for the students.

Figure 15: Entry Pathways – The University of Adelaide

Study at Adelaide / Undergraduate / Entry Pathways

ENTRY PATHWAYS

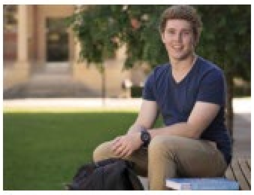
There are many ways you can gain entry into one of our degrees. See below for the options available to you.



Higher education study

If you have already completed at least six months of a recognised higher education program elsewhere or completed University Foundation studies or a bridging or enabling program - you can use these qualifications to gain entry into the University.

FIND OUT MORE



Work and life experience

Work and life experience includes a combination of factors that demonstrate your readiness for higher education, including professional and/or work experience (including in the **Australian Defence Force**), interviews, and the **Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT)**.

FIND OUT MORE

University Preparatory Program

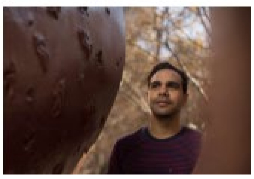
The University Preparatory Program (UPP) is a free one year program for anyone who wants to get ready to enter university.

FIND OUT MORE

Vocational education and training (VET) study

Completing a TAFE or VET (vocational education and training) qualification at a certificate IV-level or higher can get you entry into many University of Adelaide degrees.

FIND OUT MORE



Aboriginal and Torres Islander pathways

If you identify as an Indigenous Australian, we have some excellent additional programs designed to help you study with us. Check out our Wirltu Yarlu University Preparatory Program and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Scheme.

Source: https://adelaide.edu.au/study/undergraduate/entry-pathways/

Good practice example 7: Consult users about their experience when designing or updating a website

Academic and administrative staff who know their institution well have an in-depth knowledge of the policies and procedures in their institution and a shared understanding of higher education language and its extensive use of acronyms. When developing and updating websites and other information, they may unwittingly use language which is unfamiliar to those who are not yet immersed in the environment such as prospective students. There is also the risk that the information will favour students from families with English as a first language and those who have knowledge and experience of higher education.

To address such issues, consider establishing a reference group of students with different backgrounds to assist and provide feedback on this work. Such reference groups might include students who are relatively new to the institution and may still be unfamiliar with what the institution offers compared with later year students. That said, later year students will still bring useful eyes to inform the materials being prepared. Diversity amongst such groups is important. A number of providers have student ambassador programs (mentioned in Good practice example 3 in relation to Bond University), and part of their responsibilities could be to help with the design or updating of websites.

Such service to the institution could be recognised in some formal way as a contribution to the course in which they are enrolled or some other mechanism.

Also, consider asking secondary school students to read the website or brochure and identify any terms they do not understand.

Consistency and comparability

Admissions information is considered transparent if it is consistent and comparable wherever the provider offers information about their courses (including the website, brochures, handbooks, and TACs). Admissions information can be very confusing for prospective students, teachers and parents, and that confusion is compounded if the information differs across the website, brochures, handbooks, and information provided by the TACs. This can occur both within and across providers. Prospective students should be able to find admissions information that uses the same terms and covers the same types of information across all providers, as described in the *updated specification.*

Consistency and comparability are not the same as uniformity; a core information set does not mean that providers cannot present additional information, relevant to their context. Similarly, consistency in the approach to providing admissions information across providers is not the same thing as uniformity of admissions criteria. Adhering to this *Good Practice Note* does not compromise the autonomy of providers in relation to their admissions criteria.

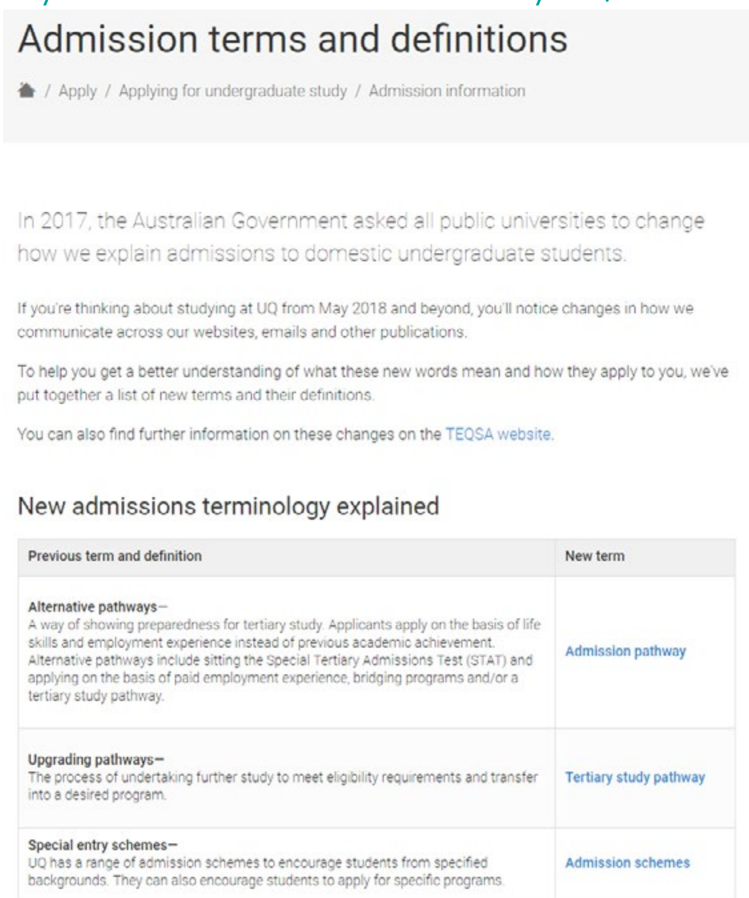
Good practice example 8: Use consistent information across various platforms

Some approaches to adopt are:

- Present information consistently across the website, brochures, handbooks and any other materials, and importantly, make sure the information is consistent with the information in the relevant TAC.
- Ensure language is consistent between the various platforms used by the institution, and ideally, the look and feel will be similar.
- Consider publishing the public glossary that is included in Appendix B in the updated specification (attached to this Note as Attachment 4) and add any technical or other terms that might be institution or course-specific.

  Some providers have developed their own glossary. For example, in a short glossary, the University of Queensland explains the changes being implemented, and they direct people to the TEQSA website for further information (Figure 16). This glossary lists previous terms and definitions, and provides the new terms to be used. This would be useful for prospective students if they come across both expressions, and for parents, teachers and career advisors who know the previous terms. But it won't take much time to be irrelevant for school-leaver prospective students. At ACU, the focus of its glossary is on being sympathetic about the confusing terminology used in universities and has a much broader reach than admissions information but includes the relevant terms (Figure 17).

Figure 16: A Glossary of Admission Terms at the University of Queensland



Admission terms and definitions

/ Apply / Applying for undergraduate study / Admission information

In 2017, the Australian Government asked all public universities to change how we explain admissions to domestic undergraduate students.

If you're thinking about studying at UQ from May 2018 and beyond, you'll notice changes in how we communicate across our websites, emails and other publications.

To help you get a better understanding of what these new words mean and how they apply to you, we've put together a list of new terms and their definitions.

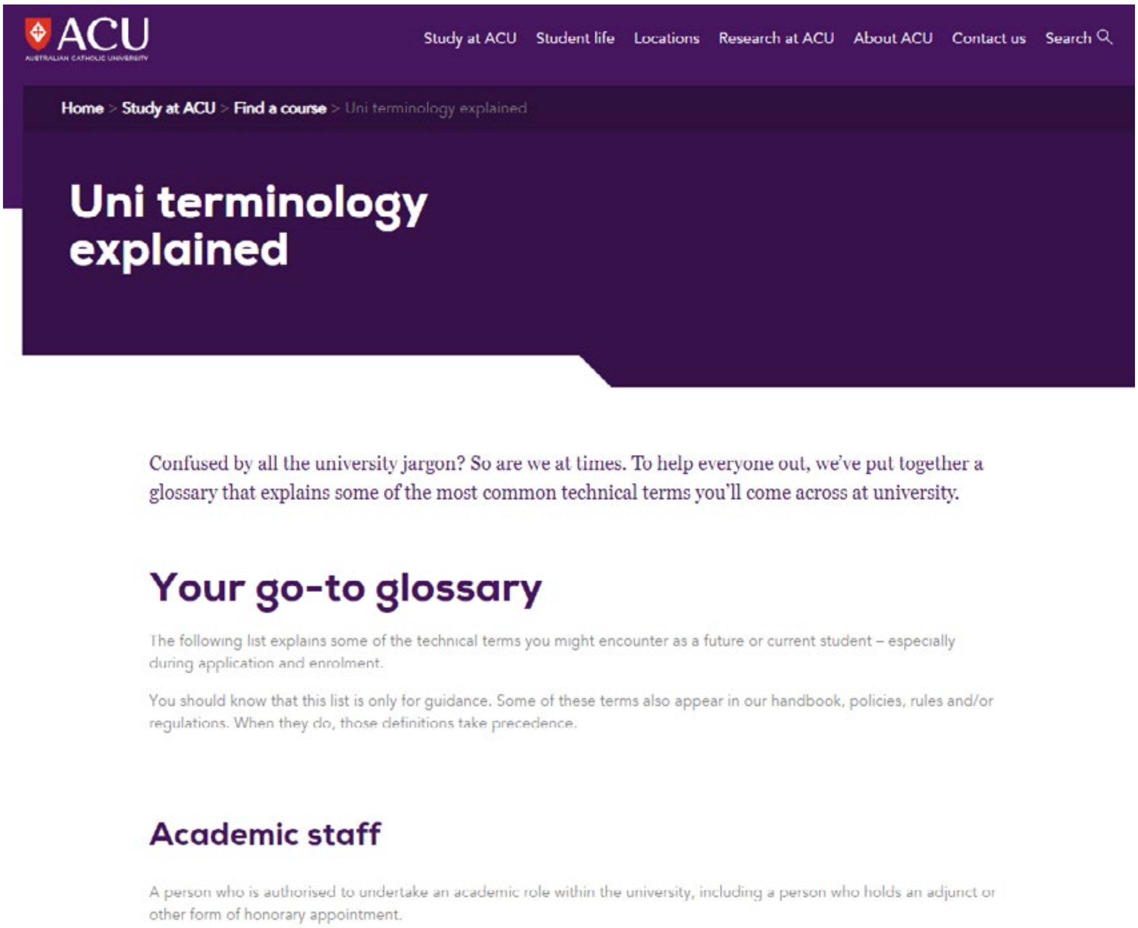
You can also find further information on these changes on the TEQSA website.

