Australian Government
Department of Education

Undergraduate applications, offers and acceptances 2019

October 2019

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Introduction

Purpose of the report

To identify trends in numbers of applications, offers and acceptances and the characteristics of applicants, which are leading indicators of the response of universities to the demand for higher education in 2019.

This report analyses data on applications, offers and acceptances for university admission for the first semester of the 2019 academic year, as of 17 May 2019.

Overview of the data

Data are derived from the University Applications and Offers Data Collection. The data refer to domestic undergraduate student applications, offers and acceptances as of 17 May 2019. It consists of:

- fifth round data on applications and offers processed through Tertiary Admissions Centres (TACs), and
- second round data on applications made directly to universities and resulting offers.

The full data is available in visual analytics form on the department's website, along with previous Applications and offers reports and data at: https://www.education.gov.au/undergraduate-applications-offers-and-acceptances-publications

Acknowledgements

The department would like to thank all officers of TACs and universities for submitting high quality applications and offers data for the 2019 academic year.

Highlights

Application numbers

- The actual number of individuals applying either through a TAC or directly for a university place in 2019 was 330,608 a decrease of 1.3 per cent on the previous year. This follows a decrease of 2.6 per cent in 2018.
- Direct applicants made up 35.0 per cent of total applicants in 2019.

Offer numbers

- There were 276,489 unique offers made in 2019, a decrease of 1.5 per cent on the previous year. This follows a decrease of 1.9 per cent in 2018.
- Direct offers accounted for 33.9 per cent of total offers in 2019.

Offer rate

- The offer rate measures the way in which universities choose to respond to student demand.
- In 2019 the offer rate was 83.6 per cent, down from 83.8 per cent in 2018 and up from 82.5 per cent in 2017.

Table 1: Growth in applicants and offers and, offer rate, 2010-2019

Australia	Applicants	Offers	Offer rate
2010			80.2%
2011	3.3%	4.0%	80.8%
2012	2.4%	4.9%	82.8%
2013	2.3%	4.2%	84.4%
2014	2.6%	1.8%	83.8%
2015*	3.2%	2.9%	84.2%
2016*	1.7%	0.8%	83.7%
2017	1.6%	0.1%	82.5%
2018	-2.6%	-1.9%	83.8%
2019[1]	-1.3%	-1.5%	83.6%

- *Excluding WA for 'half-year' Year 12 cohort effect.

Acceptances and deferrals

- There were 208,734 applicants who accepted an offer in 2019, a decrease of 0.9 per cent compared with 2018.
- Of all applicants who received offers in 2019, 21,926 or 10.5% deferred their offer, slightly higher than the deferral rate of 10.3% in 2018.

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[1]In 2019, Western Sydney University (WSU) experienced sharp increases in direct applications due to newly introduced collection methods and changes to business processes. Hence, caution is warranted when comparing 2019 applications and offers data with data from previous years.

Breakdown by key factors

State and territory
- Compared with 2019, most states and territories recorded a fall in applications. South Australia recorded the largest decrease (-8.4 per cent), followed by Northern Territory (-3.0 per cent), New South Wales (-2.8 per cent), Western Australia (-1.9 per cent) and Queensland (-1.0 per cent).
- However, ACT (5.0 percent), Tasmania (2.9 per cent) and Victoria (1.0 per cent) recorded increases in applications in 2019.
- All states recorded negative growth in offers, except ACT (7.6 per cent) and Tasmania (2.3 per cent). SA (-6.1 per cent), WA (-3.7 per cent), NT (-2.6 per cent), NSW (-1.6 per cent), Queensland (-1.2 per cent) and Victoria (-1.0 per cent) recorded negative growth in offers in 2019.
- The offer rate in 2019 was 83.6 per cent, a decrease of 0.2 per percentage points from the previous year. Tasmania recorded the highest offer rate, 92.9 per cent, while on the other hand Victoria recorded the lowest offer rate, 77.4 per cent, in 2019.
- Offer rates decreased in Victoria (-1.6 percentage points), WA (-1.5 percentage points), Tasmania (-0.5 percentage points) and Queensland (-0.2 percentage points).
- On the other hand, the offer rate was up in 2019 for ACT and SA (both 2.1 percentage points), followed by NSW (1.0 percentage points) and NT (0.4 percentage points).

Year 12 and Non-Year 12 applicants
- Nationally, Year 12 applicants decreased by 2.9 per cent in 2019 while the number of non-Year 12 applicants declined by 0.3 per cent.
- Nationally, Year 12 applications represented 40.2 per cent of total applications.
- The number of offers to Year 12 applicants declined by 3.6 per cent while the number of offers to non-Year 12 applicants increased by 0.1 per cent.
- Nationally, Year 12 offers represented 42.3 per cent of total offers.
- The offer rate for Year 12 applicants was 88.0 per cent which was higher than the offer rate of 80.7 per cent for non-Year 12 applicants.

