



More transparent higher education admissions:

Essential information for career advisers & schools

What's happening?

Prospective students, parents and schools now have access to consistent, more comparable information on undergraduate admission requirements. This will make choosing a course and institution easier for all applicants, no matter where they live.

All higher education providers that accept applications from Australian domestic students will publish information about their admission policies and application processes on their own websites, using consistent language and formats to make it easier to compare different courses and providers.

What will this mean?

- the same language will be used to talk about admissions in all states and territories
- more useful and reliable information will be available about the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) needed to get into a course (or Overall Position in Queensland)
- there will be explanations of the admission criteria and processes for all possible entry pathways and application options.

A new national information hub about higher education courses and admission requirements will be available soon. This will make researching and comparing information about course options and admission requirements much easier.

When is this changing?

The changes will be ready for students applying to study in 2019. Most providers will comply with the new approach by the time provider open days start around August 2018.

What changes will we see?

Easier to find the information that applicants need

Institutions and tertiary admission centres publish a wide range of information about higher education courses and admission requirements. Since August 2017, institutions have been updating their websites to make admissions information easier to find.

Links to admission-related information should be prominent and clearly identifiable on a homepage under headings like 'future students', 'admissions information', 'apply', 'how to apply' or 'study'.

Every provider will have two types of admission information available

An overall statement of the institution's:

- general admission criteria
- application options and processes
- institutional student profile.

For each course offered in 2019 and beyond, a statement of:

- study options
- course-specific admission criteria and application pathways/options
- the likely student peer cohort.

Student profile information

Institutions will now provide additional information on their websites about students' likely peer cohort. Based on recent enrolment data, this provides applicants with an idea of the fellow students they will likely be studying with at their institution and in their course. Prospective students will see the number and proportion of students who entered the course in the most recent intake who:

- were recent secondary school leavers
- had already undertaken some vocational or higher education since leaving school
- were older students out of school for more than two years
- or were international students.

See an example student profile below.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) profile

Recent school leavers can be accepted into many courses based solely on their ATAR (or OP in Queensland) or on the basis of their ATAR in combination with some other criteria such as an interview, audition or portfolio assessment. For these courses, institutions will publish the range of ATAR/OP ranks of students who were offered a place in the course in the previous intake. All institutions will publish the lowest and highest ATAR/OP admitted. Where five or more offers were made, institutions will also public the median rank.

In addition to the unadjusted or 'raw' ATAR profile, institutions may publish a separate profile of selection ranks (i.e. the rank after taking account of any adjustment factors to which applicants may have access – e.g. for equity characteristics or having studied a school subject of particular relevance to the course applied for).

Previously, different terms like "ATAR cut-off" and "Clearly-in ATAR" were used in different states to convey similar concepts. Some people have also had concerns about how believable ATAR "cut-off" and "clearly-in" figures were. Many students with ATARs below these published figures were being admitted to courses. Because of this, these terms will be phased out from information supporting 2019 admissions onwards.

This will make it easier to understand the likely ATAR an applicant will need, for them to be offered a place in a course. Figures in the ATAR profile will be less open to manipulation by institutions because they will include all offers made over the entirety of the relevant intake period.

See some example ATAR/OP profiles on page 4.

More consistent admissions terminology

All institutions will talk about admissions in the same way, using the same terms. This includes using the same names to describe ATAR-related adjustments, such as:

- Elite Athlete and Performer adjustment: available on the basis of the applicant's sporting or artistic prowess.
- Equity adjustment: available on the basis disadvantage.
- Location adjustment: available on the basis of the applicant's closeness to the institution offering the course.
- Subject adjustment: Adjustment available on the basis of relevant secondary subjects.
- Maximum adjustment: The maximum total adjustment possible to an applicant's Selection Rank.

More comparable and comprehensive entry information:

Prospective students will be able to see all admission criteria for all entry pathways into a course or program. This information will be grouped by applicant type. This means that applicants will be able to easily find the information most relevant to them, whether they are a school leaver, recent higher education or VET student, or an older applicant with work and life experience.

Tertiary admission centres will also adopt the new approach for admission information they publish regarding applications to study in 2019 and beyond.