New admissions terminology explained

Previous term and definition	New term
Alternative pathways– A way of showing preparedness for tertiary study. Applicants apply on the basis of life skills and employment experience instead of previous academic achievement. Alternative pathways include sitting the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) and applying on the basis of paid employment experience, bridging programs and/or a tertiary study pathway.	Admission pathway
Upgrading pathways– The process of undertaking further study to meet eligibility requirements and transfer into a desired program.	Tertiary study pathway
Special entry schemes– UQ has a range of admission schemes to encourage students from specified backgrounds. They can also encourage students to apply for specific programs.	Admission schemes

Source: https://future-students.uq.edu.au/apply/undergraduate/admission-terms-definitions

Figure 17: 'Uni Terminology Explained' – Australian Catholic University



Source: https://www.acu.edu.au/study-at-acu/find-a-course/uni-terminology-explained

Good practice example 9: Use clear and simple language and remove the terms to be avoided

Consistent language should be used so that prospective students can readily compare courses and institutions. Providers should use the common terminology and data definitions defined in Appendix A and the public glossary at Appendix B of the *updated specification*. These definitions are also consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

When updating admissions information, ensure all 'terms to be avoided' described in the *updated specification* (Appendix A, page 9) have been removed. These changes may prove a little challenging for those who have worked in higher education for some time to remember the correct phrases to use, but it is important for admissions transparency to ensure students can make informed study choices. Staff preparing websites, brochures, handbooks and other documented materials, and staff who deal with prospective students in person must be briefed and trained on the admissions transparency work, especially the terminology that should, and should not, be used.

Find and replace the following terms:

- 'Forced offers' - to be removed and included as part of adjustments or non-ATAR criteria, depending on whether ATAR was a factor in the selection process.
- 'Bonus points' - to be replaced by adjustment factors, that is, points which are added to an ATAR to derive a 'selection rank' for a particular course. The glossaries in both examples shown in Figure 16 (University of Queensland) and Figure 17 (ACU) define this expression.
- 'ATAR cut-off' and 'Clearly-in ATAR' – to be replaced by Lowest ATAR to which an offer was made or Lowest selection rank to which an offer was made, depending on the context.

  Providers should let prospective students know what the lowest ATAR of the student to which an offer was made was, for each of its courses using the most recent data available. That is, these data should be updated regularly; at least once or twice a year depending on the number of intakes the provider has each year. Some institutions provide these data on a course by course basis. The University of Wollongong provides an ATAR profile on its course pages, accessed by expanding the Admission profile tab. The ATAR profile for the Bachelor of Arts is shown in Figure 18. The table shows the highest, median, and lowest ATAR and Selection Rank for students offered a place wholly or partly on the basis of their ATAR. To assist students in interpreting this data, definitions of the ATAR and Selection Rank are available by clicking the blue question marks. There is also a link to the ATAR-based Admission page, which provides more in-depth information on the difference between these two measures, as well as commonly available adjustments.

Figure 18: ATAR Profile for the Bachelor of Arts at the University of Wollongong

ATAR PROFILE

This table relates to all students selected on the basis of ATAR alone or ATAR in combination with adjustment factors. For more information on adjustment factors commonly available to applicants, see 'ATAR-based admission'.

ATAR profile of ATAR-based offers in 2018	ATAR	Selection Rank
Highest rank to receive an offer	95.10	98.55
Median rank to receive an offer	69.65	74.65
Lowest rank to receive an offer	59.55	65.40

< 5: Less than 5 ATAR-based offers made
N/A: Data not available for this item
N/P: Not published (less than 5 ATAR-based offers made)

Source: https://coursefinder.uow.edu.au/information/index.html?course=bachelor-of-arts

- 'Recognition of prior learning' (RPL), 'advanced standing' and 'credit transfer' are the terms that should be used to explain the credit available for previous learning. 'Credit for Prior Learning' is not in the glossary (Attachment 4) so if a prospective student wanted an explanation they would not find it, which might be frustrating.

  Macquarie University has a detailed profile of what might be considered as RPL on its website, which a prospective student would find very encouraging and inclusive. Macquarie sets out two types of learning — formal learning, and informal and non-formal learning — via drop-down fields. Figure 19 shows Macquarie's RPL description and the informal and non-formal learning types of learning drop-down field.

Figure 19: Recognition of Prior Learning – Macquarie University

Get credit where credit is due with Macquarie's Recognition of Prior Learning

You've worked hard to get where you are – whether that's through prior study, work experience or community involvement. At Macquarie, we recognise all of the different elements that come together to make you *you*.

With our Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy, you could get credit for all that hard work, reducing the duration of your course and freeing you up to get to your future sooner. We'll review your previous learning experiences – whether they're formal qualifications or other types of non-formal and informal learning. You could get a head start for both entry into and credit towards your course.

We consider two main forms of prior learning for potential credit:

Types of learning

Formal Learning +

Informal and Non-formal Learning –

Informal Learning is gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences.Informal Learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

Non-formal Learning takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

Evidence of Informal / Non-formal Learning

In order to obtain entry or credit at Macquarie based on informal or non-formal learning, a statement and documentary evidence must be provided to support your claim. Evidence needs to document your prior learning and demonstrate either:

- a standard of learning required for admission to your specified Macquarie degree program and/or
- achievement of the specific learning outcomes of the unit(s) for which credit is sought.

Some examples of documentary evidence for informal and non-formal learning include:

- Certificates and statements of attainment from courses sponsored by employers or professional bodies, including information about the course of study
- Results from other non-accredited courses from various education and training providers (eg. MOOCs), including outlines of any units studied
- Employment history and employment position descriptions
- Letters of reference from employers, including direct supervisors, verifying your knowledge, skills and experience

Source: https://www.mq.edu.au/study/admissions/recognition-of-prior-learning

Having a definition of credit is also important. Although one of the preferred terms is not used, Monash University clearly sets out what credit for prior learning means and describes the three recommended expressions (credit transfer, articulation and RPL). Monash provides a very useful tool to search the outcomes of previous credit applications, which would give a prospective student a good idea of the sorts of things taken into account (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Explanation of Credit for Prior Learning – Monash University

Applying for credit for prior learning

Credit is the recognition of previous study or learning that can be counted towards a qualification. This can reduce the number of units required to complete a course of study.

Types of learning

Different types of learning are assessed for equivalency to Monash study or to the prerequisite qualification for admission to a course. These are:

Formal learning that takes place through a structured program of learning and assessment that leads to the full or partial attainment of a recognised qualification.

Non-formal learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification.

Informal learning gained through work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

Credit processes

You can get credit for previous study or learning through one or more of the following processes:

A credit transfer provides you with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification. This is based on equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications.

Articulation enables you to progress from one completed qualification to another with admission and or credit in a defined pathway.

Recognition of prior learning involves assessment of your relevant prior learning to determine the credit outcomes of your application for credit.

Credit search

You can use the credit search online to see some outcomes of previous credit applications at Monash. Please note that the system is a guide only.

Source: https://www.monash.edu/admissions/credit

- Avoid using acronyms and jargon. As per Good practice example 7, consider testing readability and understanding of terminology by asking current students or secondary school students to read the website or publications, identify terms they do not understand and provide their thoughts on how best to present information.
- If adopting the new common terms or information sets is challenging, contact the TEQSA Admissions Transparency Team for advice:
    - Email: admissions@teqsa.gov.au
    - Telephone: 03 8306 2547
    - Web: www.teqsa.gov.au/admissions-transparency

Good practice example 10: Provide training for staff involved with the preparation of written materials or communicating directly with prospective students

Staff involved with preparing websites, brochures and other written materials must understand the common terminology to be used as set out in the *updated specification*, and the terms to be avoided. Similarly, staff involved in talking directly to or emailing prospective students must also use the correct terminology so that they are consistent with any of the written materials a prospective student may have read.

Training for such staff, either face-to-face or online, about the terminology and the admission criteria of their institution is recommended. They can then speak with confidence to prospective students, whether in response to a telephone call, a discussion across the desk in a student contact centre, or more intensive discussions with students who may not be familiar with higher education, have English as a second language, or disability.

Good practice example 11: Provide data in the student and ATAR profiles in the format set out in the Phase Two common terminology and information sets

The student and ATAR profile templates in Appendices C and D of the *updated specification* provide important information for prospective students. The student profile should use data from the most recent student admissions at the institution to show applicant background, numbers and percentages of students in each category. Appendix C is the data for the institution as a whole and Appendix D is the data for each course. Appendix D also has an ATAR profile template to show students how ATARs were or were not used for a course in the most recent admission period. The information in these profiles is useful because it gives students some idea of the likely peer cohort of new students in the institution and courses in which they are interested, and what ATARs were used. Providers should avoid changing the order of the academic background data in the student and ATAR profiles so that the data can be easily compared between providers.

Figure 21 shows the data for Charles Darwin University set out in the recommended way, including the three subsets of data for students with recent secondary education (solely based on ATAR, ATAR plus any adjustment factors, and ATAR not used). Think Education (Figure 22) is another example of setting out the data correctly.

Figure 21: Student Profile for Charles Darwin University

Admissions in 2019

The table below gives an indication of the likely peer cohort for new students at CDU. It provides data on all students who commenced undergraduate study and remained enrolled past the census date in Semester 1, 2018 including those admitted through all offer rounds, across all Australian campuses, and international students studying in Australia.

Applicant background (Semester one intake 2018)	No. of students	% of all students
A. Higher education study (includes a bridging or enabling course)	696	44.53%
B. Vocational education and training (VET) study	381	24.38%
C. Work and life experience (Admitted on the basis of previous achievement, not in the other three categories)	167	10.68%
D. Recent secondary education • Admitted solely on the basis of ATAR (regardless of whether this includes the consideration of adjustment factors such as equity or ATAR adjustments)	148	9.47%
• Admitted where both ATAR and additional criteria were considered (e.g. portfolio, audition, extra offer conditional on minimum ATAR)	12	0.77%
• Admitted on the basis of other criteria only and ATAR was **not** a factor (e.g. Special consideration, audition alone, schools recommendation scheme with no minimum ATAR requirement)	8	0.51%
International students	151	9.66%
All students	1563	100%

Notes

"<5" - the number of students is less than 5

N/A - Students not accepted in this category

N/P - Not published: the number is hidden to prevent calculation of numbers in cells with less than five students.