Field of education
- Nationally, the most popular broad field of education (in terms of the number of applications) in 2019 was Health (87,247 applicants or 26.4 per cent of all applicants). This was followed by Society and Culture (76,110 applicants or 23.0 per cent) and Management and Commerce (39,579 applicants or 12.0 per cent).
- Fields of education that recorded strongest growth in applications in 2019 were Architecture and Building (5.2 per cent), followed by Natural and Physical Sciences (2.2 per cent), Society and Culture (2.1 per cent) and Information Technology (0.6 per cent).
- On the other hand, fields of education that experienced the largest declines in applications were Management and Commerce (-9.1 per cent), followed by Engineering and Related Technologies

(-4.1 per cent), Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies (-3.1 per cent), Creative Arts (-3.0 per cent) and Education (-1.2 per cent).

- Society and Culture received the largest number of offers (66,704 or 24.1 per cent of total offers). This was followed by Health (63,576 or 23.0 per cent of total offers).
- Most broad fields of education recorded declines in offers in 2019. Management and Commerce recorded the largest fall in offers (-7.7 per cent), followed by Engineering and Related Technologies (-6.6 per cent), Creative Arts (-3.6 percent), Health (-2.8 per cent) and Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies (-1.9 per cent).
- However, Society and Culture recorded the largest increase in offers (3.9 per cent). This was followed by Natural and Physical Sciences (3.0 per cent), Architecture and Building (2.7 per cent) and Information Technology (1.4 per cent). Offers to Education remained steady in 2019.
- Natural and Physical Sciences had the highest offer rate at 97.3 per cent, an increase of 0.7 percentage points in 2019. Health had the lowest offer rate of 72.9 per cent in 2019. Engineering and Related Technologies experienced the largest fall in the offer rate in 2019 of 2.3 percentage points to 84.7 per cent.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)
- The average ATAR of applicants receiving an offer increased from 76.5 in 2018 to 77.4 in 2019, its highest level since 2013.

Table 2: Average ATAR for those receiving an offer, 2010- 2019

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Average ATAR	79.9	78.9	78.4	77.7	76.7	76.5	76.4	76.6	76.5	77.4

- In 2019, 28.0 per cent of all offers made to applicants were for those with an ATAR of at least 70.05. Offers to applicants who achieved an ATAR above 90 accounted for 10.4 per cent of all applicants.
- The share of offers for applicants in the ATAR band 50.00 or less was 2.5 per cent, down from 2.9 per cent in 2018 or from 8,023 to 6,891.
- The share of offers for applicants with no ATAR or who were non-Year 12 applicants was 60.1 per cent in 2019, up from 58.5 per cent in 2018, or from, 164,331 to 166,251.
- Offer rates for applicants in the ATAR band 50.00 or less have increased from 41.1 per cent in 2014 to 50.8 per cent in 2019.
- The offer rates for the top three ATAR bands (deciles) have remained relatively steady within a range of 97 per cent to 99 per cent.
- Note the likelihood of an applicant with a low ATAR receiving an offer has recorded a greater increase than an applicant with a higher ATAR. In part, this is because offer rates for applicants with a higher ATAR are starting from a higher base so there is less scope for an increase in offer rates.
- Fields of education with an above average share of offers for applicants in the ATAR band 90.00 or more were Engineering and Related Technologies (24.0 per cent) and Natural and Physical Sciences (19.5 per cent).

- Fields of education with an above average share of offers for applicants in the ATAR band 50.00 or less were Architecture and Building (4.1 per cent), Education (3.2 per cent), Society and Culture, Information Technology and Management and Commerce (all 3.1 per cent) and Creative Arts (2.7 per cent).

Underrepresented groups

- In 2019, applicants from a low SES background recorded a larger decrease (-3.9 per cent) in applications than applicants from a medium SES and high SES backgrounds, -2.0 per cent and -1.0 per cent respectively.
- In 2019, offers to applicants from a low SES background decreased by 5.0 per cent followed by those from a medium SES background (-2.9 per cent) and high SES background (-0.3 per cent).
- Applicants from a low SES background were less likely to receive an offer. Their offer rate was 81.8 per cent compared with 83.3 per cent for applicants from a medium SES background and 85.3 per cent for applicants from a high SES background in 2019.
- In 2019, applications from metropolitan residents decreased by 2.1 per cent while applications from non-metropolitan residents decreased by 2.3 per cent.
- Offers made to metropolitan applicants decreased by 2.2 per cent compared with a decrease of 3.6 per cent in offers made to non-metropolitan applicants.
- Applications from non-metropolitan residents were more likely to result in an offer compared with applications from metropolitan residents, 85.6 per cent and 82.9 per cent respectively.
- Nationally, there were 7126 applicants from an Indigenous background, an increase of 3.3 per cent compared with 2018. This represents 2.2 per cent of all applications.
- Offers to Indigenous applicants increased by 2.8 per cent to 5775 in 2019.
- Just over four fifths of Indigenous applicants, 81.0 per cent, had received an offer. This is a decrease of 0.4 percentage points compared with the same period last year. The offer rate for non-Indigenous applicants was 84.0 per cent in 2019, a decrease of 0.3 percentage points over 2018.

