APPLYING FOR COURSES

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

What you need

To complete your course application, you will need:

- details of your secondary studies including your Year 12 number
- up to eight course preferences
- contact details and date of birth of your authorised nominee, if you wish to use one.
- payment method – debit/credit card or Paypal

How to apply

1. Read the terms and conditions

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

2. Complete your educational history

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

You will be asked:

- Where you completed your senior secondary schooling
- Your student number
- If your year 12 study was the IB and your IB candidate code
- If your secondary qualification is considered "non-standard" (e.g. you were home schooled)
- If you also completed studies from any other senior secondary curriculum, for example, if you completed some International Baccalaureate subjects in addition to your VCE subjects.

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

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

3. List your course preferences

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

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

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

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

4. Authorised nominee

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

An authorised nominee has your permission to enquire about your application, on your behalf. You will only need an authorised nominee if you are going to be unable to make enquiries yourself. Authorisation is not an all-access pass, so details about your results, medical information and ATAR will never be discussed with anyone without your permission.

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

5. Additional information

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

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

6. Submission and payment

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

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

Once the application is submitted, you will be asked to pay the processing fee. You can pay this straight away, or pay it later using the payment function in your VTAC account. If you don't pay by the deadline, your application will not be forwarded to institutions. Payment can be made via PayPal with VISA or MasterCard credit/debit cards.

UNDERSTANDING THE PREFERENCE SYSTEM

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

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

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

Here are some tips on how to list your preferences:

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

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

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

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

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

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

How the offer system works

1 You will list your preferences in the order you want to get into them.

2 VTAC will make your results and application available to the courses and institutions you've applied to.

3 Course authorities from the institutions advise VTAC of the offers they wish to make.

4 VTAC will send you an offer for the highest course on your preference list that considers you competitive.

5 The institution will email you enrolment instructions for your offered course.

6 You will then choose to accept, reject or defer the offer. VTAC recommends accepting as it does not reduce your chances of subsequent offers.

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

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

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

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

Why can't I receive an offer from all my preferences?
You will only receive an offer for the highest course that wishes to make an offer. You won't find out about any lower preferences, because those places have already been offered to someone else.

This is why it is important to list your preferences in the order you most want to do the courses.

CHANGING A PREFERENCE

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

What is change of preference?

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

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

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

How to change your course preferences

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

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

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

Find further instructions for changing your course preferences at:
vtac.edu.au/applying/courses/cop
All change of preference dates are listed at:
vtac.edu.au/dates

When can I change my preferences?

Straight away

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

After your ATAR is released

After you get your ATAR, you will have a short amount of time to change your preferences. Finalise your preferences at this point to maximise your chance to receive the offer you want.

After offers come out

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

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