Source: https://www.cdu.edu.au/study/essentials/student-profile

Figure 22: Student Profile for Think Education

Applicant background	Semester one / Full year intake for 2018	
	Number of students	Percentage of all students
(A) Higher education study (includes a bridging or enabling course)	127	24%
(B) Vocational education and training (VET) study	154	30%
(C) Work and life experience (Admitted on the basis of previous achievement not in the other three categories)	119	23%
(D) Recent secondary education:		
• Admitted solely on the basis of ATAR (regardless of whether this includes the consideration of adjustment factors such as equity or subject bonus points)	42	8%
• Admitted where both ATAR and additional criteria were considered (e.g. portfolio, audition, extra test, early offer conditional on minimum ATAR)	0	0%
• Admitted on the basis of other criteria only and ATAR was not a factor (e.g. special consideration, audition alone, schools recommendation scheme with no minimum ATAR requirement)	39	8%
International students	39	8%
All students	520	100.00%

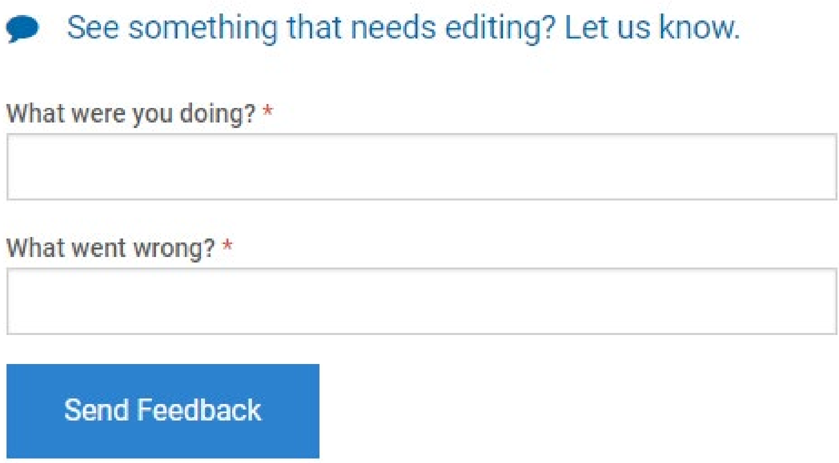
Source: http://www.think.edu.au/studying-at-think/general-admission-information-set

Data presentation and quality

Implementation of admissions transparency includes the presentation of a whole-of-institution student profile and course-specific student and ATAR profile tables. Prospective students rely on these data to guide them in their decision-making, so accuracy and maintaining the currency of the data is important.

The University of Queensland has adopted a useful process to help them correct any mistakes or present a piece of information more clearly to its audience. 'See something that needs editing? Let us know' appears on several webpages, and when pressed, expands to that shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23: University of Queensland – See Something That Needs Editing?



Source: https://future-students.uq.edu.au/apply/undergraduate/get-planning

Good practice example 12: Student and ATAR profiles use the most recent data available

The purpose of the institution and course profile tables is to give an indication of what the likely student cohort would be if a prospective student enrolled in the institution and undertook a course. Things to take account of include:

- Ensure a reference period is specified at the top of the student and ATAR profile tables, as per the templates in Appendices C and D in the *updated specification*.
- Follow the instructions for masking data to maintain privacy and prevent derivation as provided in the *updated specification*. Numbers less than five should be masked to maintain privacy. It may be necessary to mask additional cells to prevent numbers less than five being derived. Avoid suppressing the total.
- Check that the sub-totals presented in the student profiles add up to the total and the proportions add up to 100 per cent.

Figures 21 and 22 showed data for Charles Darwin University and Think Education for their institutions as a whole. They show the application period used, the number of students enrolled from each academic background category add up to the total, and the percentages in each category are correct. Figure 24 shows the student profile and ATAR profile data at a course level using the Bachelor of Science offered at the

Bundoora campus of La Trobe University as an example. The student profile table illustrates that there were less than 5 international students. Therefore, data for one of the recent secondary education backgrounds shows 'Not Published' to avoid derivation of the number in the hidden category. The reference period (Full Year 2018) is shown at the top of the tables.

Eastern College displays a student profile for the whole institution (Figure 25), and it has four categories of students with less than five, and whilst the gap between known enrolments and the total is small, it cannot be worked out how many were in each because the four categories have less than five.

Figure 24: Student and ATAR Profile for Bachelor of Science at La Trobe University

Student profile – Bachelor of Science (SBSC)

Location: Melbourne

Applicant background	Full year 2018 Number of students	Percentage of all students
(A) Past higher education study (includes a bridging or enabling course)	21	13.60%
(B) Past vocational education and training (VET) study	9	5.80%
(C) Work and life experience (Admitted on the basis of previous achievement not in the other three categories)	14	9.10%
(D) Recent secondary education: • Admitted solely on the basis of ATAR (regardless of whether this includes the impact of adjustment factors such as equity or subject bonus points)	102	66.20%
• Admitted where both ATAR and additional criteria were considered (e.g. portfolio, audition, extra test, early offer conditional on minimum ATAR)	N/P	N/P
• Admitted on the basis of other criteria only and ATAR was not a factor (e.g. special consideration, audition alone, schools recommendation scheme with no minimum ATAR requirement)	0	0.00%
International students	<5	<5
All students	**154**	**100.00%**

Notes:
"<5" – the number of students is less than 5
N/A – Students not accepted in this category
N/P – Not published: the number is hidden to prevent calculation of numbers in cells with less than 5 students

ATAR profile – Bachelor of Science (SBSC)

(ATAR-based offers only, across all offer rounds)

	ATAR (excluding adjustment factors) *	Selection Rank (ATAR/OP plus any adjustment factors) *
Highest rank to receive an offer	91.3	99.95
Median rank to receive an offer	65.15	70.1
Lowest rank to receive an offer	47.05	62

Notes:
"<5" – the number of students is less than 5
N/A – Students not accepted in this category
N/P – Not published: the number is hidden to prevent calculation of numbers in cells with less than 5 students

Source: https://www.latrobe.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/924423/bachelor-of-science-melbourne.pdf

Figure 25: Student Profile for Eastern College

8. Student Profile

The table below gives an indication of the likely peer cohort for new students at the institution. It provides data on students that commenced undergraduate study and passed the census date in the most relevant recent intake period for which data are available, including those admitted through all offer rounds, across all Australian campuses, and international students studying in Australia.

Applicant Background		Number of students	Percentage of all students
(A) Past higher education study (includes a bridging or enabling course)		9	34.7
(B) Past vocational education and training (VET) study		8	30.8
(C) Recent Secondary Education	Admitted solely on the basis of ATAR (regardless of whether this includes the impact of adjustment factors such as equity or subject bonus points)	< 5	< 5
	Admitted where both ATAR and additional criteria were considered (e.g. portfolio, audition, extra test, early offer conditional on minimum ATAR)	6	23.1
	Admitted on the basis of other criteria only and ATAR was not a factor (e.g. special consideration, audition alone, schools recommendation scheme with no minimum ATAR requirement)	< 5	< 5
(D) Work or Life Experience (Admitted on the basis of previous achievement other than the above)		< 5	< 5
International Students		< 5	< 5
All Students		26	100%

Notes:

- "
- N/A - Students not accepted in this category.
- N/P – Not published: the number is hidden to prevent calculation of numbers in cells with less than 5 students.

Source: https://eastern.edu.au/admissions/information

Good practice example 13: Provide information on how an ATAR is calculated and how the selection rank is derived

The UAC provides a definition of ATAR shown in Figure 26. Providing a definition of ATAR or a link to a TAC's website is recommended to ensure students understand the meaning, and that it is a rank, and not a score. The University of Sydney provides a definition of ATAR (Figure 27), as does Macquarie University, which also defines selection rank (Figure 28). These are helpful starts to understanding their meaning and the difference between an ATAR and a selection rank.

Figure 26: Definition of ATAR by UAC

AUSTRALIAN TERTIARY ADMISSION RANK

WHAT IS THE ATAR?

The ATAR is a rank, not a mark.

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is a number between 0.00 and 99.95 that indicates a student's position relative to all the students in their age group (ie all 16 to 20 year olds in NSW). So, an ATAR of 80.00 means that you are 20 per cent from the top of your age group (not your Year 12 group).

Universities use the ATAR to help them select students for their courses and admission to most tertiary courses is based on your selection rank (your ATAR + any applicable adjustments). Most universities also use other criteria when selecting students (eg a personal statement, a questionnaire, a portfolio of work, an audition, an interview or a test).

Source: https://www.uac.edu.au/future-applicants/atar

Figure 27: Definition of ATAR – University of Sydney

ATAR stands for **Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank**. It is a number between zero and 99.95 that tells you where you rank in your year group. It's based on overall HSC results and is designed to be a predictor of your first-year performance at university.

Your result should not be seen as an ATAR score, but rather your percentile position out of all students who started Year 7 with you. So an ATAR of 70 doesn't mean you got 70 percent – it means that you're in the top 30 percent of your year group.

Source: https://sydney.edu.au/study/study-options/undergraduate-courses/atar-explained.html

Figure 28: Definition of Selection Rank - Macquarie University

Selection Rank

75.00

The Selection Rank considers your Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) plus any allocated adjustment factors.

ATARs are calculated in each State and help universities determine who will receive a place in an undergraduate course.

International Baccalaureate (IB) students are allocated a UAC rank based on their total IB score.

Source: https://courses.mq.edu.au/2019/domestic/undergraduate/bachelor-of-science/entry-requirements#content

The specific calculation of ATAR is different in each state and territory but the result is designed to be nationally equivalent. The Overall Position (OP) refers to a Queensland student's position in a statewide tertiary entrance rank order based on their overall achievement in senior secondary subjects. Queensland will adopt the ATAR in place of the OP for students who commence Year 11 in 2019 and beyond.

Section 4 of the course information section in Appendix D of the *updated specification* sets out the information that is required; what an ATAR is, a selection rank, and the meaning of highest, lowest and median ATAR (with no adjustments), and highest, lowest and median selection rank. A selection rank includes the impact of any equity, subject or other adjustment factors made to an ATAR. A table template shows the ATAR profile for a provider's course for the most recent intake period for which data are available. For each course, providers are required to present the ATAR column but providing the selection rank column is optional. The ATAR and student profiles for the Bachelor of Science at La Trobe University in Figure 24 illustrates the data required on ATARs and selection ranks for Science.

