



VTAC

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Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) Annual Report 2012-2013



About this report

This report gives an overview of the operations of the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre for the period 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

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Foreword from the Chair



I am pleased to present this report on behalf of VTAC.

The last year saw further progress in strategic reforms aimed at providing increased flexibility for institutions and a greater range of services for institutions and applicants.

For the first time a number of private providers registered as Associate Institutions, publishing their courses with VTAC but processing their own applications and offers.

A number of institutions also participated in a trial process for accepting and processing direct applications for VTAC courses. These institutions accepted direct applications from around 5,000 applicants and issued just over 3,000 offers for courses commencing in 2013.

VTAC's financial position continued to build on its strong base over the five years, at the same time delivering a greater range of services at lower cost to institutions.

I would like to thank the members of the VTAC Management Committee for their leadership and commitment in ensuring that the VTAC model continues to offer an effective and collaborative approach that serves the interests of both members and applicants.

On behalf of the Management Committee I also extend my thanks to those who work for and with VTAC to ensure its continued growth and success.

Ian Marshman

Chair, VTAC Management Committee

Director's message

VTAC has had another busy year of growth in nearly all areas of our operations. In 2012 we processed over 83,000 applications for tertiary courses and issued around 72,000 offers for over 2500 courses commencing in Semester 1, 2013. There were 1,645 applications and 846 offers processed for midyear entry.

The first major phase of our information systems redevelopment project, VOICES, the course database and systems for course and institutional data was put into production in February 2013. Another big change was the move to a hosted and managed infrastructure using cloud based services.

In 2012 VTAC continued to grow its range of information provision programs, through its strong links with secondary schools, community groups and counselling services. These were augmented with a range of Webinars and Vodcasts and the use of social media.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their hard work and dedication and our institutions for their support.

Elaine Wenn
VTAC Director



Achievements in 2012-2013

Regional bonuses

VTAC's automatic regional bonus program was enhanced to allow for institutions to specify different criteria for unique sets of courses. Prior to this VTAC only accommodated one criterion per institution.

Irregular/negotiated offers for GET courses

Applicants with only undergraduate preferences who were eligible for graduate entry teaching (GET) courses were able to seek GET irregular/negotiated offers this year. Previously applicants with only GET preferences could seek undergraduate irregular offers but not vice versa.

Enhanced services for applicants

The past year saw increased sharing of information between applications and the extension of selfservice functions including changes to admissions tests bookings and online access to download confirmation letters and related documents.

Streamlined supplementary offer system

Selection officers were provided greater flexibility and control with the ability to generate their own supplementary worklists containing all applicants who met prerequisites and did not receive any offers from November to January.

Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

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.

About VTAC

VTAC is an unincorporated agency established by its member institutions to co-ordinate 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 its Constitution, with its primary functions being to act as an agent for its Members 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 participating institutions 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 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;
- 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. It 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 letters 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;
- provides a range of published information, information sessions and advisory services for applicants, secondary schools and the general public.

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 51 member institutions there are 11 universities, 18 TAFE providers and 26 private colleges. At 30 June 2012 VTAC had 2,164 courses available.



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, special entry access schemes and scholarships.

The following, including two new institutions, participated as VTAC institutions in 2012/13:

- Academy of Interactive Entertainment
- Advance TAFE
- Australian Academy of Design
- Australian Catholic University
- Australian College of Applied Psychology
- Australian College of Sports Therapy
- Australian Maritime College
- Bendigo TAFE
- Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School
- Box Hill Institute
- Carrick Institute of Education
- Charles Sturt University
- Chisholm
- CQUniversity [NEW]
- Deakin University
- Elly Lukas Beauty Therapy College
- Footscray City Films
- GippsTAFE –
Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE
- Gordon (The)
- Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE
- Grenadi School of Design
- Holmes Institute
- Holmesglen
- Kangan Institute
- La Trobe Melbourne [NEW]
- La Trobe University
- 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
- Oceania Polytechnic Institute of Education
- Ozford College of Business
- Photographic Imaging College
- Photography Studies College
- Qantm College
- RMIT University
- SAE Institute
- South West Institute of TAFE
- Southern School of Natural Therapies
- 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

Associate institutions 2012/13

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

Associate institutions began operation in July 2012. In the first year nine smaller participating institutions shifted their participation across to the Associate level and four new institutions signed on.

