

The background of the page is a dark blue gradient. On the right side, there is a vertical bar with a light blue-to-dark blue gradient. The main area contains several overlapping, semi-transparent blue circles and ovals of various sizes, creating a layered, abstract effect. The text is positioned in the lower-left corner.

VTAC

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre

Annual Report 2010-2011

Foreword



I am pleased to present this report of a busy and successful year for VTAC.

A major focus of our activities was the VTAC Strategic Directions Project, the review initiated by the Board of Trustees in 2009 to consider the longer term strategic directions for VTAC in light of both the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education and the Victorian Government Skills Reform and Tertiary Education Plan.

Key reforms introduced over the past year were to allow institutions more flexibility in making direct offers applicants and to communicate with their applicants during the application and selection period,

I would like to thank the members of the VTAC Management Committee for their leadership and commitment. On behalf of the Management Committee I also extend my thanks to those who work for and with VTAC to ensure its success.

VTAC is looking forward the future challenges and opportunities presented by the changing higher education landscape and we continue to strive to provide high quality admission and selection services to its tertiary institutions and to applicants seeking entry to courses in our institutions.

Ian Marshman

Chair, VTAC Management Committee

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The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre strives to ensure that participating institutions, applicants and Australian Secondary Schools receive high quality services by exercising leadership in the tertiary education sector through promoting effective quality management practices and services.

This report provides an account of the initiatives, events and operations of the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre for the period 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011.

Vision

To be recognised as an innovative, high quality, flexible, responsive and service-oriented organisation committed to best practice processes at all levels.

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.

VTAC supports institutional diversity, flexibility and autonomy in selection through the provision of a cooperative and open selection system. The system is supported by range of services benchmarked against Australian and international best practice.

VTAC supports applicants for tertiary courses by providing them with accurate and relevant information about courses and access to efficient and equitable application and selection procedures.

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
- comprehensive information and application services to assist applicants applying for courses and to receive offers without unnecessary delay.

Director's message

VTAC has had another busy year of growth in nearly all areas of our operations. In 2010 we processed over 88,000 applications for tertiary courses and issued around 74,000 offers for over 2000 courses. For the second year VTAC processed applications for mid-year entry in 2011.

VTAC has been a front runner in its online applications and offer services and this year we strengthened our web presence with enhanced information services for institutions, applicants, and careers counsellors.

VTAC is recognised nationally for its information provision program with links to all Victorian secondary schools, community groups and counselling services. Last year participants from over 500 schools attended 29 information sessions held throughout Victoria.

VTAC's success is based on the dedication of its staff and their strong relationships with our institutions and I would like to thank you all for your continued effort and support.



Elaine Wenn
VTAC Director

Governance



Committee members

Board of Trustees

- CHAIR OF THE VCC
Professor David Battersby
Vice-Chancellor, University of Ballarat
CHAIR
- CHAIR, VTAC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Mr Ian Marshman
Senior Vice Principal, The University of Melbourne
- DEPUTY CHAIR, VTAC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Mr John Maddock
Chief Executive Officer, Box Hill Institute
- WCC MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR VTAC LIAISON
Professor Paul Johnson
Vice-Chancellor and President, La Trobe University
- SKILLS VICTORIA – DIIRD
Ms Kym Peake
Deputy Secretary, Skills Victoria

Scaling Committee

Advisory committee established by the Board of Trustees

- THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Ms Lin Martin
CHAIR
- THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Dr Sue Finch
- MONASH UNIVERSITY
Prof Rob Hyndman
- VTAC DIRECTOR
Elaine Wenn
- VTAC MANAGER, RESEARCH, MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING,
Paul Livingstone
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

VTAC Management Committee

- AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
Ms Joy Magee
- BOX HILL INSTITUTE
Mr John Maddock
DEPUTY CHAIR
- CHISHOLM INSTITUTE
Mr Peter Harrison
- DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
Ms Robin Buckham
- LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
Professor John Rosenberg
- MONASH UNIVERSITY
Professor Merran Evans
- RMIT UNIVERSITY
Dr Amanda McMaster
- SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
Mr Tony Reed
- UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT
Professor Todd Walker
- UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE (THE)
Mr Ian Marshman
CHAIR
- VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
Ms Lyn Bayly
- WILLIAM ANGLISS INSTITUTE OF TAFE
Mr Nicholas Hunt
- AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ACPET)
Ms Julie Moss
- CHAIR OF THE SCALING COMMITTEE
Ms Lin Martin

Member institutions

Institutions:

58

Universities:

11

TAFE providers:

18

Private colleges:

29

Academia International

Academy of Interactive Entertainment

Australian Academy of Design

Australian Catholic University

Australian College of Applied Psychology

Australian College of Sports Therapy

Australian Guild of Music Education

Australian Institute of Fitness

Australian Maritime College

Bendigo TAFE

Blue Mountains International
Hotel Management School

Box Hill Institute

Carrick Institute of Education

Charles Sturt University

Chisholm Institute

Deakin University

East Gippsland TAFE

Elly Lukas Beauty Therapy College

Endeavour College of Natural Health

Footscray City Films

GippsTAFE (Central Gippsland
Institute of TAFE)

Gordon (The)

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE

Grenadi School of Design

Holmes Institute

Holmesglen

International College of Hotel Management

JMC Academy

Kangan Institute

La Trobe University

LaTrobe College of Art and Design

Max Therapy Institute

Melbourne Institute of Business
and Technology

Melbourne Institute of Technology

Monash College

Monash University

Moorabbin Flying Services

Navitas College of Public Safety

Northern Melbourne
Institute of TAFE (NMIT)

Oceania Polytechnic Institute of Education

Oxford College of Business

Photographic Imaging College - PIC

Photography Studies College

Qantm College

RMIT University

SAE Institute

Sage Massage

South West Institute of TAFE

Southern School of Natural Therapies

Stott's Colleges

Sunraysia Institute of TAFE

Swinburne University of Technology

University of Ballarat

University of Melbourne (The)

Victoria University

Victorian Institute of Technology

William Angliss Institute of TAFE

Wodonga Institute of TAFE

About VTAC

Formed (as VUAC):

1967

Operating as VTAC since:

1987

The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) is an unincorporated association acting as an agency for its member institutions. VTAC is funded by member institutions and processing fees paid by applicants.

VTAC is the central office that administers the application and offer process for places in tertiary courses at university, TAFE and independent tertiary colleges in Victoria (and a few outside Victoria).

VTAC receives, processes and provides application information and supporting documentation to the course selection authorities at institutions. After selection decisions have been made by the course authorities at institutions, VTAC sends offer letters to successful applicants on the institutions' behalf.