Things to consider including:

- Providing a 'Minimum ATAR/Selection Rank required for consideration' or a 'Guaranteed Entry ATAR/Selection Rank' is only necessary if an institution or the course has adopted this approach. However, if applicants are assessed based on minimum or guaranteed ranks, then these must be published. If a Guaranteed Entry ATAR/Selection Rank changes before the application closing date, it should be updated promptly.

- Ensure that the ATAR data for recent secondary education (within the past two years) are disaggregated into the recommended three sub-categories (admission is solely on the basis of ATAR, on the basis of ATAR plus additional factors, and ATAR was not a factor). These are shown in the student profiles in Figures 22, 24 and 25 (Think Education, La Trobe University and Eastern College respectively). Ensure that any recent secondary student selected solely based on special consideration is included in the 'ATAR was not a factor' category of the student profile.
- If a student profile, created using the template from Appendix D of the *updated specification*, includes students in the solely ATAR or ATAR plus additional criteria box, an ATAR profile should also be created, using the template from Appendix D of the *updated specification* and displayed on the provider's website.
- Staff with responsibility for extracting these data for presentation in the institution and course tables are encouraged to record the step-by-step process of how they did it, so that the data is extracted in the same way in successive years and is therefore comparable.
- As recommended earlier, ensure that staff, who provide enrolment advice to prospective students, are trained to understand the new terminology, the terminology that is not to be used, how an ATAR is calculated, the difference between an ATAR and a selection rank, and how the selection rank is derived. This should also be explained on the website and in publications. If the provider or the TAC adjusts the ranking of applicants in ways that are different from other providers or TACs, they should explain this.

Good practice example 14: The course ATAR profile matches the course admissions information

Ensure that the course ATAR profile matches the course admission information. For example, if the course requires all applicants to attend an interview, ensure that the course ATAR profile shows the number of students selected based solely on ATAR is zero and ensure the course information is correct.

To demonstrate this, the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Art) at the University of Melbourne has an interview and the presentation of a folio of work as part of its admission requirements (Figure 29). The University advises that applicants who meet the interview and portfolio requirements will be ranked on this basis, provided they meet the University's subject pre-requisites and English language requirements. The student profile for this course for the 2018 admissions period shows N/A (not applicable) for the number of students admitted on the basis of ATAR alone or ATAR with adjustment factors (Figure 30) as these are not the basis for selection into this course.

Figure 29: Admission Criteria of an Interview and Portfolio for the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Art) – The University of Melbourne

Essential requirements for admission

PREREQUISITES

These are the subjects (with minimum scores) you must have completed to be eligible for entry to this course. For most applicants this will be done by with the relevant Australian Year 12 subject. However, there are other ways to satisfy a course prerequisite. Learn about course prerequisites

Units 3 & 4: A study score of at least 25 in English/English Language/Literature or at least 30 in EAL.

ADDITIONAL

Selection into the Bachelor of Fine Arts is talent-based. The selection process for this specialisation may include: interview and folio. For more information about the audition and selection process, see the Admission Criteria section below that applies to you.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

All applicants to the University of Melbourne must satisfy the English language requirements. For most domestic and international undergraduate applicants studying an Australian Year 12 this will be done by satisfying the English prerequisite of the course with an approved Australian Year 12 English subject. Read more about alternative methods of satisfying the English language requirement.

Source: https://study.unimelb.edu.au/find/courses/undergraduate/bachelor-of-fine-arts-visual-art/entry-requirements/

Figure 30: 2018 Student Profile for the Bachelor of Visual Arts – The University of Melbourne

Student profile of the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Art) in 2018

The table below gives an indication of the likely peer cohort for new Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Art) students at the University of Melbourne. It provides data on students who commenced undergraduate study and were enrolled after the census date in Semester 1, 2018. It includes those admitted through all offer rounds and includes all students offered.

Applicant background	Semester 1, 2018 Number of students	Semester 1, 2018 Percentage of all students
Higher education study	22	19.5%
Vocational education and training (VET) study	15	13.3%
Work and life experience (admitted on the basis of previous achievement not in the other three categories)	<5	<5
Recent secondary education (within the past two years):		
- Admitted on the basis of ATAR (regardless of whether this includes the impact of adjustment factors such as equity schemes)	N/A	N/A
- Admitted where both ATAR and additional criteria were considered (e.g. audition, interview etc)	N/A	N/A
- Admitted on the basis of other criteria only and ATAR was not a factor (e.g. audition, folio etc)	70	61.9%

Source: https://study.unimelb.edu.au/find/courses/undergraduate/bachelor-of-fine-arts-visual-art/entry-requirements/

How applicants are assessed

Admissions information should assist students to appraise their prospects for success in applying for admission to a course. If the criteria on which assessment is based for prospective students from different academic backgrounds are not provided, this may deter a person from applying.

Good practice example 15: Provide the criteria which assessment is based on, particularly if assessment is not based on ATAR alone

Give the prospective student an understanding of how their application will be assessed. This is particularly important for applicants who fit more than one academic background group and for those who are not being assessed on ATAR alone. Consider explaining:

- The criteria upon which assessment is based, and why these criteria have been chosen.
- What types of professional or community experience and informal learning would be considered relevant?
- What expectations or guidelines the provider has in relation to portfolio, audition or interview requirements, and the weighting of those in relation to an ATAR or selection rank.
- The weighting of study, work and life experience in an assessment and how these may add value to an application.
- How an applicant who has completed a bridging or enabling course, a Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) or other pathway program, is assessed differently from other applicants, if that is the case.

LCI Melbourne is a good example of setting out clearly what its expectations are in relation to admission into a creative or visual arts course. Figure 31 shows how it describes its selection interview and portfolio presentation as informal and friendly which is encouraging for prospective students, and it describes the sorts of things that might be included in a portfolio.

Figure 31: Selection Interview and Portfolio Requirements – LCI Melbourne

Applicants who wish to apply to LCI Melbourne through Creative Entry must submit a portfolio and attend an interview. If you wish to apply via Academic Entry, please read about the requirements here.

SELECTION INTERVIEW AND PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION

A selection interview and portfolio presentation is an informal, friendly discussion about your ambitions, interests and any relevant work experience. It is an opportunity to showcase a selection of your best creative work. You will be interviewed by one or two people, who will ask questions relating to LCI Melbourne's Selection Criteria.

THE PORTFOLIO

While not expected to be of professional quality, the portfolio should demonstrate a range of creative and technical skills relevant to the major and/or sub-major in which you are interested.

WHAT IS A PORTFOLIO?

A portfolio is a collection of your art, design, media or written work. The portfolio should demonstrate a range of creative and technical skills relevant to the major and/or sub-major in which you are interested. The portfolio must include:

- A cover letter that explains your interest in studying at LCI Melbourne, and your interest in a particular major/s or sub-majors. The letter should outline your interests, passions and achievements and be no more than 400 words.
- Names of two referees, including their job titles, email addresses and phone numbers. Referees could include: teachers, a principal, a work experience supervisor or employer. We may contact them to tell us about you. Please notify them that they have been listed as referees for your LCI Melbourne application.
- Written, printed, 3D and/or digital material, including both finished pieces and pieces showing your development work. All media are acceptable, so long as they demonstrate creativity and relevance to the area you wish to study. Please bring originals to the interview where possible. Where items are too large, photographs are also acceptable.

WHAT MEDIA CAN I INCLUDE IN MY PORTFOLIO?

A portfolio could include a selection of the following items, depending on which major and/or sub-major interests you:

- Communication Design: posters/advertising campaign; blog posts or articles, original typography.
- Fashion & Costume Design: fashion illustrations, fashion photography, photographs of pieces you have made, mood boards, storyboards.
- Filmmaking & Photography: photographs, with captions or short statements; film, animation, multimedia presentation.
- Graphic and Digital Design: an app, animation, website, posters or advertising campaign.
- Interior Design: mood/story boards, sample boards, events/interiors you have styled, sketches, models, designs, plans.
- Visual Arts: photographs or scans of excerpts of visual diaries and photographs or scans of 2D or 3D artwork such as paintings, illustrations, prints, sculptures, installations, sounds works and videos.

Source: https://www.lcimelbourne.edu.au/applications/creative-entry/portfolio-interview-guide

If this information is also available on a TAC website, ensure the information available from the provider is consistent.

Providers' policies and procedures about Recognition of Prior Learning, Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer should be consistent with the admissions transparency recommendations discussed in this *Good Practice Note* and be readily available on a provider's website, including any fees payable. Ensure that this information is clearly accessible to prospective students and is not limited to web pages for current students.

TAFE Queensland provides information about credit transfer as shown in Figure 32, and also provides a link to its policies and procedures, within which the policy around credit transfer can be found (Figure 33).

Figure 32: Information About Credit Transfer – TAFE Queensland

International | Current students | News and events | Contact

tafe Queensland | Information for | Courses | Study with us | About | How to apply

Fast track your way to a formal qualification by receiving recognition for the study you have completed or the skills you've gained from the workplace. This means less study time for you, and being qualified a whole lot sooner. We can directly apply credits from previous successful study and assess your skills to give you recognition.

Credit transfer

Credit transfer is a process that gives you credit for components of a qualification based on equivalent study that you've previously successfully completed.

If you've previously completed formal studies, for example at TAFE, another VET provider, or higher education provider, you may be eligible to receive credit towards a TAFE Queensland qualification.

If we assess that units in your course are equivalent to any you have previously completed, you will receive a credit transfer for those modules or units. That means you won't have to study or pay for those units again and they will count towards your qualification.

Benefits of credit transfer

If you've previously completed formal studies it's worth checking to see if you're eligible for a credit transfer as it can reduce the amount of units you need to complete to receive your qualification.

Credit transfer can also:

- save you time and money
- help you get your qualification sooner
- allow you to build on your previous studies.

Applying for credit transfer

To apply for a credit transfer you will need a credit transfer application form and supply relevant evidence such as qualification testamurs or graduation statements.

