



VTAC Annual Report **2015/2016**

About this report

This report gives an overview of the operations of the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre for the period 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2016

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Foreword from the Chair



It is with pleasure that I present this report on VTAC activities over the 2015/16 period.

It has been a busy year at VTAC, as it continues to enhance and improve the routine activities involved in promoting and administering the application process for participating institutions, liaising with school and education communities, and assisting applicants in their goal of obtaining a place in a tertiary education course.

VTAC's IT environment has been moved almost entirely to managed providers, taking advantage of the speed and flexibility of cloud computing. The continuing enhancements are enabling VTAC to meet strategic objectives in providing institutions and applicants with a stable, effective and growing suite of services.

In addition to the core services, VTAC has been trialling and implementing new services. Included amongst these is FlexiDirect. VTAC have worked with La Trobe University to implement and pilot postgraduate coursework direct applications which are 'powered by VTAC'. These applications are accessed from the university website, but all the retrieval of supporting information, assessing of prior qualifications and ranking of applicants are handled by VTAC. This has enabled university staff to reduce time spent on repetitive administration tasks, facilitated the electronic provision of most prior academic results, and improved the time from application to offer.

In addition to FlexiDirect, VTAC has rolled out non-Year 12 assessment processing for all institutions as business as usual following a successful pilot. Many institutions have taken advantage of this additional service. Services that will be piloted in the coming year include assessment of advanced standing, facilitating additional documentation provision where needed for course compliance requirements and an enhanced electronic results provision product to support not only direct applications but also students wanting academic results electronically.

Tertiary admissions have been at the forefront of the news over this year; in particular there has been robust debate about use of various selection tools and outcomes in a demand-driven environment. The Higher Education Standards Panel is considering admissions and more transparency in the publication of selection data and we await the recommendations of this panel.

I would like to express my appreciation to colleagues on the VTAC Management Committee for their leadership and support for me as Chair of the Committee, and acknowledge the work of VTAC staff who have ensured the continued success of VTAC over the year.

Ms Natalie MacDonald
Chair, VTAC Management Committee

Director's message



Over the 2015/2016 period, VTAC has completed a review of its strategic direction, services to institutions and staffing structures. Out of this has emerged a revitalised organisation ready to take on the challenges presented in the current environment and with a focus upon providing targeted, quality services to the institutions we are proud to support.

On 8 September 1966, the first meeting was held between the University of Melbourne, Monash University and La Trobe University to set up a centralised admissions system which would service the three institutions in the supply-driven admissions space. Now in its 50th year, VTAC looks forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of its founding with now 62 institutions, a demand-driven environment and a very automated and efficient application, assessment and selection system.

We have revamped our branding and now sport a fresh, new, consistent look and feel across our website, hard copy publications and online applications. Our suite of publications has also had an overhaul with the first edition of the new VTACmag being published this year, along with a Year 10 planning publication. Our publications are now chattier, engaging and client-focussed. We've been able to take this approach as we have moved all course information online and through the new VTAC CourseSearch mobile app.

Supporting our member institutions and providing them with a high quality, timely and cost-effective service is a particular passion for all VTAC staff, and with the appointment of a dedicated project manager and a business analyst we are steadily improving both the quality and quantity of services offered. Because VTAC is wholly owned by Victorian tertiary institutions on a cost-recovery basis, we are well-placed to offer our specialised and agile services in IT, communications, customer service, measurement and reporting and assessment to assist institutions in their recruitment and admissions areas.

Tertiary admissions has been a very hot topic over this year with ATAR-based selection issues dominating headlines and the Minister for Education commissioning the Higher Education Standards Panel to conduct a review of university admissions. VTAC has played a key role in providing data to the HESP and in helping to inform conversations around the role and activities of Tertiary Admissions Centres.

I'd like to thank the Management Committee and the Board of Trustees for their continuing support and oversight of VTAC's operations. Under the guidance of Selection and Application Services, Information Technology Services, Customer Service and Communications and Publishing Services, VTAC is well equipped to deal with the challenges that the 51st year of operations will bring.

Mrs Catherine Wills
VTAC Director

Senior management reports

Selection and Application Services

Selection and Application Services has had another successful year.

Further improvements were made to selection worklists and simulation systems to improve the user experience for selection officers.

The annual selection review was very productive, resulting in a number of changes designed to better meet the needs of institutions.

Additional services were added to improve the applicant experience. Applicants now have the opportunity to change their preferences after each offer round. There is also a documentation upload function for applicants to supply their Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) and scholarship supporting documentation.

Looking forward we are developing a strategy to implement year-round offers, an initiative that will greatly benefit both institutions and applicants.

Antonietta Tancredi

Communications and Publishing Services

Communications and Publishing Services executed a large program of product enhancements and improvements to communication strategies this year.

Stage two of the implementation of the branding guidelines was implemented across a variety of platforms including refinements to the VTAC website and other public interfaces.

Usability testing was back on the agenda, with a further review of VTAC CourseSearch and the website in general. Overwhelmingly the feedback indicated that the enhancements implemented across the programs had improved accessibility and applicant understanding of the content and information on the site and in CourseSearch. Importantly the findings led to a review of the structure of course information on CourseSearch whereby content was sorted into digestible chunks of information.

Initiatives for 2016-17 include the introduction of VTACmag, a magazine format publication centred on the applicant experience, and the introduction of the VTAC CourseSearch app, which provides applicants with access to course information via their phone or tablet, with or without the internet.

With business as usual in the areas of communication through social media, seminars and conferences, the public relations team expanded their efforts on cementing VTAC's position as an authority on courses and tertiary education in Victoria. A new marketing story was created with an aspirational emphasis. The plan is to continue to build on this story over the next two or three years.