The following institutions participated as Associate institutions in 2012:

- Academia International
- Australian College of the Arts [NEW]
- Australian Guild of Music Education
- Australian Institute of Fitness
- Billy Blue College of Design [NEW]
- Endeavour College of Natural Health
- Gurkhas Institute of Technology [NEW]
- Health Skills Australia [NEW]
- International College of Hotel Management
- JMC Academy
- LaTrobe College of Art and Design
- Sage Massage
- Stott's 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; appointed annually by members of the Board of Trustees.
- Deputy Chair of the Management Committee; appointed annually by members of the Board of Trustees.

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 Peter Dawkins
Vice-Chancellor, Victoria University
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
- VVCC MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR VTAC LIAISON
Professor John Dewar
Vice-Chancellor and President, La Trobe University
- SKILLS VICTORIA – DEECD
Ms Kym Peake
Deputy Secretary, Skills Victoria

Scaling Committee

Advisory committee established by the Board of Trustees

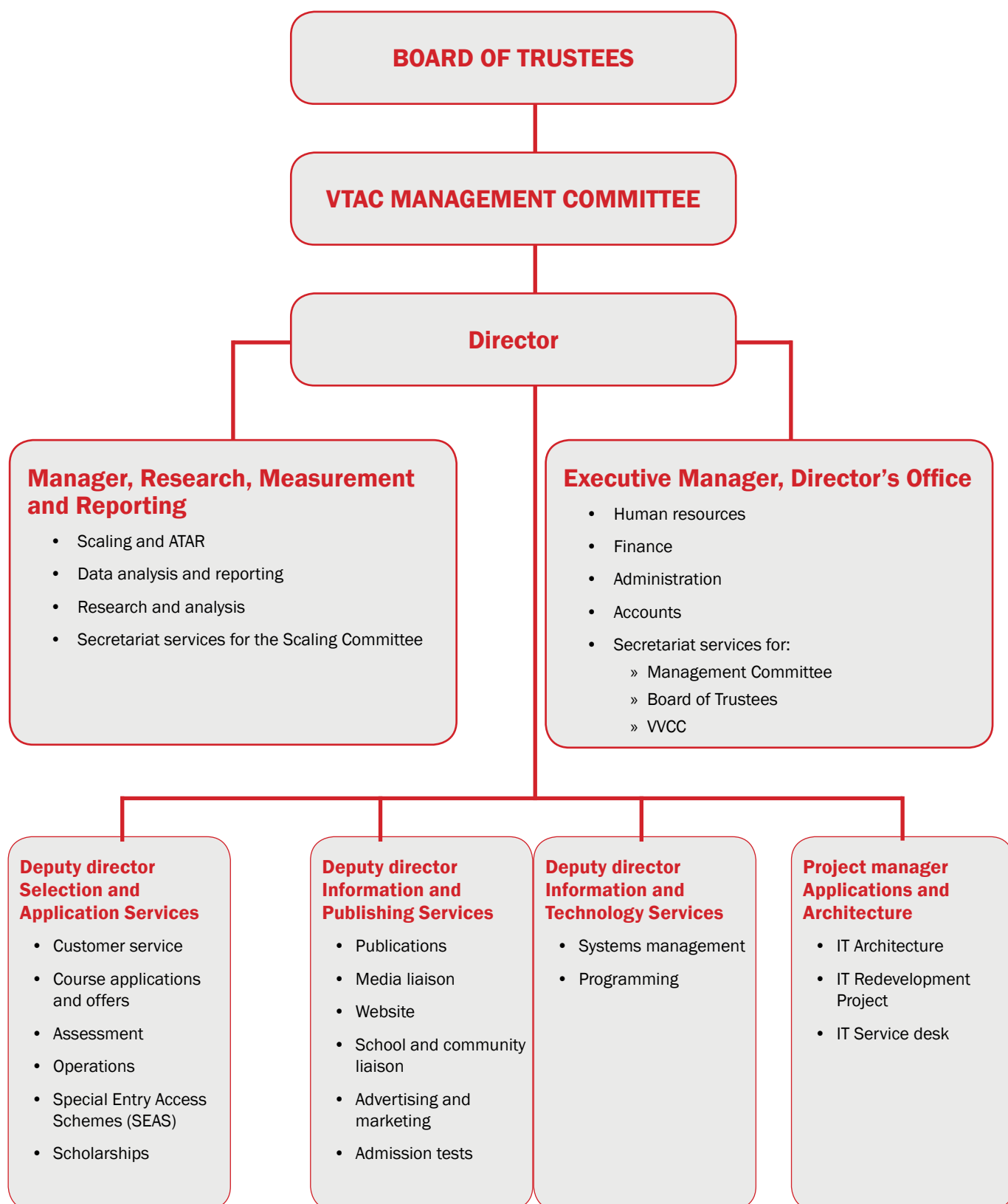
- THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Professor Sue Willis
CHAIR
- THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Dr Sue Finch
- MONASH UNIVERSITY
Prof Rob Hyndman
- VCAA
Mr David Philips
- VTAC DIRECTOR
Ms Elaine Wenn
- VTAC MANAGER, RESEARCH, MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING
Mr Paul Livingstone
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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 Fofi Hronopoulos
- LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
Professor Jane Long
- MONASH UNIVERSITY
(Also SCALING COMMITTEE CHAIR)
Professor Sue Willis
- RMIT UNIVERSITY
Dr Maddy McMaster
- SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
Mr Jeffrey Smart
- UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT
Mr Greg Jakob
- 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 Sandra Boyd