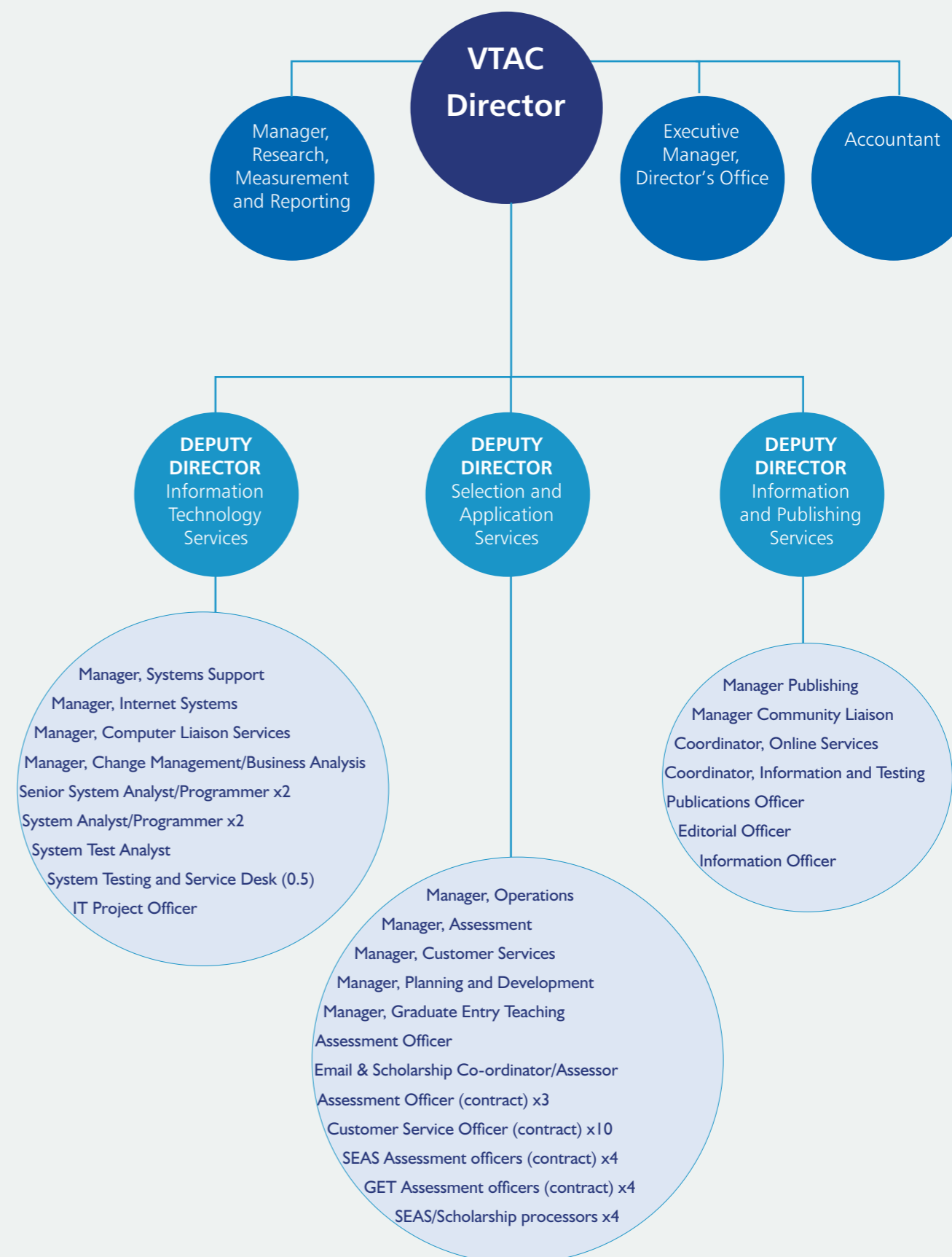
The VTAC system operates under an agreed set of rules and schedules aimed at consistency and a 'level playing field'. It also recognises institutional autonomy and authority in selection and admissions policy and practices.

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 58 member institutions there are 11 universities, 18 TAFE providers and 29 private colleges. At 30 June 2011 VTAC had 2086 courses available.

In addition to applications and offers for tertiary courses, VTAC also:

- administers the application process for the Special Entry Access Scheme and scholarships on behalf of participating institutions;
- calculates and issues the ATAR (previously known as the ENTER) for VCE students;
- co-ordinates sittings for STAT and DULSAT (ALSET) admissions tests;
- provides telephone and online information and enquiry services for applicants;
- publishes a range of guides to tertiary study;
- conducts information sessions for secondary school students and their parents, careers teachers and adults returning to study.

Organisational structure



Key achievements

Applicant services

- **Increased online services:**
VTAC continued to increase the availability of online options for applicants via the applicant portal MyInfo, including online irregular offers and direct email communication services. Another important initiative was the automation of the test registration process, which allowed paid applicants to download their confirmation letters, candidate instruction sheets, and Candidate Information Booklets via the applicant portal MyInfo rather than waiting for mailed copies. This increased efficiency while simultaneously saving resources.
- **Streamlined email enquiry service:**
VTAC updated the email enquiry service for both applicants and general enquiries to be monitored by an internal task system. The new system allocated all email enquiries as tasks to ensure all enquiries were resolved. In addition, applicant email enquiries were recorded and stored with their application record.
- **Introduced PayPal option:**
VTAC introduced PayPal as a second online payment option in addition to payment by credit card. PayPal enables applicants to pay by linking either their bank account debit card or credit card to their PayPal account
- **Improved telephone system:**
In 2010 a new telephone system was implemented to replace the system that had been in operation for the past 12 years. The new system gives VTAC more programming control with the server and PABX located on site at the VTAC office.

Selection services

- **Increased graduate courses and improved assessment of eligibility:**
VTAC continued to promote more graduate courses and assisted institutions by assessing the eligibility of applicants for graduate entry during the application process.
- **Certificate II and III through VTAC:**
This year VTAC has expanded course offerings to include Certificate II and Certificate III courses from VET providers who are in the VTAC system. This allows these institutions to offer places to applicants from a broader range of education/skill levels.

Offers

- **Offers for fully paid applicants only:**
Only fully paid applicants were released to institutions for selection.
- **Streamlined supplementary offers:**
Supplementary offers provide the opportunity for institutions to offer available tertiary places to applicants who did not receive an offer in the main offer rounds. The second year for supplementary offers provided institutions greater flexibility and control to make more relevant and more targeted offers to applicants based on information supplied in applications, such as: course preferences; fields of interest; postcodes; and, teaching methods for Graduate Entry Teaching (GET) courses.
- **Irregular offer forms online:**
The irregular offer process was transferred into an online process. Applicants were able to submit requests via the applicant portal, MyInfo. Selection officers were then able to communicate their decisions online.

