



ALTERNATE ENTRY TO HIGHER EDUCATION

If you are considering university studies but think that you won't qualify for entry, there are a range of support programs and different pathways available to you.

University entry has historically been achievable by successful completion of Year 12 and gaining an ATAR score at the minimum level or above for a particular course. While this pathway continues to be an effective one for many, it is not the only way to access further education at university.

You may have:

- not studied the prerequisite subjects for your chosen course
- not achieved an adequate ATAR score for entry
- left education early and want to return to studies

New alternative entry points have recently been developed and are available to assist a broader field of applicants to access university level education. Most universities within Australia are developing and offering a range of 'alternative entry pathways'.

1. VET in schools

At GMAS, you may choose not to work towards university entry through an ATAR. Some students' learning styles are better supported in the Vocational Education & Training (VET) system. VET programs offered through your school may help you gain entry to your chosen field of study. For example, you may choose a VET course in Certificate III Health Services. After years 11–12, that could be followed by a Certificate IV in Preparation for Nursing, then a Diploma of Nursing. That could then create a pathway to university and there may be an opportunity to apply credits to a nursing course.

2. UniPrep or Bridging Courses

UniPrep or Bridging Courses courses can be used to develop entry level skills for university studies. These courses can provide foundational skills for successful university careers.

UniPrep or Bridging Courses courses are often offered over one semester and are administered in smaller, highly supported groups that help you to acclimatise to the university environment and develop skills in academic studying and writing. Successful completion will often guarantee entry to your course of choice, including credit for one unit.

3. Special Tertiary Admissions Test

If you are 'mature age' (in many states, over 19 in the year of application) there are further options. You can sit a Special Tertiary Admissions Test, which is usually done in one day and which includes a general intelligence element and an essay. You will get a score that can be used instead of an ATAR in applying for a university course.

Local colleges often offer preparation courses to assist you to understand the test format and reduce anxiety in sitting the test.

4. Vocational education and training (VET) and TAFE pathways

Many universities and TAFEs have an agreed pathway arrangement where you can start a course at Certificate III or IV, continue to diploma level and transition into a specified university level course.

For many learners, this is a preferable process, as it offers short-term goals, an opportunity to re-enter study for a shorter period and an opportunity to gain confidence, while building skills and benefiting from clear progress points along the way. Sometimes a university will give credit for work (usually at diploma/advanced diploma) level and advanced standing into your course of choice, reducing your overall time in study.

5. Portfolio entry

Whether you are a school leaver or mature entry candidate, portfolio entry allows you to apply for a place using a combination of WACE courses, vocational education course results, training, endorsed programs, an introductory letter, resume and letters of support.

If you are interested in any of the above options, it is important to talk to someone who can help you.

Contact your local TAFE, Registered Training Organisation or university directly, ask your Year Coordinator, Head of School or Head of VET/Careers, or discuss your needs with a professional career practitioner, who can assist you to identify your best pathway to success.