Organisational structure

The VTAC staff contingent consists of 28 permanent, 15 contract and 12 casual staff with the majority of contract/casual staff employed seasonally to assist during the peak application period.



The year in review

Facts and Figures

Course Applications

There were 83,782 applications in 2012, for courses in 2013. This was down 2.4% from the previous year. Of these:

- 76,567 were for domestic undergraduate courses, down 2.8%,
- 2,314 were for international undergraduate courses, down 9.9%, and
- 4,874 were for graduate entry teaching courses, up 10.5%.

Offers

In total, 72,757 applicants received at least one offer. This was down by 2.4% from the previous year. Of these:

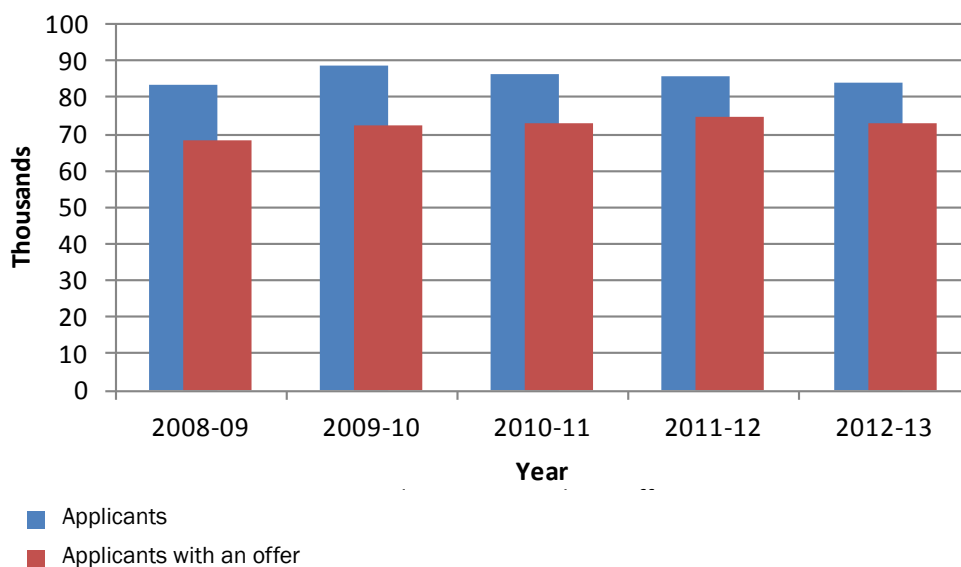
- 66,900 were for domestic undergraduate courses, down 2.7%,
- 1,839 were for international undergraduate courses, down 14.1%, and
- 4,018 were for graduate entry teaching courses, up 8.9%.

Offer Rate

The applications and offers above produced an overall offer rate of 87%, down 0.1 percentage points from the previous year. This means that for every 8 applicants, 7 received an offer.

For domestic undergraduate courses, the increase was 0.1 percentage points, to 87.4%.