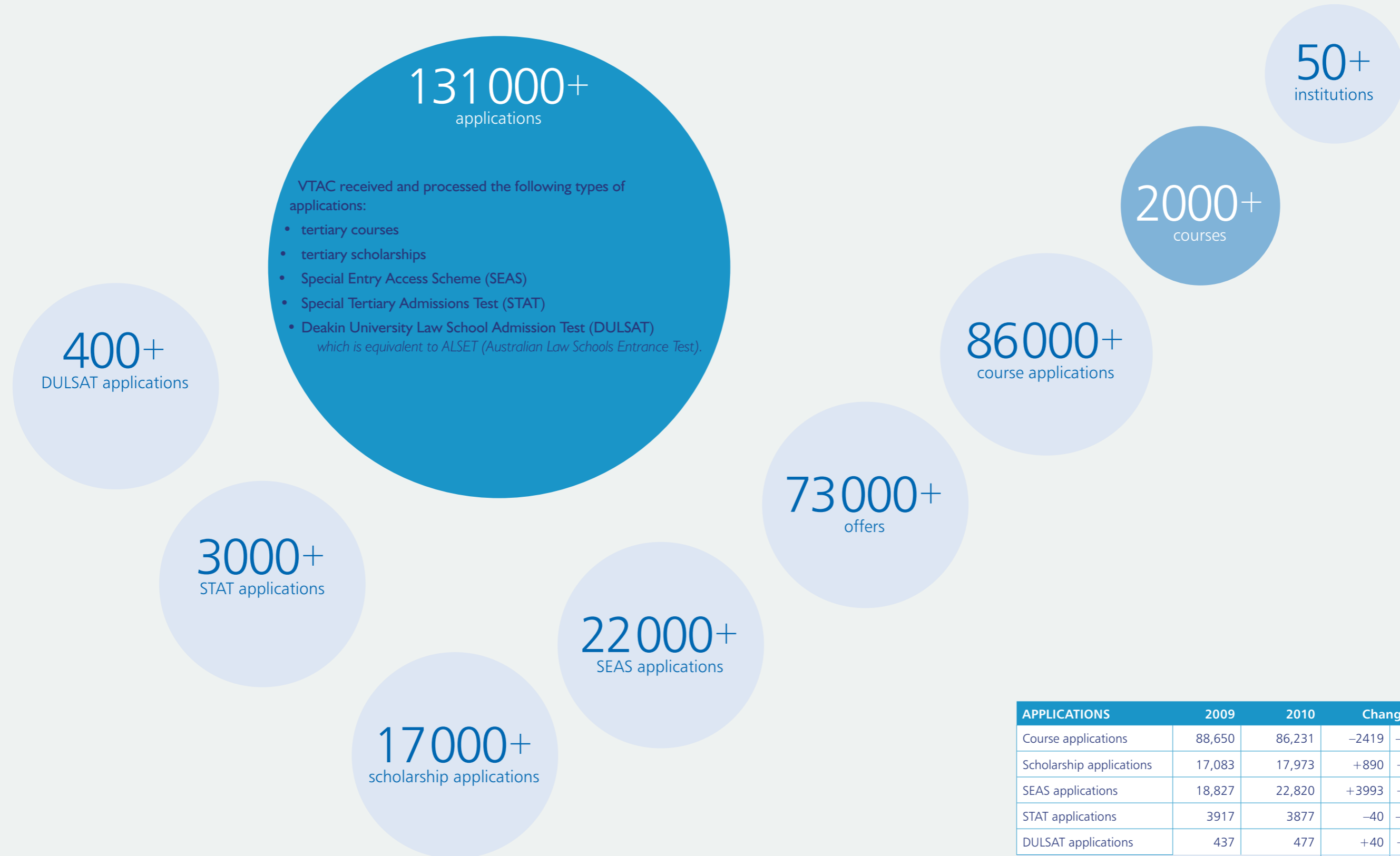
Communications

- **Launched VTAC Social Media:**
This year VTAC launched online social media communications with two VTAC blogs for applicants and careers professionals. The blogs provide real-time updates on the VTAC website as well as offering a subscription option that allows applicants and counsellors to access updated information via a variety of delivery channels such as RSS, email, Twitter and Facebook. Providing these options means that subscribers have more control over how and when they access the information and allows them to stay up-to-date via platforms they are more likely to use.
- **Improved CourseSearch:**
The keyword search function on the online CourseSearch program was expanded making it easier for prospective students to find courses. The results now include courses where the keyword appears in the title of the course, the title of the award/qualification, and/or the title of any of the major studies listed for the course.
- **Streamlined Majors Index:**
The Majors index in the VTAC Guide was streamlined to reduce the number of headings and reduce multiple course listings under similarly worded headings. By assigning individual major studies to a VTAC major category, institutions maintain the official major name in their course information, and VTAC assists applicants to find similar courses.
- **Clearly-in ATAR in course entries:**
In response to feedback from careers professionals using the VTAC Guide to counsel Year 12 students, VTAC has now included the previous year's Clearly-in ATAR with the general course information so all information relevant to the course can be viewed together.

Technology services

- **Improved service desk facilities:**
VTAC introduced an electronic service desk software based on ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) methodology. The software, Microsoft Team Foundation Server (TFS), replaced the existing email and paper based service which had become overburdened and difficult to track. The new software enables the service desk to monitor, allocate and test issues, bugs and technical requests made to the VTAC Information Technology Services (ITS). The advantages include quick tracking, approval process and monitoring of complex multiple-tasked developments. Management of user requests is transparent to all, but still requires careful staff management during the busy selection period.
- **VTAC systems redevelopment:**
VTAC has initiated an IT system redevelopment project to meet existing and future business processing needs with the aims of improving services for institutions and applicants; providing greater flexibility and self-service capability for institutions and reducing manual maintenance efforts. By adopting the industry standard multi-tiered web application architecture, minimising the number of interfaces between different systems and enabling the business logic components to be shared by different systems and user interfaces, VTAC systems will be equipped with the optimal amount of scalability while reducing the effort and impact of any changes to be made.

Applications and offers



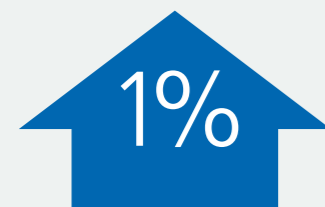
APPLICATIONS	2009	2010	Change	
Course applications	88,650	86,231	-2419	-3%
Scholarship applications	17,083	17,973	+890	+5%
SEAS applications	18,827	22,820	+3993	+21%
STAT applications	3917	3877	-40	-1%
DULSAT applications	437	477	+40	+9%
TOTALS	128,914	131,378	+2464	+2%

Applications and offers

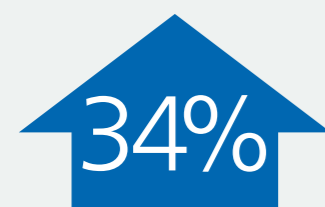
Course applicants
(AUG-DEC 2010):



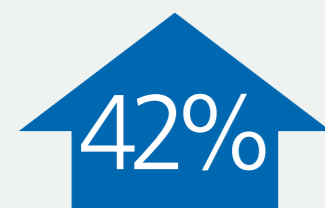
Course applicants
(AUG-DEC 2010)
offered a place:



Course applicants
(APR-JUN 2011):



New applicants
(APR-JUN 2011):



Course applications

VTAC is the central office that administers the application and offer process for places in vocational education training, undergraduate and graduate entry teaching courses at university, TAFE and independent tertiary colleges in Victoria (and a few outside Victoria). VTAC receives and forwards application information and supporting documentation to the course selection authorities at institutions.

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

Although the number of course applicants for August-December 2010 decreased by three per cent, the number of applicants for this period who received an offer showed an increase of one per cent.

COURSE APPLICANTS	2009	2010	Change	
Domestic undergraduate	81,141	79,135	-2006	-2%
International undergraduate	2773	2628	-145	-5%
Graduate entry teaching	4736	4468	-268	-6%
<i>Total undergraduate</i>	<i>83,914</i>	<i>81,763</i>	<i>-2151</i>	<i>-3%</i>
TOTALS	88,650	86,231	-2419	-3%

APPLICANTS OFFERED	2009	2010	Change	
Domestic undergraduate	66,728	67,415	687	+1%
International undergraduate	2300	2208	-92	-4%
Graduate entry teaching	3597	3397	-200	-6%
<i>Total undergraduate</i>	<i>69,028</i>	<i>69,623</i>	<i>595</i>	<i>+1%</i>
TOTALS	72,625	73,020	395	+1%

Universities appear to have made more offers in response to the higher participation targets set by the Commonwealth Government following the 2008 Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education. Universities made 517 more main round offers than the previous year, and over the past two years, main round university offers have increased cumulatively by almost twelve per cent.