Suzanne Connelly

Research, Management and Reporting

The year has been busy with updates to the scaling and selection processes, and accommodation of a broader categorisation of VCAA studies, including Northern Hemisphere-timetabled studies. Submissions to various bodies included empirically-based reports to the Initial Teacher Education consultation process.

Bespoke routines are being progressively replaced by more standardised processes that are not vested in the RMR office. These are able to be run routinely. Several reporting processes have been amended to new realities. For example, previous reports of applicant choices were based on institutional categorisations – Higher Education vs. TAFE for example. With universities now offering pathway (non-degree) programs and some previous Institutes of Technology now being universities, many tertiary providers now offer a mixture of courses across the educational spectrum. Thus new reports now classify courses rather than institutions.

Research projects are being initiated to provide data and evidence to various bodies, especially government departments and also member institutions.

The “usual business” of scaling, aggregation and selection have all proceeded without any concerns.

Associate Professor Stephen Farish

Information Technology Services

The ITS team had a number of major changes in 2015-16. In line with the ITS strategy the public and internal systems were moved to cloud-based hosting at Amazon Web Services, providing better scaling for peak times and allowing cost savings at times where traffic is low.

During this time there were also significant achievements and developments. The VTAC website and applications handled the annual traffic spike at offer release day smoothly and without impact to users. The staff email system was migrated to Office 365, providing scalable tools and environments that will meet the future needs of VTAC while providing a stable platform.

The selection worklists and simulation systems, publishing and institutional pages were enhanced based on feedback and discussion with institutions, providing better functionality and a more appealing page style.

CourseLink was updated, providing rich functionality and making the tool easier for school careers counsellors to use.

The scaling, aggregation and ATAR programs were enhanced for the current year, and the output to the VCAA/VTAC Joint Results Service was delivered on time for the 2015 ATAR release.

Development of the VTAC CourseSearch mobile application was delivered in June, and the app has been steadily growing in popularity.

It has been a very successful year for the ITS group.

Gary Phillips

Project Management

The project team has had a memorable year, delivering a number of large-scale projects.

We have seen a number of projects emerge from in-depth discussions with institutions, with one of the most notable being the FlexiDirect project. FlexiDirect is a direct postgraduate application and selection system, with a focus on user experience. La Trobe University was the first participant in this pilot and the application was launched in April 2016. VTAC staff have learnt a lot about the differences between central and direct admissions, and we enjoyed collaborating with La Trobe on this. The pilot will continue until March 2018, and will then be incorporated into business as usual.

The project team has successfully managed other major projects, including the VTAC mobile application, QualCheck results verification services, and the upgrade of the publishing system.

Looking forward, we are working with institutions to improve the use of data to provide meaningful insight, and to also work towards improving credit assessment and articulation processes for institutions and students.

Chris Pollard

Customer Service

This has been significant year for customer service at VTAC. As part of our commitment to providing quality year-round support to our applicants, we employed an additional full-time senior customer service officer. This resource has been critical in providing much needed support during the mid-year cycle when staffing levels are at their lowest. The senior role has also been valuable in assisting with management of the customer service area and its contract staff during the busier months.

March saw the creation of the Customer Service Unit (CSU). This customer-focused hub has the autonomy and flexibility to work with all departments to deliver strong customer and client service objectives across all operational areas. Being welcomed into the the senior leadership team in my role as Customer Service Unit Manager has also given a voice to applicant challenges and concerns.

In partnership with CAPS, the CSU offered non-Year 12 applicant workshops to provide a more hands on approach to providing support for mature aged applicants returning to study. Feedback from these workshops was very positive.

The CSU handles approximately 45,000 phone calls and 9,000 emails per year. During the 2015-16 year, the CSU met its goal to respond to these enquiries with high levels of accuracy and low wait times.

Caleb Koppé

About VTAC

VTAC is an unincorporated agency established by its member institutions to coordinate the tertiary selection process in Victoria, that is, to receive applications and make offers on behalf of institutions.

VTAC's functions are set out in the Constitution, with its primary function being to act as an agent for its Members, in particular to:

- Approve, on behalf of Victorian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and Skills Victoria any major changes in policy or administration of selection processes;
- Devise selection policies for the joint selection system and establish and administer admission procedures for Members, TAFE Institutes and participating independent tertiary colleges, without derogation from the rights of each institution to determine for itself the principles for the selection of new students or the prescription of prerequisites for courses;
- Publicise and disseminate information about the admissions procedures of VTAC's members and participating institutions;
- Promote, enhance and facilitate interest in tertiary education in Victoria;
- Promote and sustain a co-operative and open selection system in Victoria;
- Be mindful of the respective interests of the sectors and the members of VTAC;
- Collaborate with other educational organisations; and
- Undertake other educational, promotional or commercial activities necessary, expedient or advantageous to carrying out its functions.

Institutions have established an agreed set of rules and guidelines to ensure effective operation of a system that is based on co-operation and goodwill. VTAC plays a coordinating and facilitating role to achieve agreed outcomes and maintain system coherence through consensus and negotiation.

VTAC is not a selection authority, does not determine the selection criteria used by institutions and does not decide who will receive an offer. All decisions about which applicants are offered a place are made by the course selection authorities at institutions.

After selection decisions have been made by the course authorities at institutions, VTAC sends offer messages to successful applicants on the institutions' behalf.

VTAC also:

- calculates and issues the ATAR for VCE students;
- co-ordinates sittings for Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) and Australian Law Schools Entrance Test (ALSET);
- provides telephone and online information and enquiry services for applicants;
- publishes a range of guides to tertiary study;
- provides timely information to assist applicants via its social media networks, WordPress, Facebook and Twitter;
- conducts information sessions for secondary school students and their parents, careers teachers and adults returning to study.