Applications and Offers

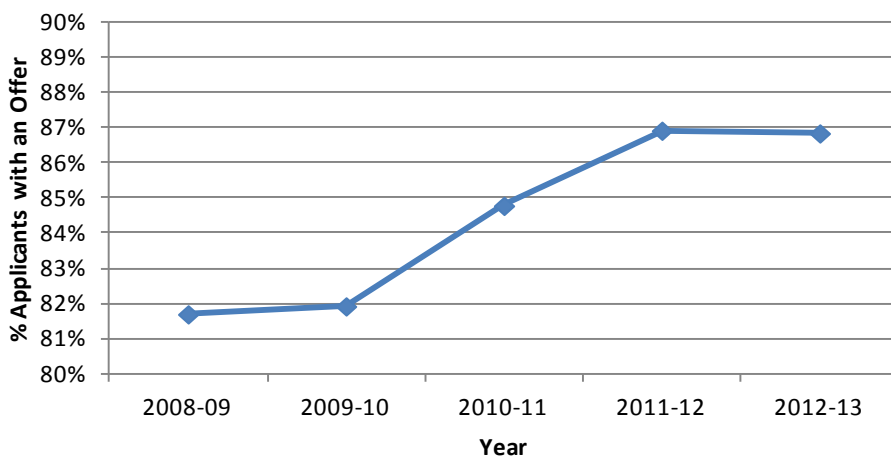




Offer Rate by Year

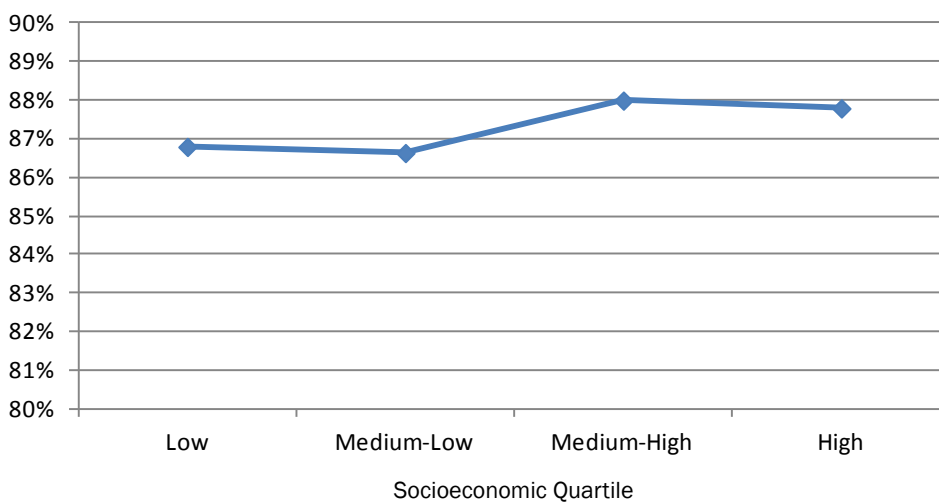
In 2008-2009 and again in 2009-10, the overall offer rate was 82%. Since then, it has increased by approximately 2 ½ percentage points each year, to 84.7% in 2010-11 and 87% in 2011-12.

Institutions appear to be making more offers through VTAC in response to the higher participation targets set by the Commonwealth Government following the 2008 Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education. These gains have been consolidated with the offer rate remaining at 87% in 2012-13.



Offer Rate by SES

One of the specific targets to come out of the Bradley review was that for low socioeconomic enrolments. Even though low socioeconomic applicants are underrepresented among other applicants, once they apply, they achieve an offer rate very similar to other socioeconomic groups.





Applications and Offers by Year

COURSE APPLICANTS*	2011-12	2012-13	Change 11/12-12/13	
Domestic undergraduate	78,801	76,567	-2,234	-2.8%
International undergraduate	2,597	2,341	-256	-9.9%
Graduate entry teaching	4,412	4,874	462	10.5%
Total undergraduate	81,398	78,908	-2,490	-3.1%
TOTALS	85,810	83,782	-2,028	-2.4%

APPLICANTS OFFERED*	2011-12	2012-13	Change 11/12-12/13	
Domestic undergraduate	68,755	66,900	-1,855	-2.7%
International undergraduate	2,141	1,839	-302	-14.1%
Graduate entry teaching	3,688	4,018	330	8.9%
Total undergraduate	70,896	68,739	-2,157	-3.0%
TOTALS	74,584	72,757	-1,827	-2.4%

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

Courses

There were 2,164 courses offered through the VTAC system, up 3.7% from the previous year. This included 192 courses with applications direct to institutions.