Mid-year course applications

VTAC provided a mid-year application and offer service for the second time in 2011. Eleven institutions participated, offering a total of 72 courses and making 738 offers. There were 1326 applicants, of whom 629 were 2010 applicants re-applying and 697 were new applicants in 2011. Mid-year applications in 2011 increased by thirty four per cent and new applicants increased by forty two per cent.

Behind the scenes

Application assessment

When VTAC processes an application, the information submitted is automatically checked against the information VTAC can access electronically (such as Year 12 records or university results). These checks are referred to as 'tasks'. System-processed tasks include confirmation of student details and study claims. When the information does not exactly match, some form of manual check or investigation is required by VTAC assessment staff to verify the information submitted. Examples of manual checks include investigating mismatched names or dates for study claims, or assessing whether overseas qualifications meet Australian entrance requirements according to National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) guidelines.

Document processing

While all applications are available online, applicants are able to submit printed documentation to support their application. Processing printed documentation requires sorting and validating documents sent to VTAC. Each item is date-stamped, grouped, scanned and verified. This information is circulated electronically to selection officers for consideration.

VTAC Personal information (Pi) forms

Applicants are also able to submit additional information to support their application using the VTAC Pi form which is available through the online applicant portal: MyInfo. In the past year VTAC received and processed a number of printed VTAC Pi forms. In future all Pi forms will be submitted online.

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT TASKS	2010
System-processed tasks	1,200,464
For undergraduate course applications	24,001
For Automated Results Transfer Service	16,173
For SEAS applications	29,940
For Scholarship applications	11,861
For Graduate Entry Teaching (GET) course applications	11,064
<i>Sub-total manual-processed tasks</i>	<i>93,039</i>
TOTAL	1,293,503

Assessment tasks:

1,290,000+

Printed documentation:

208,000+

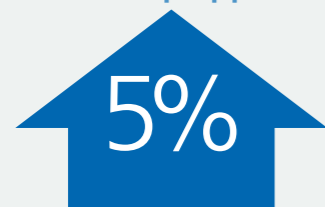
VTAC Pi forms:

42,000+

DOCUMENTATION	2010
Academic transcripts	143,503
Supporting documents for SEAS	21,423
Supporting documents for Scholarship	18,171
RMIT University Schools Network Access Program (SNAP) forms	5571
La Trobe University Schools Access La Trobe (SALT) forms	2661
VTAC Pi forms (online)	25,476
VTAC Pi forms (printed)	16,842
<i>Sub-total (VTAC Pi forms)</i>	<i>42,318</i>
<i>Sub-total (printed)</i>	<i>208,171</i>
TOTAL	233,674

Applications and offers

Scholarship applicants:

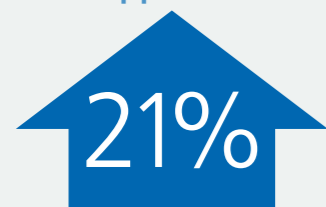


Scholarships

VTAC administers a centralised application and assessment process for some institutional scholarships. In 2010 scholarship applicants increased by five per cent from 17,083 to 17,973.

APPLICATIONS	2009	2010	Change	
Scholarship applications	17,083	17,973	+890	+5%

SEAS applicants:



Special Entry Access Scheme

VTAC administers Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) as 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.

In 2010 SEAS applicants increased by twenty one per cent from 18,827 to 22,820.

APPLICATIONS	2009	2010	Change	
SEAS applications	18,827	22,820	+3993	+21%

Increases in both scholarship and SEAS applications could be attributed to better promotion of the schemes and the improved accessibility of the applications.

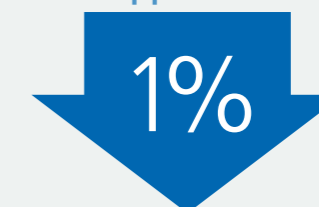
STAT and DULSAT (ALSET) applications

Approximately twelve per cent of courses offered through VTAC required some non-Year 12 applicants to sit the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT). The Deakin University Law Schools Admission Test (DULSAT) was a requirement of eight courses at Deakin University. Applicants for STAT decreased by one per cent while applicants for DULSAT (ALSET) increased by nine per cent, indicating a possible increase in applicants for Deakin law courses.

The 2010 application period was a year of firsts for STAT/DULSAT. VTAC held mid-year sittings of the STAT in May 2010 and also hosted a metropolitan sitting in December. 2010 also saw the introduction of self-service functions where paid applicants were able to download their confirmation letters, candidate instruction sheets, and Candidate Information Booklets via the applicant portal MyInfo rather than waiting to receive them by mail.

General sittings were held at Caulfield and Burwood. Additional sittings were held in regional venues across Victoria and in Hobart as Tasmanian applicants were required to apply for the STAT through VTAC. Special arrangements were made for candidates unable to attend any of the general testing sessions, and an additional session was organised and held for vision-impaired applicants at the offices of Vision Australia in October.

STAT applicants:



DULSAT (ALSET) applicants:

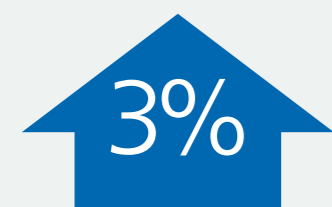


STAT and DULSAT (ALSET) sittings	2009 applicants	2009 attendees	2009 %	2010 applicants	2010 attendees	2010 %
October: Metropolitan	1785	1650	92%	1563	1431	92%
October: Regional	744	690	93%	705	652	92%
November: Metropolitan	1474	1277	87%	1367	1182	86%
November: Regional	190	171	90%	192	162	84%
December: Metropolitan	-----	-----	-----	260	220	85%
Special Sittings	161	156	97%	124	114	92%
Sub-totals (October)	2529	2340	93%	2268	2083	92%
Sub-totals (November)	1664	1448	87%	1559	1344	86%
Sub-totals (metropolitan)	3259	2927	90%	3190	2833	89%
Sub-totals (regional)	934	861	92%	1079	976	90%
Sub-totals (Oct - Dec)	4354	3944	91%	4211	3761	89%
Mid Year (May)	-----	-----	-----	143	127	89%
TOTALS	4354	3944	91%	4354	3888	89%

Tertiary Admission Rank

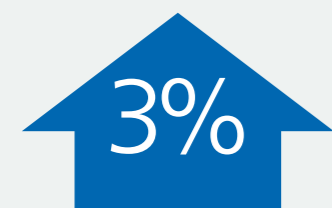
ATAR calculated:

47000+



Studies scaled:

114



Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

To assist tertiary institutions in selecting students VTAC provides an overall measure of each student's performance across all their Year 12 studies. This overall measure is called the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). The ATAR provides a way of ranking students that is fair to students even though they have taken different studies. All VCE Study Scores are scaled by VTAC to adjust for the fact that it is more difficult to obtain a high study score in some studies than others. The scaled Study Scores are called ATAR Subject Scores. In 2010 there was a three per cent increase in both the number of ATARs calculated and the number of studies scaled.

ATAR and VCE results online service

VTAC provides a number of methods for students to obtain their ATAR: telephone interactive voice response (IVR); telephone short message service (SMS); and online. In addition a printed statement was also provided to students who applied for courses through VTAC.

VTAC and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority operate a single online-portal for students to obtain their VCE results and ATAR. The service provides students with a single access point for both their VCE results (released by the VCAA) and ATAR (released by VTAC).