There are two separate forms for VET and Higher Education programs:

- Credit Transfer Application form - VET
- Credit Transfer Application form - HE

VIEW POLICY

Source https://tafeqld.edu.au/courses/ways-you-can-study/recognition-of-prior-learning.html

Figure 33: Policy on Credit Transfer – TAFE Queensland

International | Current students | News and events | Contact

tafe Queensland | Information for | Courses | Study with us | About | How to apply

Home | About | Policy and governance | Policies and procedures | Student rules and policies | Credit transfer, articulation and recognition of prior learning

STUDENT RULES AND POLICIES

10. CREDIT TRANSFER, ARTICULATION AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Credit Transfer

What You Need to Know

Credit Transfer Rules

Credit transfer is a process that provides you with credit for previous formal study that is equivalent to your nominated qualification.

For Vocational Education and Training students, credit transfer may be granted below 100% of a qualification.

For Higher Education students, the maximum credit allowed towards a qualification is:

- 50% of a qualification that is less than 3 years full-time in duration;
- 1 year of a qualification that is 3 years full-time in duration; and
- 1.5 years of a qualification that is 4 years full-time in duration.

Current and prospective students are eligible to apply for credit transfer when:

- You have previously successfully completed the unit/s through TAFE Queensland or other registered training organisation or higher education provider;
- The unit/s for which you are applying for credit was not awarded by the previous registered training organisation or higher education provider through credit;
- You are applying for admission or currently enrolled in unit/s with TAFE Queensland for which you are applying for credit;
- The unit/s is embedded within the qualification in which you are applying for admission or enrolled. Where the relevant unit/s are electives within the qualification's packaging rules, only the required number of electives for the qualification will be eligible for credit; and
- For User Choice students, the completed units/s are relevant to the vocational outcome of the current qualification (leading to employment

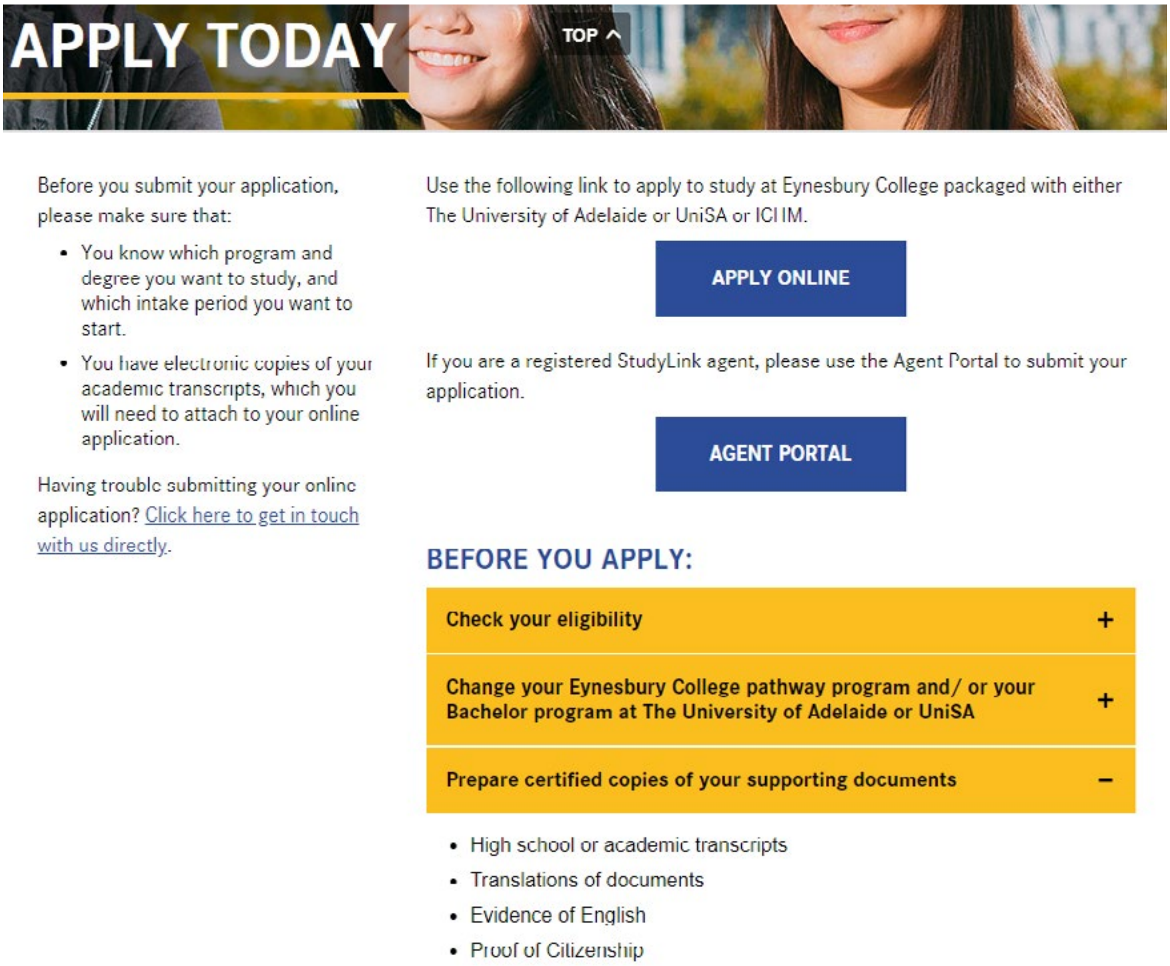
Source: https://tafeqld.edu.au/about-us/policy-and-governance/policies-and-procedures/student-rules-and-policies/credit-transfer-articulations-and-recognition-of-prior-learning.html

Consider including a list of application information (for example, birth certificate, other education results) and links to the forms that need to be provided so that prospective students can easily understand the documents they are required to submit with their application.

Three examples from providers of the information they specify about the documents required with an application for a course are:

- Eynesbury College provides a checklist for course applicants (Figure 34) which includes the links to apply, the documents required with the application, and the need for the documents to be certified.
- Melbourne Institute of Technology provides similar information and includes required documentation and hotlinks relating to applications for credit transfer from previous studies towards a course at the Institute (Figure 35).
- Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT) provides similar information and explains how to certify documents which is helpful for prospective students (Figure 36).

Figure 34: Documents and Online Links Required with an Application for a Course – Eynesbury College



Source: https://www.eynesbury.navitas.com/apply

Figure 35: Documents and Online Links Required for Application to a Course – Melbourne Institute of Technology

5.0 How to apply

You must apply through VTAC if you are:

- A current Year 12 student (Australian Year 12, the IB in Australia or New Zealand)
- Intending to apply to multiple institutions

You can apply directly to MIT if you are:

- A non-current Year 12 student or
- Intending to apply only to MIT
- Applying for November intake
- A Post Graduate student
- Too late to apply through VTAC

Preparing Your Application

You will need to provide the following documents with your application:

- Certified copies of your academic documents (e.g. transcript, certificates)
- Evidence of English language skills (if you completed studies from a non-English speaking country)
- Employment related documents e.g. employment certificate, reference letter, resume(where applicable)
- Any relevant professional/personal development course certificates
- Personal Statement (where applicable)

For information on key dates for applying and receiving offers for courses through VTAC, visit VTAC website

Apply Online Now

You will need to upload scanned copies of your academic and other application related documents when applying for a course online.

Credit Transfer

If you are seeking credit transfer for the same or similar unit/s previously completed at a different institute, you must submit the following supporting documents with your credit application:

- Certified copy of relevant certificates and results for any studies that you have completed
- Unit outlines
- Credit Transfer Application Form – download the form here

For further information about credit transfer, click here

Source: http://www.mit.edu.au/study-with-us/The_whole_of_institution_information_set

Figure 36: Documents and Online Links Required for Application for a Course – Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT)

Step 1: Apply online

International and domestic students can apply today using our online application form. Or, you can apply by filling out a printed application forma and emailing it, with your supporting documents to admissions@sibt.nsw.edu.au

Step 2: Make sure to attach supporting documents

All SIBT applicants are required to submit supporting documents as part of the application process. You can submit the documents while completing the online form or send the documents by email to admissions@sibt.nsw.edu.au.

The following certified* supporting documents are required:

- All academic qualifications (including school reports and official examination certificates)
- English test results or other evidence of English competency (if available and applicable)
- Translations of any documents that are not in English
- Any relevant employment documents (if applicable)
- If you have changed your name then official documents must be included

Australian students must also supply proof of citizenship or permanent residency, such as a certified* copy of the birth certificate, passport, citizenship certificate or visa.

* A certified document is a copy of an original that has been cited by a qualified person and confirmed as correct and legitimate. Documents may be certified by:

- The SIBT office in Sydney
- An authorised SIBT representative
- The institution that issued the documents
- A Justice of the Peace or Public Notary
- An Australian Embassy, Consulate or Education Centre

Source: https://www.sibt.nsw.edu.au/application-process

Consider indicating to prospective students that they may find information from more than one background group is useful or relevant to them.

Good practice example 16: Provide information on the relevant types of professional or community experience and informal learning

Where relevant to an institution or course, provide information about the types of professional or community experience and informal learning and give examples so that prospective students can readily understand whether and how their experience may or may not be used in assessment of their application.

Macquarie University's description of RPL shown in Figure 19 sets out in detail examples of evidence that Macquarie would consider as types of informal learning.

Good practice example 17: Provide detail on any expectations or guidelines for criteria that apply in addition to the ATAR, such as an audition or portfolio

Where relevant to an institution or course, provide information about how criteria (other than the ATAR), such as an audition or portfolio, are considered. Give examples, so that prospective students can readily understand how auditions will be managed, and what they are expected to perform; or what they should include in their portfolio and how it is to be presented. Swinburne University has portfolio guidelines (Figure 37) to assist students in its School of Design to seek exemptions or credit for prior learning.

Figure 37: Undergraduate Application Portfolio Guidelines - Swinburne University

Relevant for domestic and international undergraduate applicants

1. Applicants who wish to enter the first year of any Bachelor of Design course are required to have the appropriate ATAR score and prerequisite subjects*, or equivalent. ***You are not required to present a portfolio or attend an interview.***
2. Any applicant seeking exemptions or credit for prior studies, as part of their entry to any Bachelor of Design course, must submit a portfolio and/or showreel along with academic transcripts from previous institutions.

Here are a few guidelines to follow for development of portfolios for those applicants seeking exemptions or credit for undergraduate courses delivered by School of Design.

Portfolio / showreel format:

- A consolidated PowerPoint, PDF, Flash or .MOV file on a CD formatted for both PC and Macintosh or, alternatively, on a DVD.
- Clearly label any submission with your name.
- Include necessary execution files such as QuickTime, Acrobat Reader or Flash Player, etc.