VTAC is not a government body—it is funded by participating institutions and processing fees paid by applicants.

As the second largest tertiary admission centre in Australia, in terms of the size of its operations (with NSW being the largest), VTAC services the largest number of institutions and offers the largest number of courses. Of the 63 participating institutions there are 11 universities, 10 TAFE providers and 42 private colleges. During the main round selection period, VTAC had 1,704 courses available.

Vision, mission and guiding principles

Mission

VTAC's mission is to provide high quality admission and selection services to Victorian tertiary institutions and to applicants seeking entry to their courses. In doing so, VTAC aims to promote and encourage participation in tertiary education.

Vision

An application and admissions service that meets the needs of applicants and the VTAC institutions

VTAC seeks to provide excellent application and admission services for use by applicants and institutions as and when they wish.

- A broad range of courses available through VTAC. VTAC's application and offer services can accommodate a broad range of tertiary courses including VET courses, undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
- Year round offer schedules. Institutions will be able to make offers throughout the year according to a pre-determined schedule, enabling many applicants to have their applications processed quickly without having to wait for a major offer round.
- Applications made directly to the institution. Institutions may process direct applications and offers for VTAC courses, subject to agreed protocols to protect the interests of other institutions and applicants.
- Enhanced assessment and admission services for institutions. VTAC seeks to provide a centralised service for the assessment of applicants for courses according to the criteria and guidelines specified by the institution. Course selection officers will use the VTAC assessments in combination with their own assessments of interviews, auditions, portfolios, to rank applicants in order of merit. This will include non-Year 12, advanced standing, postgraduate coursework and international applicant processing.
- A common framework for publishing selection criteria. The VTAC selection framework will provide applicants with clear, comparable information on the selection requirements for each course. It will be based on principles of fairness, transparency, explicitness and ease of comprehension for applicants.
- Enhanced user experience. Applicants will be able to monitor the progress of their application online and receive advice about whether they meet prerequisites or other requirements, including the need to provide additional information, or attend an audition or interview.

- An enhanced VTAC range of online services for applicants and institutions. Mobile computing capabilities will be a fundamental component of VTAC's services, as will the use of social media and online forums as important sources of information for, and communication with applicants.

A superior level of service and cost efficiency for tertiary institutions

VTAC seeks to provide the most effective and cost efficient application and admission services for its participating institutions. This will be achieved through the economies of scale that can be offered by VTAC, reducing the administrative overheads for institutions, but preserving institutional diversity and autonomy for selection of applicants.

Reimaging of VTAC to be more accessible and service-oriented

- VTAC seeks to refresh its branding and present an integrated, consistent look and feel through all interactions whether print, physical or electronic.
- An enhanced involvement with careers professionals with closer interactions with the ACCE (CEAV) and university marketing staff (TIS).
- An enhanced service culture within VTAC recognising the need to provide excellent, timely, friendly and expert assistance to partner institutions.

Guiding principles

In pursuit of its vision, VTAC is guided by a set of principles that support and promote:

- institutional diversity;
- institutional autonomy for selection;
- a tertiary selection framework based on fairness, transparency, explicitness and ease of comprehension for applicants; and
- comprehensive information and application services to assist applicants applying for courses and to receive offers without unnecessary delay.

Participating institutions

VTAC has two levels of participation: VTAC institutions and associate institutions.

VTAC institutions

VTAC institutions are university, TAFE and private tertiary providers that participate in the application, selection and offer processes for courses. They may also participate in the Special Entry Access Scheme and scholarships.

The following 42 institutions participated as VTAC institutions in 2015-16:

- Academy of Design Australia
- Academy of Interactive Entertainment
- Australian Catholic University
- Australian College of Applied Psychology
- Australian College of Sports Therapy
- Australian College of the Arts (Collarts)
- Australian Guild of Music Education
- Australian Maritime College
- Bendigo TAFE
- Box Hill Institute
- Charles Sturt University
- Chisholm
- CQUniversity
- Deakin College
- Deakin University
- Elly Lukas Beauty Therapy College
- Federation University Australia
- The Gordon
- Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE
- Holmes Institute
- Holmesglen
- Kangan Institute
- Kaplan Business School*
- La Trobe Melbourne
- La Trobe University
- Melbourne Institute of Technology
- Melbourne Polytechnic
- Monash College
- Monash University
- Moorabbin Flying Services
- Navitas College of Public Safety
- Oceania Polytechnic Institute of Education
- Photography Studies College
- RMIT University
- SAE Creative Media Institute
- Southern School of Natural Therapies
- Swinburne University of Technology
- The University of Melbourne
- Victoria University
- Victorian Institute of Technology
- William Angliss Institute
- Wodonga Institute of TAFE

* Previously participated as an Associate institution.

Republica Education began operating as Tractor Design School and Mercer School of Interior Design in March 2015.

Melbourne Institute of Business and Technology began operating as Deakin College in July 2015.

Associate institutions

Associate institutions list their courses with VTAC, but manage their own application and offer process.

The following 21 institutions, including five new institutions, participated at Associate level in 2015-16:

- Australian Institute of Fitness
- Australian Institute of Music
- Billy Blue College of Design
- Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School
- Endeavour College of Natural Health
- Footscray City Films*
- Health Skills Australia
- International College of Hotel Management
- JMC Academy
- LaTrobe College of Art and Design
- Longerenong College
- Macleay College (NEW)
- Marcus Oldham College (NEW)
- Mercer School of Interior Design (NEW)
- Northern College of the Arts and Technology
- Oxygen College
- Photographic Imaging College*
- RGIT Australia
- Sage Institute of Education
- Tractor Design School (NEW)
- VFA Learning

* Previously participated as a VTAC institution.