2010 saw an increase in the use of mobile phones to access the web service. In 2009, access by mobiles was 4%, almost all of which was iPhone. In 2010 the mobile access was 12.5%, with Apple iPhone, iPod and iPad dominating (11.5%).

In 2010 browser and operating system combinations were very diverse. Users of Safari and Firefox combined (49.7%) exceeded users of Internet Explorer (39.3%). The increase in successful logins on a variety of browsers and operating systems has been attributed to accessibility improvements of the online service.

SMS and telephone services

SMS requests have steadily increased over the past three years while calls to the IVR service have dropped significantly over the past two years. Total calls in 2010 have dropped to under 50% of 2007 levels due to increased uptake of the SMS and online services.

Of the 1493 telephone calls, 1301 (87.1%) were received on the first day of the service. It is likely that towards the end of the week, the main callers were those who expected changes to be applied to their information.

Method	2007	2008	2009	2010
Telephone	3137	7777*	1729	1493
SMS	17520	18200	20418	23540
TOTALS	20657	25977	22147	25033

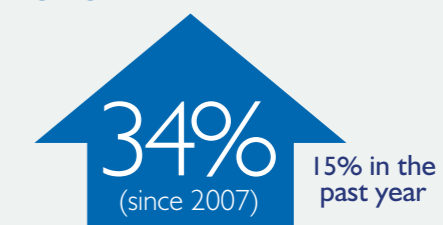
* The spike in calls to the IVR service in 2008 is attributed to problems accessing the website.

Outbound SMS (2010)	PUSH ¹ results	PULL ² results	Registration confirmation	Invalid ID or PIN	TOTAL
TOTALS	33148	982	19820	5618	59568

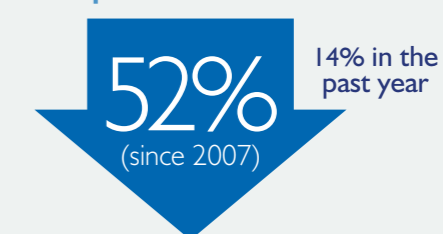
Inbound SMS (2010)	Pre-launch registrations	Post-launch ³	TOTAL
TOTALS	19809	609	20418

1. PUSH is where the service "pushes" an SMS of VCE results and ATAR to the students who had registered for the service prior to the specified time and date. These figures include additional messages sent following results amendments by VCAA and VTAC.
2. PULL is where students registered after the service had opened and then were able to "pull" their VCE results and ATAR from the server.
3. Includes pre-launch registered users who also used the pull service

SMS:



Telephone:



Telephone calls 2010	6.00 - 7.00	7.00 - 8.00	8.00 - 9.00	9.00 - 10.00	10.00 - 11.00	11.00 - 12.00	12.00 - 13.00	13.00 - 14.00	14.00 - 15.00	15.00 - 16.00	16.00 - 17.00	17.00 - 18.00	18.00 - 19.00	19.00 - 20.00	20.00 - 21.00	21.00 - 22.00	22.00 - 23.00	23.00 - 0.00
Calls per hour	27	342	172	142	163	113	83	53	42	36	36	28	29	9	9	11	6	0
	1%	11%	6%	5%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total calls (cumulative)	27	369	541	683	846	959	1042	1095	1137	1173	1209	1237	1266	1275	1284	1295	1301	1301
	2%	28%	42%	52%	65%	74%	80%	84%	87%	90%	93%	95%	97%	98%	99%	99.5%	100%	100%

Communications

Calls:

81,000+

Emails:

10,500+

Sessions:

29

Schools

500+

Attendees:

2600+

Applicant services

VTAC employs ten customer service contractors and last year they handled over ten thousand email enquiries and over eighty thousand phone calls from prospective and existing applicants.

Secondary schools liaison services

In addition to the customer service area, VTAC also provides professional advice on policy and procedures, clarification on system rules and follow up on institutional issues or concerns. VTAC is the only tertiary admissions centre to provide all Australian Secondary Schools with direct telephone and email contacts that bypass the generic applicant call centre.

Information sessions

Careers practitioners

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 South Australia. The topics covered include the four VTAC applications, rules changes, new and updated processes, and VTAC initiatives for careers practitioners such as the Careers Professionals website, which VTAC launched in 2010. The presentations were available for careers practitioners to download and use for their own school presentations thereby reaching an even wider audience. In 2010 a total of 830 careers practitioners from Victorian secondary schools and TAFE institutes attended.

Parents of VCE students

With parents being a significant influence on Year 12 students, VTAC dedicates resources to running 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 2010 it is estimated that VTAC presentations have reached over 5000 current Year 12 students.

Information session	Sessions	Schools	Attendees
Careers teachers/VCE Coordinators (Victoria)	17	512	830
Careers teachers (Interstate)	3	95	125
VCE parent seminars	7	---	1490
Disability liaison seminar	2	---	210
TOTALS	29	607	2655

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 four day period a total of 1442 calls were answered. The number of telephone calls is decreasing steadily with each year. After the first day of service, most of the calls are from students expecting or requesting upgraded results.

Calls answered:

1400+

Emails:

320+

Day	Calls made	Calls abandoned#	Calls answered	Emails
Before PRAS opened	---	---	---	28
Monday	1,020	301 30%	719 70%	158
Tuesday	509	154 30%	355 70%	43
Wednesday	303	75 25%	228 75%	19
Thursday	177	37 21%	140 79%	23
Friday - Sunday	---	---	---	25
After PRAS closed	---	---	---	27
TOTALS	2,009	567 28%	1,442 72%	323

#Calls abandoned refers to the calls ended after the caller heard the recorded message.

Day	VCAA queries	VTAC queries	TOTAL queries
Monday	344 48%	187 26%	719
Tuesday	203 57%	98 28%	355
Wednesday	138 61%	58 25%	228
Thursday	92 66%	35 25%	140
TOTALS	777 54%	378 26%	1442

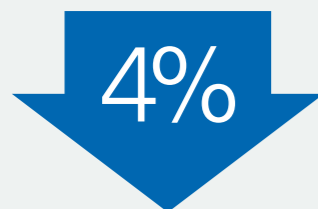
COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR PHONE ENQUIRIES								
Day	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
TOTALS	3402	4538*	2309	2079	1959	1986	1729	1442

COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR EMAIL ENQUIRIES								
Day	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
TOTALS	175	453*	212	177	214	278	272	296

*High figures in 2004 are attributed to problem with PINs.

Publications

Total printed copies:



VTAC Guide printed copies:



Print publications

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

As the demand for online VTAC resources increases the demand for printed VTAC publications has decreased. Based on figures from last year, VTAC printed more copies of *Choice*, the publication provided to every Year 10 student, and printed fewer copies of *VTAC Guide* and other booklets including *VICTER*, *SEAS* and the *VTAC Bulletin*.

Overall printing quantities were reduced by over 20,000 copies resulting in significant cost savings and waste reduction.