Other Application Services

Scholarships

VTAC administers a centralised application and assessment process for some institutional scholarship. VTAC received 19,129 scholarship applications in 2012, down 0.4% 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 30,065 SEAS applications in 2012, up 14.8% from the previous year.

STAT and DULSAT (ALSET)

Approximately twelve per cent of courses offered through VTAC required some non-year 12 applicant to sit the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT). The Australian Law Schools Entrance Test (ALSET) was a requirement of nine courses at Deakin University.

The number of applicants who sat the STAT in 2012 was 2,680, a drop of 10%. The number who sat the ALSET was 300, a drop of 18%.



Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

VTAC calculates the ATAR for all Victorian Year 12 students. In 2012, VTAC calculated an ATAR for 46,999 students, down 1.3% from the previous year.

In the scaling population, there were 19,996 unique combinations of scaled studies, of which 15,751 combinations were taken by only one student. This means one in three students chose a unique combination of scaled studies that no one else in the state chose. The most frequent combination was taken by 233 students.

- Students were able to access their ATAR on the web and via SMS prior to receiving their printed statement in the mail. 28,561 students received their results by SMS. 51,273 students accessed their results via the website.

The resultsandatar.vic.edu.au site was visited from 1,129 cities in 107 countries using various platforms and devices: mobile devices: 46,374; non-mobile devices: 94,289.

Mid-year Applications and Offers

2013 was the fourth year of VTAC's mid-year application and offer service. Ten institutions participated.

- There were 1,649 applicants, down 0.1% from the previous year.
- Of these, 819 received an offer, down 9.2% from the previous year.
- This represents an offer rate of 50%, which is down slightly from the previous year.

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.

While all applications are available online, applicants are able to submit printed documentation to support their application. These are validated, scanned and verified. This information is circulated electronically to selection officers for consideration.

- VTAC processed over 1.7m checks and assessment tasks, and
- scanned over 190,000 documents.

Communications

Customer service

VTAC employs nine customer service contractors and last year they handled over 4,900 email enquiries and over 40,000 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 South Australia.

In 2012 a total of 923 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 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 2012 it is estimated that VTAC presentations have reached over 5000 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, 1,539 calls were answered. The number of telephone calls is generally decreasing with each year. After the first day of service, most of the calls were from students expecting or requesting upgraded results.

Social media

VTAC blogs

In mid-2011, VTAC established two blogs – one for applicants and the other for careers advisors. Articles and information posted to the blog were cross-posted on Twitter and Facebook.

There were 1,291 people subscribed to the VTAC blog email service in 2012-13. By the end of July 2013, there were 157,080 views of the VTAC blog for applicants and 22,401 views of the VTAC blog for careers teachers.

Facebook

Facebook was the most used social platform to contact and engage with VTAC, with 5,148 'likes' on the page by the end of July 2013, which has more than doubled in a year.

Twitter

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

@vtacguide had 812 followers at the end of July 2013; up 40% from the previous year.

Webinars

VTAC held four webinars for careers practitioners and parents of Year 12 students between February and July 2013 covering topics such as course applications, special consideration and the CourseLink online system.

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

The VTAC Guide

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

80,000 copies of the VTAC Guide were printed; 13,164 reference copies (16%) were distributed free of charge to Victorian and border secondary schools, libraries and participating institutions; and, 32,741 copies (41%) were sold through Victorian and interstate newsagents.

ABC of Applying: Getting it Right

Important information for current Year 12 students applying for courses through VTAC. It is provided free of charge to Year 12 students in Victorian and border secondary schools

ABC of Scaling: Scaling and the ATAR

A pamphlet explaining scaling of VCE results and the calculation of the ATAR. VTAC scales VCE study scores and then calculates the ATAR.

ABC of Offers

A pamphlet explaining the VTAC offering system, applicant obligations and requirements. It is mailed to all applicants with the release of offers.

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.

CHOICE: VCE studies and the ATAR

A companion booklet to VICTER for Year 10 students about choosing VCE subjects. Copies are provided free of charge to Year 10 students in Victorian and border secondary schools.