63

Institutions
in total

11

Universities

10

TAFE providers

42

Independent tertiary
colleges

Governance

The Board of Trustees

- Chair: Chair of the Victorian Vice Chancellors Committee (VVCC)
- Vice-Chancellor nominated by VVCC as having VTAC liaison responsibility
- Senior TAFE representative nominated by Skills Victoria as having VTAC liaison responsibility
- Chair of the Management Committee
- Deputy Chair of the Management Committee

The Management Committee

- Chair; appointed annually by the Board of Trustees
- Deputy Chair; appointed annually by the Board of Trustees
- One (1) person nominated by each University for a period of two years, who may be re-nominated
- Three (3) persons nominated by Skills Victoria for a period of two years, who may be re-nominated
- One (1) person nominated by Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), as long as ACPET remains the representative body of the majority of participating independent tertiary colleges
- Chair of the Scaling Committee, if not already nominated

The Executive of the Management Committee

- Chair of the Management Committee
- Deputy Chair of the Management Committee
- Chair of the Scaling Committee
- VTAC Director

Committee members

Board of Trustees

- CHAIR OF THE VVCC
Professor Linda Kristjanson
Vice-Chancellor and President, Swinburne University of Technology
CHAIR
- CHAIR, VTAC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Ms Natalie MacDonald
Vice President (Administration), La Trobe University
- DEPUTY CHAIR, VTAC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Mr Nicholas Hunt
Chief Executive Officer, William Angliss Institute
- VVCC MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR VTAC LIAISON
Mr Martin Bean
Vice-Chancellor and President, RMIT University
- SKILLS VICTORIA – DEECD
Mr Craig Robertson
Deputy Secretary, Skills Victoria

Scaling Committee

Advisory committee established by the Board of Trustees

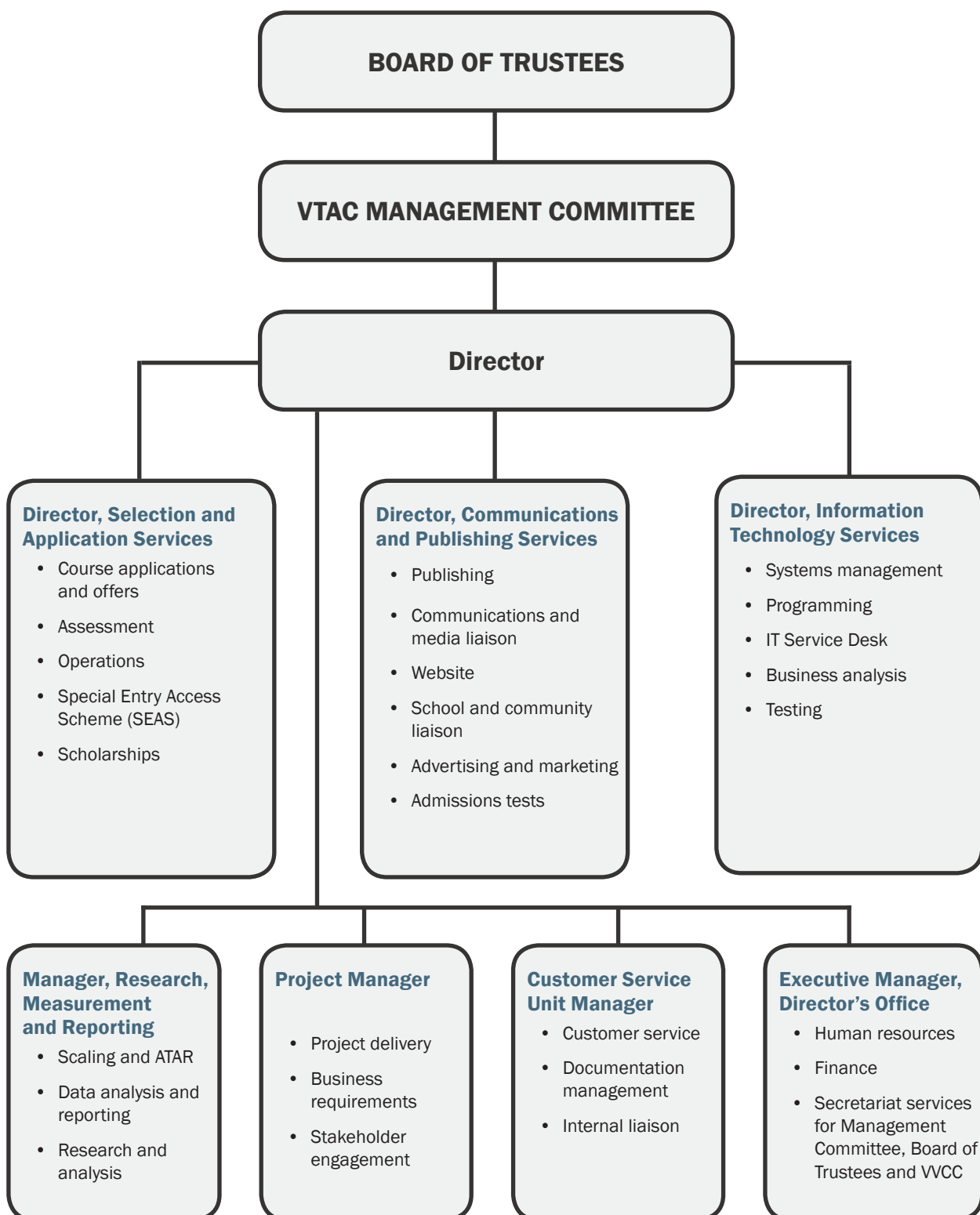
- MONASH UNIVERSITY
Professor Sue Willis
CHAIR
- MONASH UNIVERSITY
Professor Rob Hyndman
- THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Dr Sue Finch
- VCAA
Dr David Philips
- VTAC DIRECTOR
Mrs Catherine Wills
- VTAC MANAGER, RESEARCH, MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING
Associate Professor Steve Farish
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