Publication	Printed copies 2010	Printed copies 2011	change	
VTAC Guide	90,000	80,000	-10,000	-11%
ABC of Applying	75,000	75,000	---	---
ABC of Scaling	60,000	60,000	---	---
ABC of Offers	100,000	100,000	---	---
VICTER	15,000	10,000	-5,000	-33%
CHOICE!	75,000	80,000	+5,000	+7%
SEAS	30,000	20,000	-10,000	-33%
Scholarships	40,000	40,000	---	---
VTAC Bulletin	4,000	3,500	-500	-13%
VTAC Calendar	3,000	3,000	---	---
TOTALS	492,000	471,500	-20,500	-4%

VTAC Guide:
A guide to tertiary courses

The information guide for anyone applying through VTAC. \$15.00 (incl GST). Available July

- For sale from all major Victorian and selected interstate newsagents.
- Reference copies are provided free of charge to Victorian and border secondary schools, libraries, tertiary institutions and adult education and training providers.

ABC of Applying:
Getting it Right

A booklet that summarises important information for current Year 12 students applying for courses through VTAC.

Free. Available July

- Copies are provided free of charge to Year 12 students in Victorian and border secondary schools

ABC of Scaling:
Scaling and the ATAR

A pamphlet that explains in simple terms how VTAC scales VCE study scores and then calculates the ATAR.

Free. Available December

- Mailed to students along with their ATAR statement.
- Available in 16 community languages.

ABC of offers

A pamphlet that explains in simple terms the VTAC offering system, applicant obligations and requirements.

Free. Available November

- Mailed to all applicants when Round 1 offers are released.

VICTER: Victorian Tertiary Entrance Requirements

A guide for Year 10 students that outlines the VCE studies required for entry into tertiary courses in two years time.

\$5.50 (incl GST). Available July

- For sale from the VTAC office or via an order form on the VTAC website.
- Reference copies are provided free of charge to Victorian and border secondary schools
- Also published as an education supplement in the two major Melbourne metropolitan newspapers.

CHOICE
VCE studies and the ATAR

A companion booklet to VICTER for Year 10 students that debunks myths about choosing VCE subjects.

Free. Available July

- Copies are provided free of charge to Year 10 students in Victorian and border secondary schools

SEAS: Special Entry Access Scheme

A booklet for people who have experienced educational disadvantage and wish to apply for tertiary study via the Special Entry Access Scheme.

Free. Available July

- Reference copies are provided free of charge to Victorian and border secondary schools

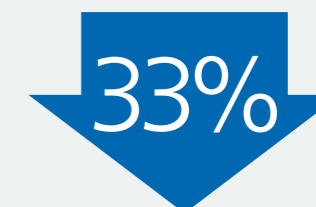
Scholarships

Information on scholarships and how to apply

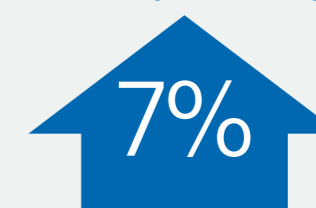
Free. Available July

- Reference copies are provided free of charge to Victorian and border secondary schools

VICTER printed copies:



CHOICE printed copies:



Publications

Courses:

2000+
(at 30 June 2011)

Course edits:

14,800+

New courses:

400+

Cancelled courses:

200+

Behind the scenes

Course editing

Each year in preparation for the next application/selection cycle, VTAC provides course information to applicants in the VTAC Guide and on the VTAC website. Each institution provides information about new courses, updates information about existing courses and advises if any courses will be cancelled. All change-requests are made through the VTAC online course editing system: VOICES.

Institutional policy and services

In addition to course information institutions also provide information to VTAC applicants about institutional policies and services such as credit transfer, deferment, accommodation etc. This institutional information is collated and edited and provided in the VTAC publications.

COURSES IN THE VTAC SYSTEM		Totals
Courses (at 30 June 2011)		2086
Cancelled courses (1 August 2010 – 31 July 2011)		288
New courses (1 August 2010 – 31 July 2011)		468

COURSE EDITS		Totals
Course edits	14855	100%
Course edits (approved)	11099	75%

Sales and distribution

Copies of *VTAC Guide 2011* were available for sale in Victorian and interstate newsagents and at the VTAC office. Copies of *VICTER 2013* were only available for sale via the VTAC office.

Reference copies of all VTAC printed publications were distributed free of charge to Victorian (and border) secondary schools, libraries and participating institutions. Schools advise VTAC of the number of Year 10 and Year 12 students via an online publications ordering system to ensure they receive an appropriate number of copies according to student numbers.

This year printed copies were again provided free-of-charge to students affected by the bushfires in February 2009. All VTAC publications were also available to download free-of-charge from the VTAC website.

Publication	Reference copies distributed 2010		Copies sold 2010		Total printed 2010
VTAC Guide	21,905	24%	55,803	62%	90,000
ABC of Applying	68,860	92%	n/a	n/a	75,000
ABC of Scaling	41,370	69%	n/a	n/a	60,000
ABC of Offers	100,000	100%	n/a	n/a	100,000
VICTER	13,160	88%	1319	9%	15,000
CHOICE!	72,560	97%	n/a	n/a	75,000
SEAS	16,720	56%	n/a	n/a	30,000
Scholarships	37,095	93%	n/a	n/a	40,000
VTAC Bulletin	3237	81%	n/a	n/a	4000
VTAC Calendar	1700	57%	n/a	n/a	3000
TOTALS	376,607	77%	57,122	11%	492,000

Reference copies distributed:

390,000+

Copies sold:

57,000+

Applicant survey

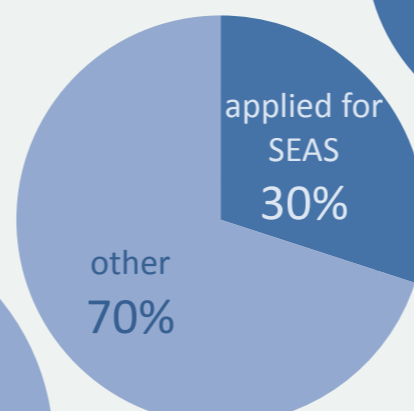
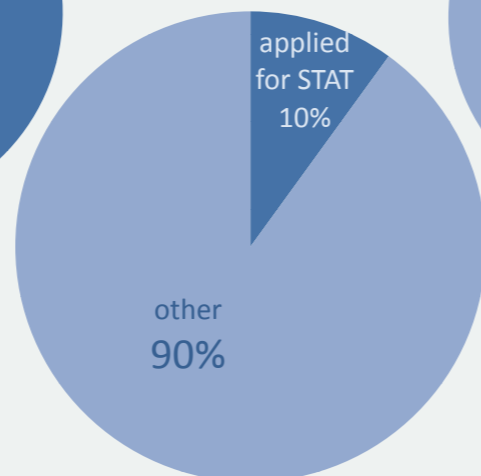
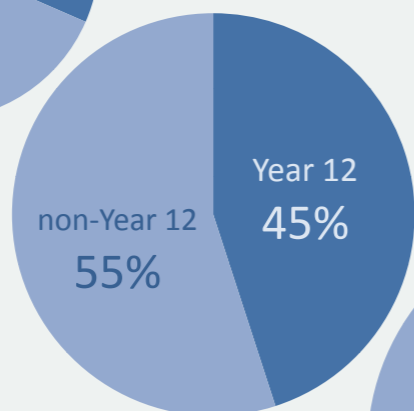
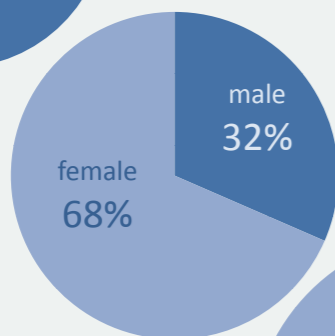
Background

During the 2010-2011 application period applicants were invited to complete a survey on their use of the VTAC website and the VTAC Guide.

