

COURSE SELECTION & ATAR PROFILE

Selection into a course is competitive as there are typically more applicants than there are places. This fact sheet explains the different selection factors and how you can use the ATAR Profile to better understand course expectations.



Understanding selection

The selection process is completed by institutions—not VTAC.

The process is competitive and involves:

- An assessment of your capacity for success in a course, and
- Ranking you against others who have applied to the course.

A range of criteria is used to assess your attributes and the criteria can change from course to course. To better understand the selection for a specific course, take a look at the 'essential requirements' and 'admission criteria' sections of each course entry in CourseSearch.

Depending on the course, these criteria might include an assessment of your previous academic performance. For Year 12 applicants, this is represented by the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Your ATAR is an overall ranking of your VCE achievement comparative to other year 12 Victorian students. The ATAR is one component of your selection rank, which is your ATAR plus any of your adjustment factors, including SEAS and subject adjustments.

The ATAR in Selection

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is designed specifically to assist some tertiary institutions in selecting applicants for courses. The ATAR is a rank, not a score. Therefore, your ATAR represents the percentage of the Year 12 age group that you performed higher than in your Year 12 studies. Your ATAR is used as one indicator of your capacity to succeed in a course and it is also a tool for comparing your potential with that of other applicants.

Selection rank & Subject adjustments

The selection rank is used by institutions to determine your selection into a course. The selection rank is an aggregate of your ATAR plus any adjustment factors.

Subject adjustments are upward adjustments added to the aggregate of your ATAR for specified studies. In some cases, different points are awarded to the aggregate according to the VCE study score you achieve in the study. Subject adjustments are course specific and taking these studies are not compulsory, but because they receive an adjustment they can help improve your chances of receiving an offer.

The value of an adjustment factor is determined by the institutions. Some public factors are published within the CourseSearch entry, while others such as SEAS are not published, due to privacy.

Equity schemes (SEAS)

Many institutions participate in equity schemes (SEAS).

Equity schemes allows institutions to:

- » Consider difficult circumstances that have had an impact on your study when making selection decisions
- » Identify applicants from under-represented groups when making selection decisions.

Assessment of an equity schemes application may result in upward adjustments to your selection rank, making you more competitive for your listed courses.

There equity schemes cover four areas, and you can apply for any or all that relate to your circumstances.

They are:

- » Personal information and location
- » Financial hardship
- » Living with a disability or medical condition
- » Difficult family and life circumstances

Other attributes considered in selection

The ATAR is not the only tool used in selection. To assess other attributes, such as a positive attitude towards study, a passion for the chosen discipline, discipline-specific knowledge, interpersonal skills, and/or artistic talent, other assessment tools are used.

These may include:

- An interview
- A test
- Completion of an additional form
- An audition, and/or
- A folio and folio presentation.

The requirement to complete any of the above, or other tasks, is listed under 'admission criteria' or 'essential requirements'. Check with instructions for advice on preparing for these tasks, and check deadlines for these tasks—some might be due before VTAC applications close.

Non-compulsory requirements

There are some items that are not compulsory but can help strengthen your application. This may include the personal statement—an opportunity to outline things like work experience, motivation to study and community leadership. Again, check course entries to see if these apply to the courses you are applying for.

ATAR profile

VTAC publishes an ATAR profile for every course that considers the ATAR in selection. This is a summary of selection data from the previous selection round. You can find them displayed within each relevant course entry on CourseSearch.

The profile shows the highest, median and lowest ATARs of applicants to whom offers were made: firstly for the 'raw' or unadjusted ATAR before any adjustments such as SEAS or subject bonuses are applied, and secondly for the selection rank—the ATAR after adjustments are applied.

The ATAR profile displayed on VTAC CourseSearch entries is the data for the offer round in January. Institutions may also publish further tables on their websites which adjust the profiles based on subsequent offers made through VTAC or directly to the institution.

Courses which make a small number of offers based on the ATAR will publish "L/N" (low number) or "<5 offers" instead of numeric data to protect the privacy of those applicants. For courses which do not use the ATAR in selection, you may see an "N/P" or "-" (not published) indication.

How do I know what selection rank is needed for a course?

The 'selection rank' data within the ATAR profile is a useful tool in understanding course selection data from the previous year and can be a good indication of what selection rank range could be required for the current year.

The 'lowest selection rank' represents the minimum selection rank out of all of the successful applicants for that course from the previous year. It may represent the actual ATAR of the applicant(s) or an adjusted ATAR. Therefore if you are using the lowest selection rank to evaluate your chances of an offer, and your ATAR is lower than the selection rank, it is still worth listing this course on your preferences as you may be eligible when adding adjustment factors. The example in the table below shows that 60.70 was the minimum selection rank required for selection into example course 1234567891.

Lowest selection ranks are not set ahead of selection—they are produced as a result of the selection process. Applicants can use the lowest selection rank from the previous year as a broad indicator of how competitive entry into a course was that year, and it can assist them to evaluate their chances of an offer in the next selection period. Keep in mind, that if your ATAR is below the lowest selection rank, it may still be worth listing this course as a preference as you might be eligible for adjustment factors such as interviews, tests, auditions, and/ or special consideration for access and equity schemes, and the lowest selection rank might be lower in the year you apply than the year before.

Selection rank = ATAR + Adjustments (SEAS, attribute assessments, other subject adjustments)

Course code	Campus	ATAR (excluding adjustment factors)			Selection rank (ATAR plus any adjustment factors)		
		Highest	Median	Lowest	Highest	Median	Lowest
1234567891	City	81.70	62.20	53.05	89.75	69.95	60.60