VTAC Management Committee

- LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
Ms Natalie MacDonald
CHAIR
- WILLIAM ANGLISS INSTITUTE
Mr Nicholas Hunt
DEPUTY CHAIR
- AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
Ms Helen Murnane
- BOX HILL INSTITUTE
Ms Jennifer Oliver
- CHISHOLM INSTITUTE
Mr Justin Fallu
- DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
Ms Fofi Hronopoulos
- FEDERATION UNIVERSITY
Ms Claire Shaw
- MONASH UNIVERSITY
Professor Sue Willis
- RMIT UNIVERSITY
Dr Maddy McMaster
- SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
Mr Hemant Kokularupan
- THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Ms Carmel Murphy
- VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
Ms Teresa Tjia
- AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ACPET)
Ms Demmi Paris

Organisational structure

The VTAC staff contingent consists of 30 permanent, and 27 contract and casual staff with the majority of contract/casual staff employed seasonally to assist during the peak application period.



The year in review

This is an overview of VTAC's application, offer and course statistics.

For a complete breakdown of VTAC's annual statistics, go to <http://vtac.edu.au/reports>.

Applications and offers

Course applications

There were 82,270 applications in 2015 for courses starting in 2016. This was down 0.6% from the previous year. Of these:

- 77,298 were for domestic undergraduate courses, down 0.8%,
- 2,674 were for international undergraduate courses, up 15.4%, and
- 2,298 were for graduate entry teaching courses, down 39.1%.

Offers

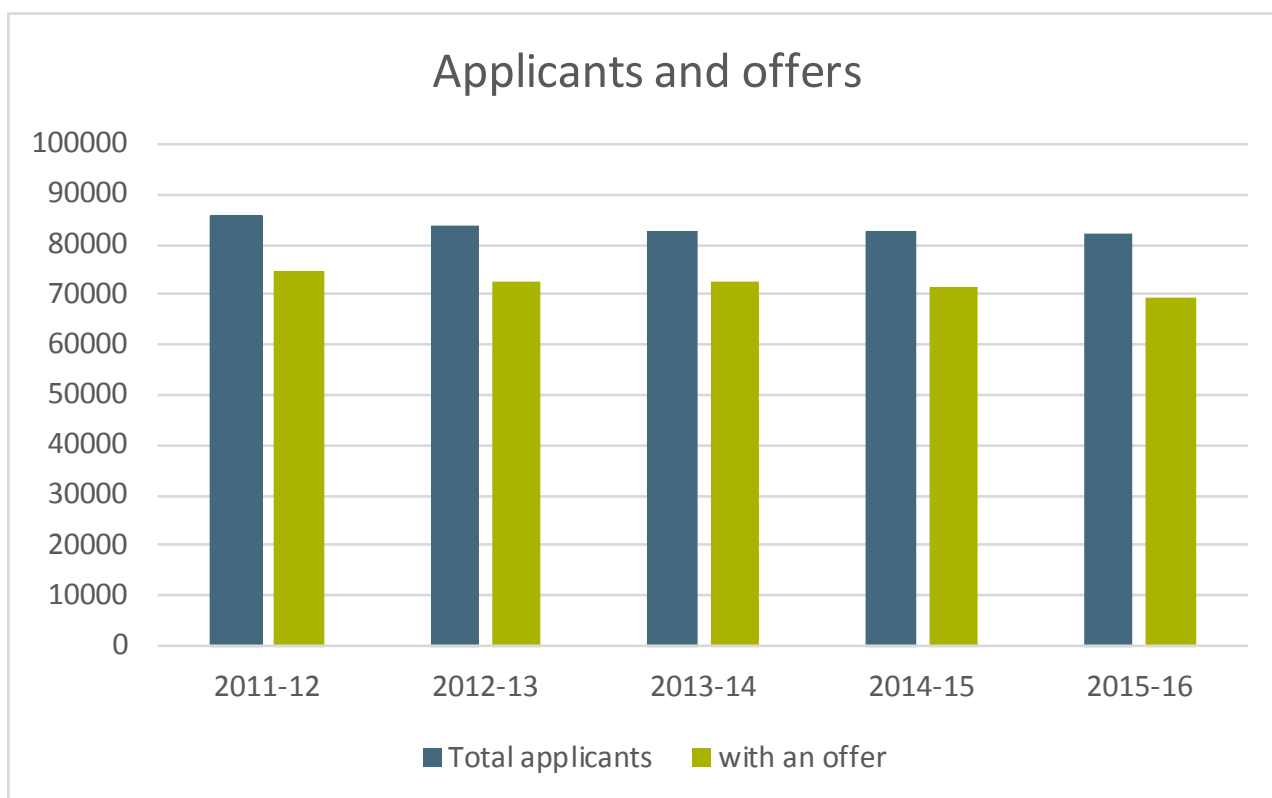
In total, 69,388 applicants received at least one offer. This was down by 3.2% from the previous year. Of these:

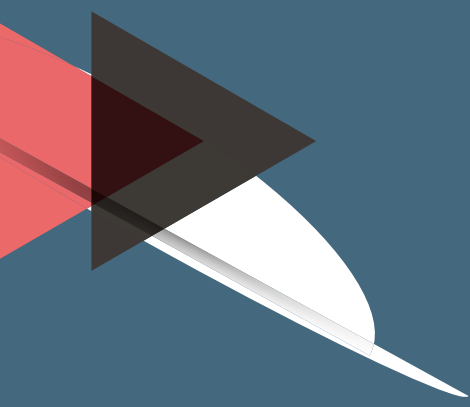
- 64,963 were for domestic undergraduate courses, down 2.9%,
- 1,948 were for international undergraduate courses, up 16.2%, and
- 2,477 were for graduate entry teaching courses, down 20.9%.