Respondents

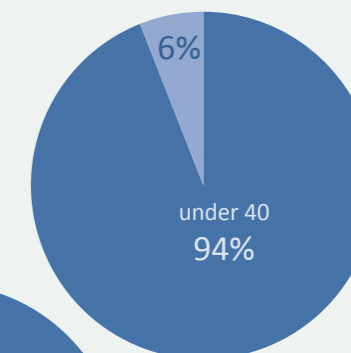
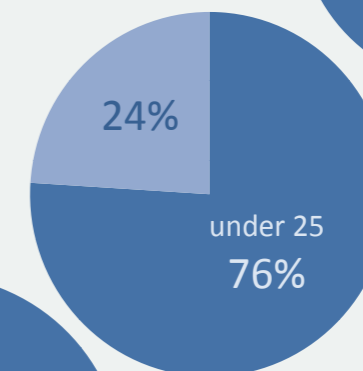
A total of 6,563 VTAC applicants completed the survey. The majority of respondents were female. Non-Year 12 applicants were slightly over-represented in the sample, comprising fifty five per cent of respondents while only representing forty one per cent of applicants. Just over three quarters of respondents were aged below 25.

Interestingly three quarters of respondents had applied for scholarships and nearly one third of respondents had applied for Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS).



Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	2069	32%
Female	4494	68%
TOTALS	6563	100%

Applied for	Respondents	Percentage
Courses	5352	81%
Scholarships	4893	75%
SEAS	1978	30%
STAT	671	10%
TOTALS	6563	100%



Age	Respondents	Percentage
<19	2893	44%
19-24	2127	32%
25-29	571	9%
30-34	326	5%
35-39	259	4%
40-44	189	3%
45-49	111	2%
50+	87	1%
TOTALS	6563	100%

Applicant survey

Prefer websites:

41%

Prefer course guides:

30%

Key findings

The VTAC website

Views on the VTAC website were positive with 80% finding usefulness and clarity of the information very good or good. Most respondents accessed the website either weekly (41%) or around deadlines (34%). Respondents were less positive about the visual appeal of the website and the balance between graphics and text, with 14% rating these aspects very good and 48% good. Website speed was rated very fast or fast by 69% and 59% reported they never or rarely had technical problems, but 14% reported they had problems often or always.

Sources of information

The most popular means of finding out about courses was by visiting websites (41%) followed by reading course guide/handbooks (30%).

Preferred ways of searching online

The preferred methods of searching course information online were institutional websites (36%), Google or other search engine (32%) and the VTAC website (30%).

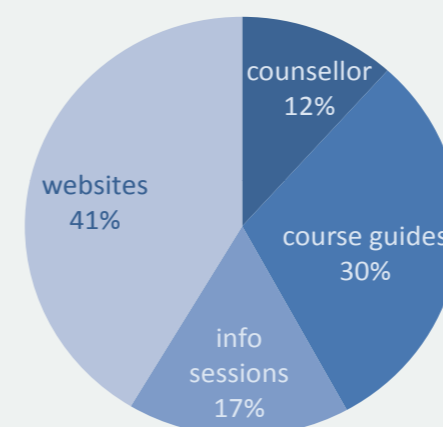
Course information

Unsurprisingly the information most commonly sought was in relation to courses, how to apply and due dates. 26% reported they did not need to research because they knew exactly the course and the institution they were applying for. 23% knew which course/s they wanted and searched for institutions, while 14% looked for courses at a specific institution. 22% searched for both courses and institutions for particular areas of study. The most useful course information was About the Course (63%).

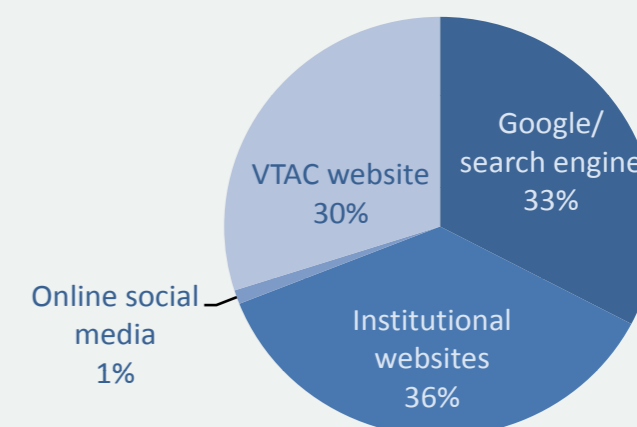
CourseSearch

54% of respondents searched for courses on the VTAC website using CourseSearch. 48% of CourseSearch users looked for specific courses they already knew about. 40% reported that searching by Field of Study was the most useful. 21% and 17% nominated institution type and keyword respectively as the most useful. Non year 12 respondents were more frequent users of CourseSearch, with 61% using it, compared with 45% of Year 12 respondents. 86% of CourseSearch users rated it as good or invaluable, and 46% rated the majors search as good or invaluable. 28% of CourseSearch users did not use the majors search.

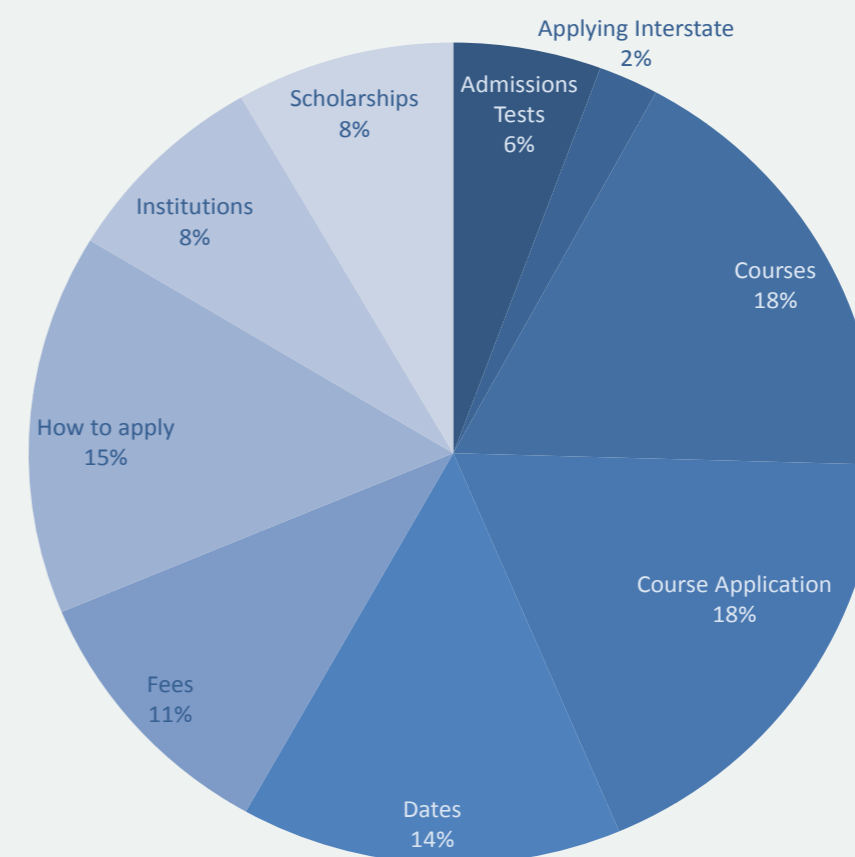
Preferred way to find out about courses



Preferred online course information source



Information searched on VTAC website



Applicant survey

Course list is most useful:

53%

Course description is most useful:

24%

The VTAC Guide

There were significant differences between Year 12 and non-Year 12 respondents in their use of the VTAC Guide.

