

2021 UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused enormous disruption, suffering and uncertainty around the world. Australia's universities are deeply aware of the impact of the outbreak on communities around Australia, including current Year 12 students who are understandably concerned about their path to tertiary study in 2021. This statement is intended to reassure prospective students that Australia's universities will be ready to welcome them next year and will be working to make their path to university as smooth as possible.

PRINCIPLES FOR ADMISSION

In 2021 admission to university will follow normal principles for admission. Prospective students, both school leavers and mature age, can be confident that admissions processes will be

- **diverse**, reflecting the diverse pathways by which students come to university;
- **flexible and adaptable** to accommodate changing circumstances;
- **adjustable** to suit the needs of students and of the community;
- **equitable and compassionate**, and
- **capable**, using a range of methods to identify students with potential.

Although it is likely that timelines and processes for applying for university will be different – at least for some people - universities are committed to making the process easy to understand and as close to business-as-usual as possible. Universities will continue to ensure that admissions processes are as equitable as possible for all sections of the community, to ensure that every Australian has the best possible chance to commence university study in 2021.

AVENUES FOR ADMISSION TO A UNIVERSITY COURSE

There are diverse ways in which applicants can apply for admission for university .

- Tertiary admissions centres (TACs): Most Year 12 students apply for admission to a university course through a tertiary admission centre. Decisions to admit students can be based on the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR), as well as other criteria.
- Direct application: Many universities also offer the ability to apply directly to the university for admission to a course.

Universities understand that 2020 will be a challenging year for some students and are offering additional ways to qualify for admission to university, including through their direct entry processes. Students can take advantage of multiple avenues to apply for admission to university to maximise their opportunities for university study.

THE AUSTRALIAN TERTIARY ADMISSIONS RANK (ATAR)

Many Year 12 students have understandably been concerned about the potential impact of COVID-19 on their final school results, and therefore on their ATAR.

State and territory governments have agreed that arrangements will be made so that eligible current year 12 students will be able to complete their studies this year and receive an ATAR.

It is important to remember a few key things about how the ATAR works:

- The ATAR is a rank, not a score. This year, every year 12 student will experience some disruption to their studies. However, because the ATAR measures the achievement of a student relative to other students in the same year, some disruption to study won't necessarily mean a lower ATAR – as everyone will be disrupted to some extent.
- Options for university admission don't end with the ATAR. Students can take advantage of multiple types of university admissions pathways. In fact, less than half of Australian students commencing a Bachelors' degree are admitted on the basis of their secondary education alone. University admissions often take account of factors beyond the ATAR, such as work experience, other qualifications (such as bridging courses, previous vocational or higher education achievement), leadership and community service, equity and special circumstances.
- Universities are looking beyond year 12 this year. Universities understand that the disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis may have affected students differently and will be looking to provide flexibility to students, through wider use of special consideration as well as other mechanisms. All universities will be ready and willing to talk with students about their individual situation. If in doubt, students should get in touch with the admissions team at the university they are hoping to attend.

OUR MESSAGE TO STUDENTS

Australia's universities understand that year 12 can be a difficult time for students in any year. This year presents some particular challenges. Universities look forward to welcoming you next year, whether you've just finished year 12, you're a mature age student, or you're somewhere in between. Universities encourage you to look at all the options available to you for admission and use the avenue that best suits you and your situation.