Offer rate

The applications and offers above produced an overall offer rate of 84.3%, down 2.3 percentage points from the previous year.

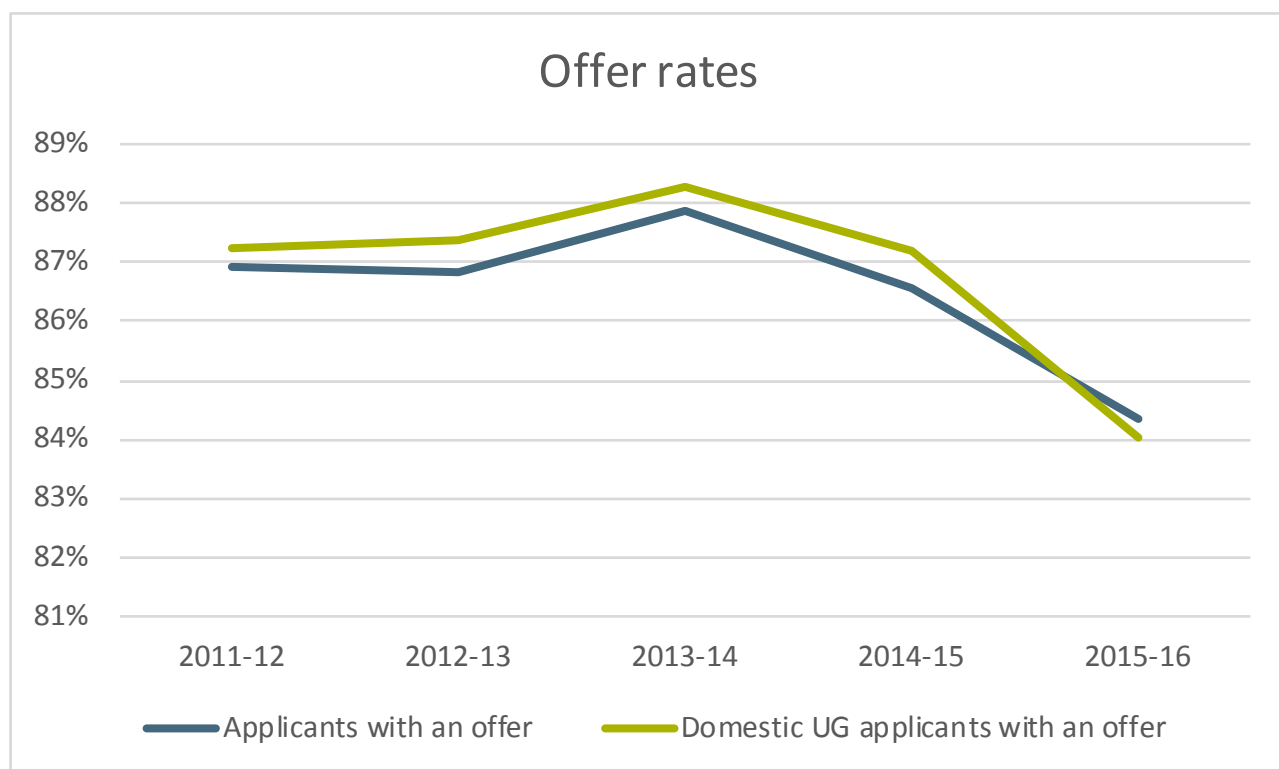
For domestic undergraduate courses, the decrease was 3.2 percentage points, to 84.0%.





Offer rate by year

The overall offer rate remained steady at 87-88% from 2011-12 to 2014-15. This year has seen a slight drop to 84%.



Applications and offers by year

COURSE APPLICANTS*	2014-15	2015-16	Change	
Domestic undergraduate	76,718	77,298	-538	0.8%
International undergraduate	2,318	2,674	580	15.4%
Graduate entry teaching	3,772	2,298	356	-39.1%
Total undergraduate	79,036	79,972	936	1.2%
TOTAL	82,808	82,270	-538	-0.6%

APPLICANTS OFFERED*	2014-15	2015-16	Change	
Domestic undergraduate	66,886	64,963	-1,923	-2.9%
International undergraduate	1,677	1,948	271	16.2%
Graduate entry teaching	3,130	2,477	-653	-20.9%
Total undergraduate	68,563	66,911	-1,652	-2.4%
TOTAL	71,693	69,388	-2,305	-3.2%

*Applicants and offers exclude mid-year. Offers exclude supplementary offers.

For a complete breakdown of VTAC's annual statistics, go to:
<http://vtac.edu.au/reports>

Courses

There were 1,704 courses published through VTAC, down 0.9% from the previous year. This included 174 courses with applications direct to institutions.

Other application services

Scholarships

VTAC administers a centralised application and assessment process for some institutional scholarships. VTAC received 21,112 scholarship applications in 2015, up 9.4% from the previous year.

Special Entry Access Scheme

VTAC administers the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS), the umbrella program for institutional access and equity schemes. SEAS provides a centralised application and assessment process for applicants to tertiary courses who have experienced educational disadvantage. VTAC received 36,369 SEAS applications in 2015, up 4.8% from the previous year.

STAT and ALSET

439 courses offered through VTAC required some applicants to sit the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT). The Australian Law Schools Entrance Test (ALSET) was a requirement of 8 courses at Deakin University.