University groups

- The Australian Technology Network (ATN) recorded a decrease in applications (-3.8 per cent) in 2019. All other university groups recorded growth in applications: Regional Universities Network (RUN) (2.7 per cent), Innovative Research Universities (IRU) (0.9 per cent) and the Group of Eight (Go8) (0.5 per cent).
- All university groups, except RUN (2.5 per cent) observed decreases in offers. The ATN universities (-3.1 per cent), followed by IRU universities and Go8 (both -0.1 per cent).
- Applications to Go8 universities and ATN universities were least likely to receive an offer in 2019, offer rates of 74.8 per cent and 78.2 per cent respectively, reflecting the higher entry requirements at these universities.
- The offer rate decreased for all university groups, except ATN, in 2019: The IRU universities (-0.8 percentage points), followed by Go8 universities (-0.5 percentage points), RUN universities (-0.2 percentage points). The ATN universities recorded an increase in offer rate (0.6 percentage points).

Data Qualifications

The data referred to in this report contains applications and offers for domestic undergraduate university places through TACs and universities as of 17 May 2019.

It should be noted that:

- Applications and offers data in this report refer to TAC data and applications made directly to universities.

- Only applications made to Table A institutions and University of Notre Dame Australia (Table B) are included in the analysis.

- The data does not include applications from overseas students.

- All references to "applications" (in TAC data) in this report relate to highest preference applications.

- A small proportion of applicants make applications to more than one TAC resulting in some double counting of applicants.

- All references to "2019" in this report relate to the 2019 fifth round submission through TACs and the second round data submission on applications made directly to universities as of 17 May for the first semester of the 2019 academic year.

- All references to "Year 12" applicants in this report relate to applicants who attempted an ACACA Year 12 program or the International Baccalaureate in the year of application.

- While completing Year 12 and gaining a tertiary entrance score is the most common way to gain entry to university, TACs and universities take a number of other qualifications into consideration, particularly for adults applying who have not recently completed Year 12. Some pathways to gaining entry to a university degree include sitting the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT), articulating from certificate and/or diploma level studies in vocational education and training (VET), university bridging or foundation programs and previous higher education (completed or commenced).

- 2015 applications and offers data is affected by the 'half-year' Year 12 cohort in Western Australia (WA). It relates to the effect of the 'half-year' cohort arose due to the Western Australian State Government changing the starting age for school children in 2003. The change was legislated by the WA School Education Act of 1999. Until 2003, children began Year 1 at the beginning of the calendar year when they turned six. From 2003, children began Year 1 if they turned six between 1 July of the previous year and 30 June of the year they started school. This policy change was introduced as a one-off. That is, there was no staggered implementation across years, which meant that in 2003 only children born between 1 January 1997 and 30 June 1997 started school. This small cohort has been working its way through the school system reaching Year 12 in 2014. The Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC – the TAC in WA) estimates that it is more likely that the number of students with an ATAR will be around 60% of the size of a normal cohort of students. This has considerably impacted WA's university application numbers for the 2015 academic year. Given that much of this report provides time

series data and makes year on year comparisons, all the figures and tables are reported with Western Australia data.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Australasian Curriculum Assessment Certification Authorities (ACACA) Year 12 programs	Each State has its own approved Year 12 program. ACACA is the national body responsible for monitoring senior secondary curricula and certification in Australia and New Zealand. ACACA Year 12 programs may be undertaken in schools, VET institutions or higher education providers. Current programs by state are: • NSW Higher School Certificate • Victorian Certificate of Education, • Queensland Certificate of Education • Queensland Senior Certificate • Western Australian Certificate of Education • South Australian Certificate of Education • Tasmanian Certificate of Education • ACT Year 12 Certificate • Northern Territory Certificate of Education.
Current Year 12 applicant	An applicant who attempted an ACACA Year 12 program or the International Baccalaureate in the year of application.
Offer rate	The offer rate is a percentage calculated as the number of valid offers made to applicants with at least one valid preference divided by the number of applicants with at least one valid preference.
University Groups	
Australian Technology Network	• Curtin University of Technology • RMIT University • University of South Australia • University of Technology, Sydney
Group of Eight	• Monash University • The Australian National University • The University of Adelaide • The University of Melbourne • The University of New South Wales • The University of Queensland • The University of Sydney • The University of Western Australia
Innovative Research Universities	• Charles Darwin University • Flinders University of South Australia • Griffith University • James Cook University • La Trobe University • Murdoch University • Western Sydney University
Regional Universities Network (RUN)*	• Central Queensland University • Southern Cross University • Federation University of Australia • University of New England • University of Southern Queensland • University of Sunshine Coast

Term	Definition
Table A universities not aligned to a University Group	

- Australian Catholic University
- Charles Sturt University
- Deakin University
- Edith Cowan University
- Macquarie University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- University of Canberra
- The University of Newcastle
- University of Tasmania
- University of Wollongong
- Victoria University
- Queensland University of Technology

*Charles Sturt University joined RUN on 29 May 2019 after the reference date of 17 May 2019. Hence, data for Charles Sturt University are not included with RUN data for 2019.