Applicants should consider the following in preparation of their portfolio:

- Send electronic copies of your portfolio or showreel. Originals, if sent as submissions, will not be returned.
- The portfolio or showreel is regarded as a professional visual résumé and should be treated as such.
- Include an introductory slide with your name and contact details, and which course you are applying for.
- If you have relevant work experience, you may wish to include a slide of your résumé highlights.
- You may wish to include a 'personal statement' slide about your study intentions, why you have chosen this course and why you should be selected.
- In general, submit a collection of between 20 and 30 of your best and most recent work.
- Seek to represent personal interests and abilities, in a professional manner.
- Provide a small description of each project, especially if done during industry experience.
- It is expected that your portfolio will demonstrate your ability to meet technical prerequisites such as a working knowledge of 2D graphic applications like Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe InDesign, or multimedia software such as PowerPoint, Flash, and Adobe Director (or similar) as relevant to your chosen area of discipline specialisation.

Work may include:

- Drawing – with an emphasis on observational drawing skills and personal expression
- Photography – with an emphasis on visual storytelling as well as technique
- Design or Multimedia project work that demonstrates originality and problem-solving capabilities
- Visual and written documentation of the design development stages of a design project
- Finished examples (photographs, illustrations or renderings) of a 2D or 3D design project
- Design-related work from another discipline
- Project work that demonstrates a visual narrative or sequence
- Group-based work that you were involved in (including a description of the extent of your involvement and contribution to the finished result).

For further information:

Domestic applicants:

Call 1300 ASK SWIN (1300 275 794) during operating hours 9am – 5.30pm AEST, or go to **www.future.swinburne.edu.au**

International applicants:

Email **international@swin.edu.au** or go to **www.international.swinburne.edu.au**

KNOW ING

Source: https://www.swinburne.edu.au/media/swinburneeduau/study-at-swinburne/docs/pdfs/UG_portfolio_guidelines.pdf

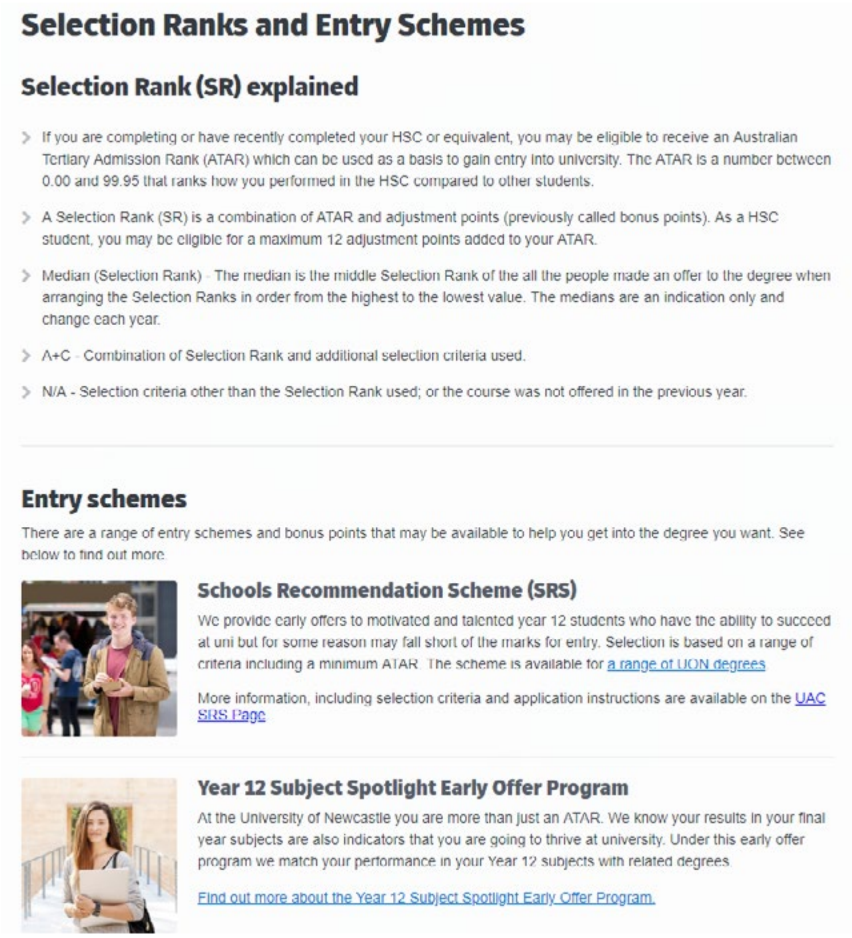
Good practice example 18: Provide all details of eligibility for adjustment factors and the maximum total adjustments

Students who are eligible for adjustment factors will be able to determine what their selection rank might be if all the details of eligibility for adjustment factors and the maximum total adjustments possible are published. Consider co-locating information about the different adjustment factors available, and the programs that set aside places for particular groups (for example, Indigenous students or people with elite sporting ability). If information about an adjustment factor program is available on the TAC website, then provide a link to that page.

The University of Newcastle indicates (Figure 38) that the maximum adjustment points to be added to an ATAR is 12 points for high school students. Newcastle also shows access schemes they have in place and, where relevant, the maximum number of adjustment points that would apply to each are described. Each entry has links to take the reader to more information, including UAC in the case of Educational Access Schemes.

Figure 39 shows similar information provided by Bond University. Drop-down items have been selected in the screenshot to show the information about maximum adjustment possible, and adjustment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Figure 38: Selection Ranks, Entry Schemes and Adjustment Factors for High School Students – University of Newcastle



Selection Ranks and Entry Schemes

Selection Rank (SR) explained

- If you are completing or have recently completed your HSC or equivalent, you may be eligible to receive an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) which can be used as a basis to gain entry into university. The ATAR is a number between 0.00 and 99.95 that ranks how you performed in the HSC compared to other students.
- A Selection Rank (SR) is a combination of ATAR and adjustment points (previously called bonus points). As a HSC student, you may be eligible for a maximum 12 adjustment points added to your ATAR.
- Median (Selection Rank) - The median is the middle Selection Rank of the all the people made an offer to the degree when arranging the Selection Ranks in order from the highest to the lowest value. The medians are an indication only and change each year.
- A+C - Combination of Selection Rank and additional selection criteria used.
- N/A - Selection criteria other than the Selection Rank used; or the course was not offered in the previous year.

Entry schemes

There are a range of entry schemes and bonus points that may be available to help you get into the degree you want. See below to find out more.

Schools Recommendation Scheme (SRS)

We provide early offers to motivated and talented year 12 students who have the ability to succeed at uni but for some reason may fall short of the marks for entry. Selection is based on a range of criteria including a minimum ATAR. The scheme is available for a range of UON degrees

More information, including selection criteria and application instructions are available on the UAC SRS Page

Year 12 Subject Spotlight Early Offer Program

At the University of Newcastle you are more than just an ATAR. We know your results in your final year subjects are also indicators that you are going to thrive at university. Under this early offer program we match your performance in your Year 12 subjects with related degrees.

Find out more about the Year 12 Subject Spotlight Early Offer Program.

Source: https://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/undergraduate/selection-ranks-and-entry-schemes
Source: https://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/undergraduate/getting-in/entry-schemes#high-school-leaver-section-hs-atsi

Figure 39: Adjustment Factors for Admissions at Bond University

Adjustment factors eligibility

If you are a current Australian Year 12 applicant, or you successfully completed your Australian Year 12 studies no more than 2 years ago and have not commenced any university studies, you may be eligible for adjustments to help you get into your intended program at Bond University.

How do adjustment factors work?

What is the maximum adjustment?

The maximum adjustment applied to each applicant is five (5) ranks from one or more adjustment factors. Each adjustment factor has a maximum adjustment rank.

Who received an adjustment in 2018?

Are there any exceptions?

Adjustment factors available

The information below contains details about each adjustment factor and the application process (if any).

Subject adjustment

Remote location adjustment

Indigenous adjustment

Adjustment Factor	Adjustment	If you apply for:
You are an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. Bond will get this information initially from your application form. As part of Bond University Policy, Australian citizens who are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (as defined by ABSTUDY) are required to supply a Confirmation of Aboriginality document, or a supporting reference from an Elder or an Indigenous organisation in the community where they live or have lived confirming the applicant is engaged with the local Indigenous community. This certificate must be provided prior to acceptance of the offer.	3	Any program that does not have additional entry requirements beyond an OP/ATAR.

Community engagement and leadership adjustment

Sport performance adjustment

Source: https://bond.edu.au/future-students/study-bond/how-apply/undergraduate-admissions-criteria/adjustment-factors

Good practice example 19: Provide comprehensive information about how prior study is assessed

Present comprehensive information about how prior study is assessed. Figure 40 shows the information provided by the University of Tasmania. Consideration could be given to including a list of courses that are already recognised for Credit Transfer or advanced standing.

Figure 40: Recognition for Prior Learning – University of Tasmania

Advanced Standing is the recognition of prior studies, from either another institution or another course at this University, that may count towards the requirements for the degree you are applying for at the University of Tasmania. The advanced standing granted may be an exemption (i.e. the advanced standing is granted for a particular unit), or general, for example, for elective units at a particular level.

There are two ways to apply for advanced standing:

- If you are applying to study a Domestic Undergraduate or Post Graduate Coursework course at the University of Tasmania, you may apply for Advanced Standing as part of your eApplication.
- If you have not already applied for Advanced Standing as part of an application to study at the University of Tasmania via eApplication, please print out and complete the Credit Application form.

It is important that you nominate your intended major and minor in the undergraduate degree you are applying for, as this information is required when assessing advanced standing; and include the following required documents along with your advanced standing application in order for it to be assessed as promptly as possible. There may be delays in assessing advanced standing applications if all required documents are not provided:

- Copy of an academic transcript
- Unit descriptions from the relevant institutional handbook and relating to the year of your study, e.g if your study was undertaken in 2018 descriptions must come from the 2018 handbook
- If you have indicated that you have completed your previous course but this is not confirmed on your academic transcript you must provide evidence of completion by way of a copy of your testamur (i.e. certificate confirming you have completed an award course of study)
- If your previous qualifications are in a different name to that listed on this application you must provide original or certified evidence of your name change to UConnect

If you are applying via the Credit Application form, please include electronic copies/scans of the above documents, You can submit the application with documents to UConnect online or via email.