The number of applicants who sat the STAT during main round 2015 was 1,378, a drop of 17% on the previous year. The number of STAT tests sat during mid-year 2016 was 217, a drop of 4%. The overall number of STAT tests sat was 1,595, a drop of 16%.

The number of applicants who sat the ALSET during main round 2015 was 78, a drop of 15% on the previous year. The number of ALSET tests sat during mid-year 2016 was 29, a drop of 42%. The overall number of ALSET tests sat was 107, a drop of 25%.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

VTAC calculates the ATAR for all Victorian Year 12 students. In 2015, VTAC calculated an ATAR for 47,003 students, up 9.2% from the previous year.

In the scaling population, there were 24,671 unique combinations of scaled studies, of which 19,298 combinations were taken by only one student. This means two out of five students chose a unique combination of scaled studies that no one else in the state chose. The most frequent combination was taken by 234 students.

Students were able to access their ATAR on the web and via SMS prior to receiving their printed statement in the mail. 24,558 students received their results by SMS. The resultsandatar.vic.edu.au site received a total of 218,500 visits, with 53% of those coming from mobile and tablet devices.

Assessment of applications and document processing

The processing of an application involves a series of checks to confirm study claims and previous academic results and assessments of overseas qualifications to ensure they meet Australian entrance requirements according to National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) guidelines.

All applications are available online and applicants are able to submit printed documentation to support their application. These are validated, scanned and verified. This information is made available on-line electronically to selection officers for consideration.

For main round 2015-16, VTAC:

- processed 5.4 million checks and assessment tasks (an increase of over 25% on last year), and
- scanned over 172,500 documents.

At mid-year, VTAC:

- processed nearly 121,500 checks and assessment tasks, and
- scanned nearly 5,000 documents.

Mid-year applications and offers

2016 was the seventh year of VTAC's mid-year application and offer service. 15 institutions participated, offering 193 courses.

- There were 2,556 applicants, up 11.6% from the previous year.
- Of these, 1,038 received an offer, down 4.3% on the previous year.
- This represents an offer rate of 40.6%, down from 47.4% in the previous year.

Figures for mid-year fluctuate due to institutions opting in and out of the program each year.

Participating institutions

The following institutions took part in mid-year in 2015:

- Academy of Design Australia
- Australian Catholic University
- Australian Guild of Music Education
- Australian Maritime College
- CQUniversity
- Elly Lukas Beauty Therapy College
- JMC Academy
- La Trobe University
- LaTrobe College of Art and Design
- Melbourne Institute of Technology
- Melbourne Polytechnic
- Mercer School of Design (associate)
- Moorabbin Flying Services
- University of Melbourne
- Victorian Institute of Technology

MID-YEAR	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Participating institutions	17	10	14	11	15
Courses offered	178	128	271	172	193
Applicants	1,648	1,649	1,890	2,290	2,556
Applicants offered	902	819	1,151	1,085	1,038

Communications

Customer service

VTAC employs nine customer service contractors and last year they handled 7,800 email enquiries and 38,000 phone calls from prospective and existing applicants over the main application and offer period.

During the mid-year period, the customer service team handled a further 1,200 emails and 6,000 phone calls from prospective and existing applicants.

Career practitioner seminars

Each year VTAC conducts a series of programs for both new and experienced careers teachers and careers practitioners. The sessions are held across all major Victorian regions, Canberra and across the border in New South Wales and South Australia.

In July and August 2015 around 975 careers practitioners from Victorian and interstate secondary schools and TAFE institutes attended.

Parents of VCE students

With parents being a significant influence on Year 12 students, VTAC runs a number of information sessions specifically for parents. The sessions are a cooperative between groups of schools across Melbourne and regional Victoria. Precedence is given to sessions in regional Victoria. In 2015 it is estimated that VTAC presentations reached over 3,000 current Year 12 students and their parents.

Post-Results and ATAR Service (PRAS)

Run in conjunction with the VCAA, the Post-Results and ATAR Service provides support for Year 12 students with questions about their results. Over the three-day period following the release of results, 1,245 calls were answered. This represents a 6% decrease on last year.

The first day mostly consisted of PIN queries, while on the following days most queries were about results interpretation.

Social media

VTAC blogs

VTAC publishes two blogs – one for applicants and the other for careers advisers. Articles and information posted to the blogs is cross-posted to Twitter and Facebook.

There were 2,840 people subscribed to receive VTAC blog updates by email and 250 WordPress subscribers at the end of the June 2015 – around double last year's figures. These numbers tend to increase during the main round application period.

By the end of June 2016, the blog for applicants had received 124,400 views (30% down on the previous year) and the careers teachers blog had received 10,800 views (21% up on the previous year).

The highest number of views was received in January during the offer period, with more than 23,700 views from 9,050 visitors.

Facebook

Facebook was the most used social platform to contact and engage with VTAC, with 17,170 'likes' on the page by the end of June 2016 (an increase of 24% on last year). This is subject to peaks and troughs throughout the application period, with growth of around one third during main round applications.

Twitter

Although not as widely-used as Facebook, VTAC's Twitter account was also used to link to blog posts, answer questions, and address misconceptions or issues in a timely manner.

@vtacguide had 1810 followers at 15 July 2016.

Webinars

VTAC held four webinars for careers practitioners and parents of Year 12 students between February and July 2016 covering topics such as course applications, special consideration and the CourseLink online system. The webinars had an average attendance rate of around 30 people and achieved wider exposure through publication on the Career Education Association of Victoria and VTAC careers practitioners blogs.

The webinars were recorded and made available through the VTAC website.

Publications

Each year VTAC produces a range of printed and online publications to promote tertiary education, the application process, and calculation of the ATAR.