National admissions information website

The Australian Government is working with tertiary admission centres and higher education providers to develop a new national information hub. The new hub will bring together key information about higher education courses, institutions and admission requirements in a format that makes it easy to search and compare several courses at once. When ready to apply, the website will link applicants to the right place to lodge an application.

The new website will be up and running later in 2018 to support students applying to study an undergraduate course in 2019.

How will I benefit from the changes?

As a career adviser, teacher or school administrator, it will be easier to identify the right courses for your students. Not just those courses or institutions in your local area, but courses across your state/territory and nationally. The same types of information will be available for each and every course at every higher education provider in Australia.

You will be able to help students to research and apply for courses in a more informed way. This may be particularly important for students who do not have ready access to career education or to family members with past experience of the higher education system to fall back on for guidance.

The aim of the changes is to make sure all prospective higher education students have equal access to the information they need to make informed choices about courses and institutions that best meet their needs, ambitions and career goals.

Where to get further help or advice

- Higher education institutions – visit their websites.
- Tertiary admission centres – they already publish a range of admission-related information and will adopt the new approaches in 2018 to support applications to study in 2019.
- Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) or your local career advisers' association.
- General information on the changes is available at: www.education.gov.au/admissions-transparency-implementation-working-group-0
- The new national higher education admissions information hub, once it is released.

Example student profile

This profile gives an indication of the likely peer cohort for new students at an institution. It provides data on all 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. The information will be provided for admissions to the institution as a whole and for each course available in the following enrolment period.

Table 1 – Example student profile – Bachelor of Education

Applicant background	2017 Semester 1	
	Number of students	Percentage of all students
(A) Past higher education study (includes a bridging or enabling course)	126	30.1%
(B) Past vocational education and training (VET) study	35	8.4%
(C) Work and life experience (Admitted on the basis of previous achievement not in the other three categories)	N/P	N/P
(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)	153	36.6%
• 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 with no minimum ATAR)	<5	<5
International students	90	21.5%
All students	418	100.0%

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.

Example ATAR profiles

These tables show the range of ATARs (OP in Queensland) for applicants who received an offer of a place in the most relevant recent intake period, wholly or partly on the basis of ATAR. If less than five ATAR-based offers were made, the median is not shown in order to maintain the privacy of current students. The information will be provided for each course available in the following enrolment period where admission on the basis of ATAR/OP is possible. Institutions must provide a profile of the unadjusted ATAR/OP ranks to which offers were made. These unadjusted figures are directly comparable across different courses and institutions. If an institution wishes to do so, it can also choose to include a profile of selection ranks that include the impact of adjustments that were made to selection ranks on the basis of equity, subject or other relevant factors. Selection rank profiles may not be directly comparable across different institutions as each higher education provider may have a different range of adjustments available.

Table 2 – Example ATAR profile – Bachelor of Education

	ATAR* (Excluding adjustment factors)
Highest rank to receive an offer	95.2
Median rank to receive an offer	76.3
Lowest rank to receive an offer	55.8

Notes: * "<5" – indicates less than 5 ATAR-based offers were made

Table 3 – Example ATAR profile – Bachelor of Arts

	ATAR* (Excluding adjustment factors)	Selection Rank* (includes adjustment factors)
Highest rank to receive an offer	94.1	97.4
Median rank to receive an offer	72.5	78.6
Lowest rank to receive an offer	50.7	60.3

Notes: * "<5" – indicates less than 5 ATAR-based offers were made



Table 4 – Example OP profile – Bachelor of Science

	OP* (Excluding adjustment factors)
Highest rank to receive an offer	1
Median rank to receive an offer	6
Lowest rank to receive an offer	15

Notes: * "<5" – indicates less than 5 ATAR-based offers were made

Table 5 – Example ATAR profile – Associate Degree in Applied Science

	ATAR* (Excluding adjustment factors)	Selection Rank* (includes adjustment factors)
Highest rank to receive an offer	<5	<5
Median rank to receive an offer	<5	<5
Lowest rank to receive an offer	<5	<5

Notes: * "<5" – indicates less than 5 ATAR-based offers were made