Overall 39% of respondents used the Guide to research courses, but for Year 12 applicants this figure was 61% and for non-Year 12s it was 22%. About half the Year 12s who used the Guide had purchased their own copy and for non-Year 12s this figure was 66%.

Considering preferred sources of information rather than actual usage, the most popular source of VTAC information was a combination of the Guide and the website (36%). 33% preferred just the website and 31% preferred the Guide.

Again, the views of Year 12 and non-Year 12 respondents were quite different.

The Guide was the most preferred source of information for Year 12, with 45% reporting it as the preferred source and 38% preferring to use both the Guide and the website. Only 17% of Year 12 students preferred the website.

In contrast, the website was the most popular for non-Year 12 respondents, with 46% reporting it as the preferred source and 34% preferred both. Only 19% of non-Year 12s nominated the Guide as their preferred source.

The most frequent reason given by Year 12 applicants for getting the Guide was because it was purchased by their family or school. For non-Year 12s it was personal preference and ease of use.

It appears the Guide is popular with Year 12 applicants because it is provided to them and is generally sufficient for their needs, as instanced by their relatively low preference for the website (17%).

The converse applies to non-Year 12 applicants – the website was the most popular source of course information, with only 19% preferring the Guide only.

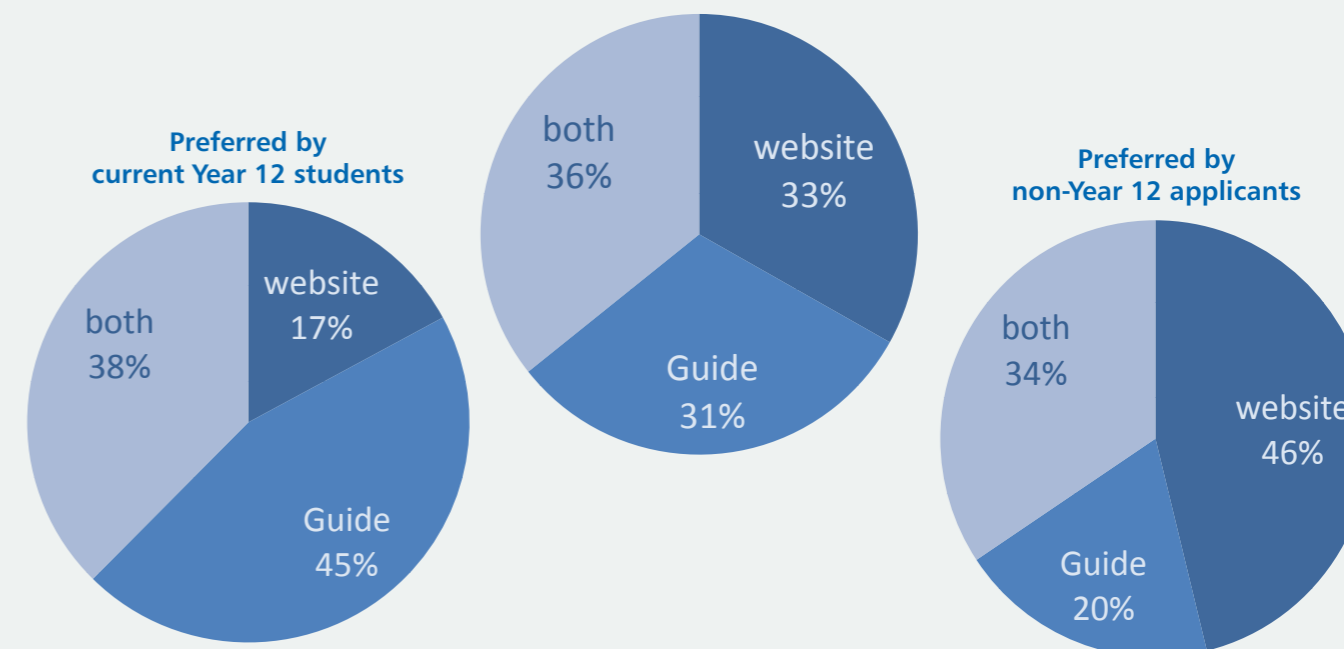
There is a likely cost factor operating. Non Year 12 applicants are unlikely to purchase a VTAC Guide, but if they do they will use it. Year 12 applicants have the Guide made available to them by their family or school or they have easy access to it, probably through sharing with classmates or through a set of Guides purchased by their school.

The VTAC Strategic Review recommended that the web version becomes the main version of the VTAC Guide, with the timeframe for the continued publication of a hard copy version and its contents/format determined following the outcomes of the 2010 applicant survey and focus groups.

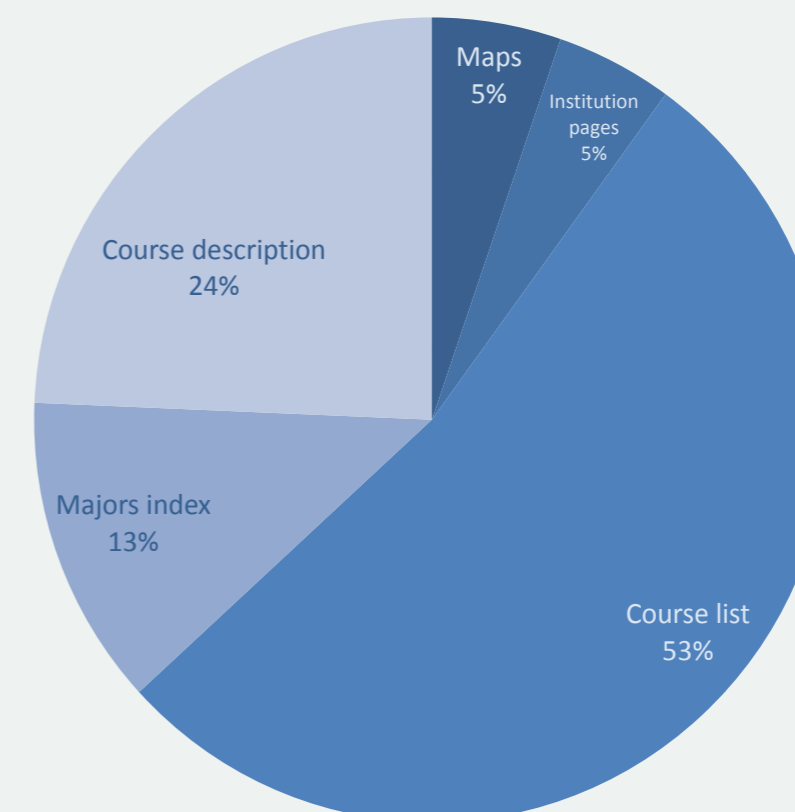
Conclusions

Based on the survey findings that most applicants use websites to find course information, VTAC plans to improve and enhance the features and content of the VTAC website to become the primary information source for prospective applicants. It was also found that course information should be the most prominent feature and easily found via online searches.

Preferred VTAC information source



Most useful information in VTAC Guide





Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre

40 Park Street, South Melbourne VIC 3205

www.vtac.edu.au