If you are applying via eApplication, please attach electronic copies/scans of the above documents as part of your application.

Source: http://www.utas.edu.au/admissions/undergraduate/credit-advanced-standing

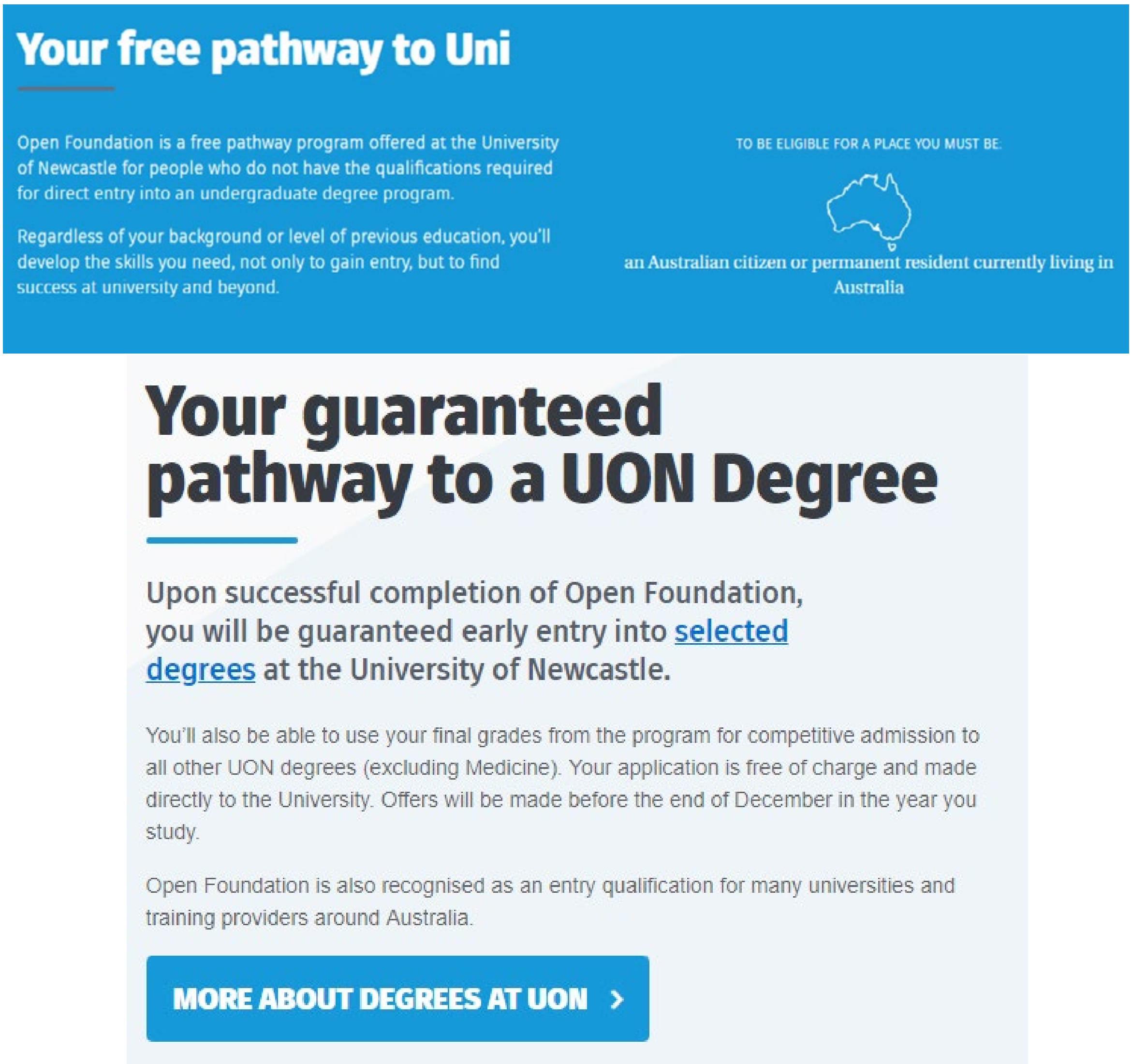
Good practice example 20: Provide a list of admission pathways for those who may not meet the assessment criteria

If the four academic background groups do not adequately reflect the basis on which students will be assessed, it would be useful to explain to prospective students how they relate to the way in which students will be assessed. For example:

- Applicants with ATARs more than three years old may want to know if they are competing for a place alongside applicants with recent secondary education, or whether they will gain entry based on their work experience (work and life experience).
- If terms such as 'school leavers', 'non-school leavers', 'adult entry' and 'mature age' are used, explain how they relate to the four background groups.
- Consider supporting prospective students who may not meet the assessment criteria of the four background groups by providing a list of admission pathways such as bridging courses. That is, any option (and links to further information) that will enable prospective students to meet the entry requirements of their chosen course.

One example of a pathway program is the Open Foundation offered at the University of Newcastle that is for students who do not have the qualifications required for direct entry (Figure 41). Figure 15 showed entry pathways offered by the University of Adelaide, in particular the University Preparatory Program for those who have never been to University or have not studied for a long time, and a preparatory program and an access scheme for people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Figure 41: A Pathway Program Offered at the University of Newcastle



Source: https://www.newcastle.edu.au/future-students/open-foundation (at 11 May 2019)

Attachment 1: Admissions transparency and the Higher Education Standards Framework

The relevant Standards relating to admissions transparency in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* are (summarised):

Domain 7 (Representation, Information and Information Management)

7.2.1 Information for students is available and accessible, accurate, relevant and timely.

7.2.2 Plain English information is available prior to acceptance of an offer.

7.3.1 A repository of publicly-available current information about the higher education provider's operations that includes indicative total student enrolments and a list of all higher education courses of study that are offered, including indicative estimated annual enrolments.

These Standards in Domain 7 explicitly relate to the provision of information for prospective (and current) students being clear and transparent. If providers fully implement the HESP's recommendations about admissions transparency, they will meet the requirements of these Standards.

The focus of this *Good Practice Note* is in relation to these Standards in Domain 7, but there are Standards in other domains, which prescribe particular requirements and define standard terminologies that must be used by higher education providers. Whilst these are content-specific and not about the transparency and communication of information per se, they have implications for admissions information and its availability of which providers should be mindful. For example, when writing or updating policies and procedures that relate to student admission requirements and which, at some point, will be accessed by prospective (and current) students, then the language and terminology used in their preparation should be considered. Meeting admissions transparency requirements is not an assurance that the Standards in these other domains (other than the ones in Domain 7 listed above) will be met. These other Standards (summarised) include:

Domain 1 (Student Participation and Attainment)

1.1.1 Admissions policies, requirements and procedures are documented.

1.1.2 Students are informed of their rights and obligations.

1.1.3 Conditions of study and contractual arrangements relating to admissions.

1.2.1 Assessment of prior learning.

Domain 2 (Learning Environment)

2.2.2 Recruitment and admission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2.3.1 Students are advised about support services available.

2.3.2 Procedures and support services available to students with adverse personal circumstances.

2.3.5 Critical-incident policy together with readily accessible procedures.

2.3.4 A safe environment is promoted and fostered.

2.4.1 Mechanisms for reporting grievances.

Domain 5 (Institutional Quality Assurance)

5.3.7 Course evaluation and improvement informing admission criteria.

Domain 7 (Representation, Information and Information Management)

7.1.1 - 7.1.5 Responsible (i.e. neither false nor misleading) representation of study offerings.

Attachment 2: Timeline of work undertaken to address admissions transparency

The following table provides an overview of the extensive work the Government, TEQSA, peak bodies, TACs and higher education providers undertook to develop and implement the recommendations on admissions transparency in higher education since 2016.

Jan 2016	*The Sydney Morning Herald* published an article about NSW universities admitting students with ATARs as low as 30, which prompted the (then) Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, to seek advice from the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP) [February 2016] on options for improving the transparency of student admissions. The HESP consulted from April 2016 and received 82 submissions.
Oct 2016	Following extensive consultation, The HESP released the report *Improving the Transparency of Higher Education Admissions.*
Dec 2016	The Government reported it accepted the HESP's 14 recommendations.
Mar 2017	The sector-led Admissions Transparency Implementation Working Group (IWG) was established, with support from the Department of Education and Training, to develop a practical response to the HESP's recommendations.
April 2017	The IWG circulated a draft Implementation Plan for consultation and received 54 submissions.
July 2017	The IWG published the *Admissions Transparency Implementation Plan* (Implementation Plan). In Phase One, providers were required to make best endeavours to implement the requirements by August 2017.
Aug 2017	TEQSA commenced a formative evaluation of provider progress towards implementation of Admissions Transparency and reported its findings to the IWG in November 2017.
Dec 2017	The IWG published *Admissions Transparency Phase Two Common Terminology and Information sets*; an update of the specifications for common admissions terminology and the information sets, due for sector wide implementation by May 2018 to support domestic undergraduate applications to study in 2019 and beyond.
Feb 2018	TEQSA released its *Advice on Admissions Transparency*, based on the findings of its formative evaluation (with feedback from IWG, providers, TACs, students and peak bodies).
April 2018	TEQSA held five capital city forums for 250 higher education administrators responsible for the implementation of admissions transparency. The questions and answers from the forums were circulated to all providers.
July 2018	The IWG published a minor update of the specifications; *Admissions Transparency Phase Two Common Terminology and Information sets*, which now defines median and highest ATAR to which an offer was made, and updates guidance under 'Essential requirements for admission'. The IWG also provided information set mock ups [whole of institution and program/course] on their website.

Attachment 3: Checklist of minimum requirements for provider implementation of admissions transparency

Question	Evidence
Is admissions information accessible?	Information about admissions is easy to find • A link from the homepage is obvious • Continuous scrolling or clicking on numerous pages is not required • 'Admissions transparency', 'TEQSA information' are not used as headings • Registration / contact details are not required to access information.
Is admissions information consistent?	Information in one place does not conflict with the same information in another place • The provider's website links to their TAC page • The information on the provider's website is consistent with the information provided on the TAC, the Course Seeker website, handbooks, etc • The common terms are used and terms to be avoided have been removed.
Is admissions information comparable?	Information is in the format required by the Implementation Plan so that prospective students can easily compare it with other courses • The provider has a student profile for the institution • The provider has a student profile for each course alongside the course information • The provider has an ATAR profile for each course alongside the course information, which includes ATARs (selection ranks are optional) • All profile categories are included • For each course, the provider has presented information for each of the four background groups.
Is admissions data presented well (without error)?	The data in the student profile and the ATAR profile for both whole of institution and each course is presented correctly • A reference period for each profile is provided • The data add up (numbers and proportions) • The data is masked correctly.
Can prospective students easily understand how they will be assessed?	All of the information that leads to an application outcome is available on the provider's website • The criteria upon which assessment is based is provided • Adjustment factors, including the maximum available, are explained • Recognition of Prior Learning / Credit Transfer is explained.