This year's edition of the VTAC Guide was its last. Course information is now available online only, through the VTAC website and the new VTAC CourseSearch app. A new magazine, VTACmag, was developed this year and launched for the 2016-17 application period. Choice and VICTER are also being phased out, to be replaced by a comprehensive Year 10 guide.

The following publications were produced for the 2015-16 application period:

The VTAC Guide

The VTAC Guide is VTAC's major publication. It contains courses offered by institutions that participate in the VTAC system, information about these institutions, and general information about application procedures.

Reference copies are provided free of charge to Victorian and border secondary schools, libraries, tertiary institutions and adult education and training providers.

30,000 copies of the VTAC Guide were printed; 8,600 reference copies were distributed free of charge to Victorian and border secondary schools, libraries and participating institutions, and over 13,000 copies (9,780 school orders and 3,400 retail) were sold through Victorian and interstate newsagents.

ABC of Applying

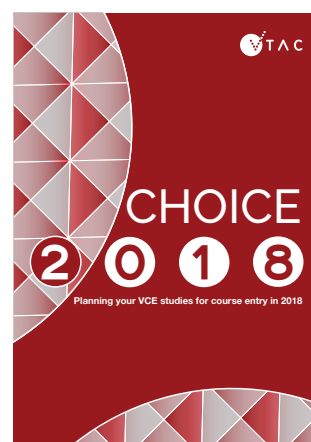
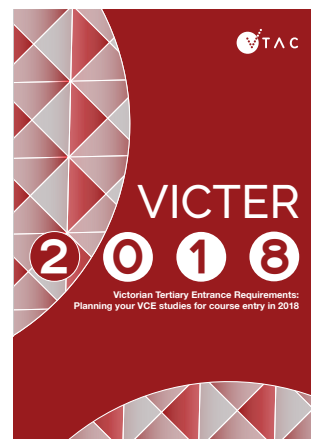
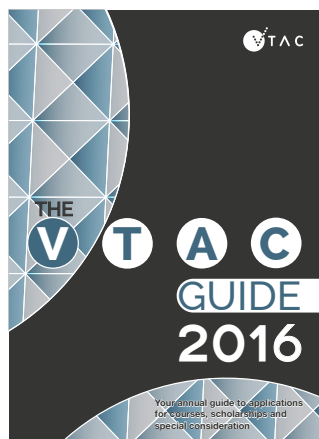
A companion to the Guide, ABC of Applying summarises (for parents of VCE students) all the vital information needed for the application process without all the course and institutional information contained in the Guide. All Victorian schools are sent one copy per Year 12 student.

ABC of Scaling

ABC of Scaling is a pamphlet that explains in simple terms how VTAC scales the VCE study scores and then calculates the ATAR from those scaled scores.

ABC of Offers

The ABC of Offers is a pamphlet that explains how the offer system works, with information about offer rounds, course fee types, supplementary offers and change of preference. It is published on the VTAC website.

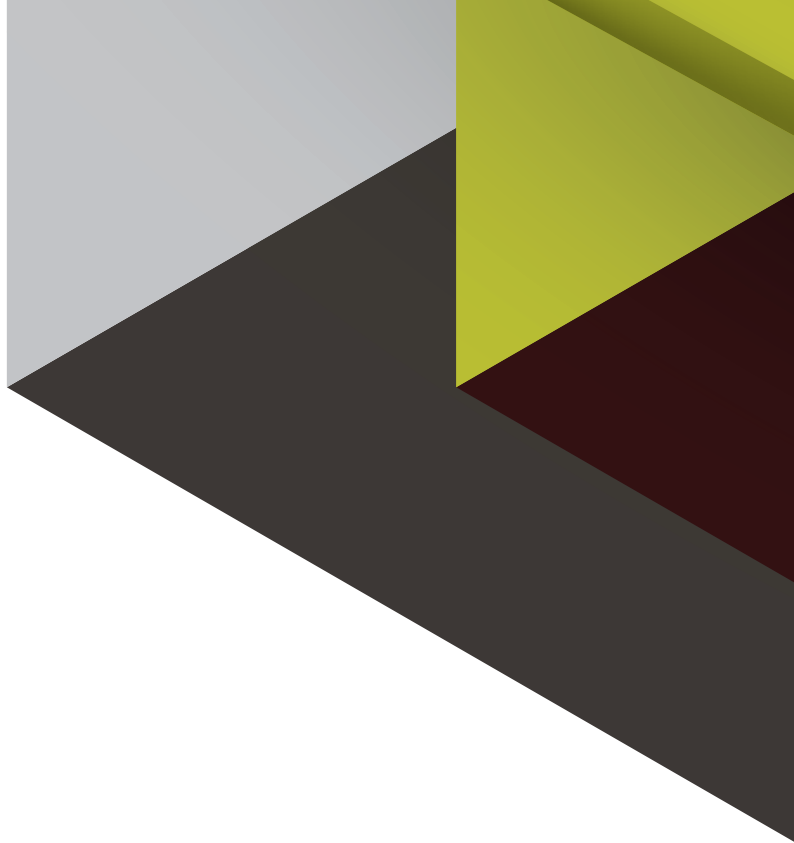


VICTER: Victorian Tertiary Entrance Requirements

In VICTER, institutions outline the VCE study requirements needed for entry into their courses in two years time. This advance information is vital for Year 10 students planning a VCE curriculum and a future tertiary direction. It is also a handy reference for Year 11 students who are reviewing their Year 12 study choices.

CHOICE: VCE studies and the ATAR

Choice is written for and targeted at current Year 10 students planning their future VCE program. The booklet covers topics such as getting a good ATAR, urban myths surrounding choosing VCE studies, and scaling. Recent graduates also offer their advice to future Year 12 students. Copies are distributed at no charge to Victorian and border secondary providers. All Victorian schools are sent one copy per Year 10 student.



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