Attachment 4: Appendix B from Admissions Transparency Phase Two Common Terminology and Information Sets

Appendix B: Public glossary for information users

This appendix sets out a select and slightly simplified glossary of common admission-related terms that can be made available to information set users who may wish to seek clarity on the meaning of terms used in the institution's admissions information. Whilst not a requirement, it is suggested that a link to a copy of this glossary be available from the institution's main access point for admission-related information.

Glossary of common admission-related terms and their meaning

The following common admission-related terms and definitions have been committed to by Australian higher education providers, tertiary admission centres and other related bodies, to ensure consistency in the presentation of admission requirements across courses and institutions.

Admission pathway
Any one of the options available to a prospective higher education student that will enable them to meet the entry requirements of their chosen courses.

Applicant background
The following grouping of applicants is used to help prospective students, family and others easily find the admission information most relevant to their circumstances. The groupings do not themselves determine how an application will be assessed but direct an information seeker to the most useful information.

- **Higher education study**
  Applicants whose highest level of study enrolment since leaving secondary education is a higher education course, whether at a university or non-university provider.
- **Vocational education and training (VET) study**
  Applicants whose highest level of study enrolment since leaving secondary education is a VET course.
- **Work and life experience (includes less recent secondary results)**
  Applicants who left secondary education more than two years previously and have not undertaken VET or higher education study since then.
- **Recent secondary education**
  Applicants whose admission is based mostly on secondary education undertaken at school, TAFE or other VET or higher education provider (Australian or overseas equivalent) that was completed (or will be) in the current year or within the previous two years.

ATAR
The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is a ranking from 30 (lowest) to 99.95 (highest) agreed by COAG as a nationally equivalent measure of a person's relative academic ranking within their complete age cohort in the year they graduated from

senior secondary school (including those who did not complete Year 12 or completed but were not eligible for an ATAR). The ATAR is derived from the scaled scores achieved for senior secondary school subjects. The specific calculation used is different in each state and territory but the result is designed to be nationally equivalent.

ATAR-related thresholds
These only apply to offers of places that are made wholly or partly on the basis of an applicant's ATAR. Not all institutions use ATAR to determine eligibility. Different institutions may use only some of the following types of eligibility thresholds:

- **Lowest ATAR to which an offer was made**
  The lowest 'raw' or unadjusted ATAR of an applicant to whom an offer of a place was made in the relevant year or year-to-date.
- **Lowest Selection Rank to which an offer was made**
  The lowest Selection Rank of an applicant to whom an offer of a place was made in the relevant year or year-to-date (including the consideration of any adjustments the applicant may have been eligible for).
- **Median ATAR [or Selection Rank] to which an offer was made**
  The middle ATAR [or selection rank] of all applicants to whom an offer of a place was made in the relevant year or year-to-date.
- **Highest ATAR [or Selection Rank] to which an offer was made**
  The highest ATAR [or selection rank] of an applicant to whom an offer of a place was made in the relevant year or year-to-date.
- **Minimum ATAR [or Selection Rank] required for consideration to enter in next intake**
  For use where a threshold minimum ATAR or Selection Rank must be achieved to be considered for admission to a course or institution.
- **Guaranteed Entry ATAR [or Selection Rank]**
  Where achievement of a specified ATAR or Selection Rank (as appropriate) will guarantee acceptance into a course or institution, subject to any non-ATAR criteria being met, such as prerequisite study or English language proficiency.

Adjustment factors
Often referred to previously as 'bonus points', these are additional points that may be used in combination with an applicant's ATAR to derive a person's course Selection Rank. Adjustments do not change applicants' ATARs, but change their Selection Rank for a particular course or courses. Common types of adjustment factors are:

- **Elite Athlete and Performer adjustments**
  Adjustments available on the basis of the applicant's sporting or artistic prowess.
- **Equity adjustment**
  Adjustment available on the basis of characteristics associated with disadvantage.
- **Location adjustment**
  Adjustment available on the basis of the applicant's proximity to the institution offering the course.
- **Subject adjustment**
  Adjustment available on the basis of the particular relevance of a secondary subject to the academic requirements of the higher education course.
- **Maximum adjustment**
  The maximum total adjustments possible to an applicant's Selection Rank from the combination of all adjustments they are eligible for.

Advanced standing
A form of credit for any previous learning (Australian Qualifications Framework definition) – see also the definitions for 'credit transfer' and 'recognition of prior learning'.

Bridging course
A course designed to cover subject knowledge, which assists students to gain knowledge in specialist areas that are a core component of the course. If a course requires a prerequisite in an area that students have not studied or worked with before, a bridging course will help students to bridge the gap in that knowledge and gain admission.

Credit transfer
A process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications (Australian Qualifications Framework definition).

Direct application to provider
Application made directly to a higher education provider rather than through a tertiary admission centre.

Early offer
Where an offer of enrolment is made to a recent secondary school student prior to release of ATARs or equivalent (e.g. OP in Queensland, IB). Such offers are generally conditional on other requirements being met, such as successful completion of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education or achievement of a specified minimum ATAR.

Enabling Course
A course designed to provide students with skills needed for success in further study, to assist in the transition to tertiary education – for example study techniques or English language skills. Successful completion helps prepare a person to be admitted to a course that leads to a higher education award.

Experience based entry schemes
A selection method used by higher education providers to assess and select students who may not have educational qualifications sufficient for an offer of admission to a course but who have other relevant work and life skills and experience that make them a suitable candidate.

International Baccalaureate (IB)
Formerly known as the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) is an international educational foundation founded in 1968 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The IB Diploma program is a senior secondary education curriculum and assessment framework offered by some schools as an alternative to the Australian National Curriculum and overseen by state and territory curriculum and assessment authorities. Australian tertiary admission centres convert IB scores to a notional ATAR or QTAC Selection Rank, enabling IB students to be ranked for tertiary entrance alongside their peers.

Offer round/s
Refers to the series of dates on which offers of higher education places are issued to applicants throughout the year, whether through a tertiary admission centre or directly by a higher education provider.

Overall Position
The Overall Position (OP) refers to a Queensland student's position in a state-wide tertiary entrance rank order based on their overall achievement in senior secondary subjects. It indicates how well a student has done compared to all other OP-eligible students in Queensland. Students are placed in one of 25 OP bands from OP1 (highest) to OP25 (lowest). Queensland students seeking admission to higher education in other states can have their OP converted to an ATAR. Interstate students looking to study in Queensland can have their ATAR converted to a Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) Selection Rank. Queensland will adopt the ATAR instead of the OP for students who commence Year 11 in 2019 and beyond.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
A process used to assess an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit that may be granted towards completion of a qualification.

School recommendation
A recommendation from a school or other secondary education provider on the abilities of a student. Previously referred to by some as a principal's recommendation.

Selection Rank
The ranking that tertiary admission centres and most universities actually use to assess admission to a course. A person's course Selection Rank can include their ATAR, any adjustments they are eligible for, such as equity or subject adjustments, other contributions calculated on the basis of work experience or previous non-secondary study, portfolio assessments, results of the Special Tertiary Admissions Test, other supplementary tests, etc.

TAC application
Application made through a tertiary admission centre, namely QTAC, UAC, VTAC, SATAC, TISC and University of Tasmania, in relation to applications to study in that state.

References

AAP – *see* Australian Associated Press

Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group 2004, *Admissions to Higher Education Review: Fair admissions to higher education: recommendations for good practice*, AHESG, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5284/1/finalreport.pdf.

AHESG – *see* Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group.

Australian Associated Press 2018, 'Coalition 'alarmed' after students with Atars as low as 17.9 accepted into teaching', *The Guardian*, 12 August, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/12/coalition-alarmed-after-students-with-atars-as-low-as-179-accepted-into-teaching.

Bagshaw, E & Ting, I 2016, 'NSW universities admitting students with ATARs as low as 30', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 January, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://www.smh.com.au/education/nsw-universities-taking-students-with-atars-as-low-as-30-20160126-gmdvr6.html.

Harvey, A & Brett, M 2016, *Submissions to Higher Education Standards Panel Consultation on Higher Education Admissions Processes: Ideas for Improving Tertiary Admissions in Australian Higher Education*, June, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://docs.education.gov.au/node/41586.

Harvey, A, Brett, M, Cardak, B, Sheridan, A, Stratford, J, Tootell, N, McAllister, R, & Spicer, R 2016, *The Adaptation of Tertiary Admissions Processes to Growth and Diversity*, Report for the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, Melbourne, Access and Achievement Research Unit, La Trobe University, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://www.latrobe.edu.au/data/assets/pdffile/0007/720853/La-Trobe-NPP-TAC-Research-Report.pdf.

Hoover, E 2019, 'At one final hearing, Harvard and Students for Fair Admissions squared off. Here's what happened', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 13 February, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://www.chronicle.com/article/At-One-Final-Hearing-Harvard/245695.

Medina, J, Benner, K, & Taylor, K 2019, 'Actresses, Business Leaders and Other Wealthy Parents Charged in US College Entry Fraud', *The New York Times*, 12 March, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/us/college-admissions-cheating-scandal.html.

Perez-Felkner, L 2018, 'Harvard case could represent the end of race in college admissions', *The Conversation*, 23 October, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://theconversation.com/harvard-case-could-represent-the-end-of-race-in-college-admissions-105191.

Reeves, R 2019, 'It's not just corruption, Entrance into elite US colleges is rigged in every way', *The Guardian*, 13 March, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/12/us-college-admissions-scandal-corruption-rigged.

Robinson, N 2018, 'Students with the lowest ATAR scores being offered places in teaching degrees: secret report', *ABC News*, 18 September, retrieved 7 June 2019, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-18/students-lowest-atar-scores-teaching-degree-offers-secret-report/10200666.

TEQSA

teqsa.gov.au