

HIGHER EDUCATION

– It's for everyone!

Is university for my child?

Attending university is exciting and can be very rewarding. It usually means you earn more money over your lifetime and work in an area that really interests you. University also opens up opportunities to learn about and explore the world!

How does my child get into university?

Your child's school will assist them with their application to university in Year 12. Your child's Higher School Certificate (HSC) results will determine their Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). School leavers need an ATAR score to get into university.

Can we afford it?

There are fees, but students can pay after they finish their degree, and once they start working and earning above a certain amount. This payment system is called HECS-HELP.

Most students work part-time, and often during the day as university timetables are more flexible than school.

There are often scholarships and other types of financial assistance available for students in financial need and your child may be eligible for one of these.

Each university has information on their website about financial assistance and it is a good idea to look at these both before and once your child starts university.

There is also financial assistance available through Centrelink at www.centrelink.gov.au

Will my child fit in?

All universities have students from many backgrounds and cultural and religious differences are respected and supported. There are even religious and cultural clubs that your child can join.

What if my child has difficulties?

There are support services at all universities. Your child can get advice and help free of charge to assist them with their study, health or happiness. There are also services specifically for students with a disability.

To succeed at university can be challenging, but the first steps for students are choosing a course that suits them, studying consistently and asking for assistance if they need it.

How do university students spend their time?

Most of the time students are at university they are in classes which are called tutorials or lectures, many students study in the library or in computer labs or with other students. There are also many activities and clubs they can join which will assist them to meet other students and make friends.

What if my child's school marks aren't good enough to get in?

There are lots of pathways into university, it doesn't all depend on the HSC result. Most universities have information on their websites about these which are often called special entry schemes, flexible entry pathways or access programs.

How can I get more information?

Ask your school Careers Advisor as they can give you more information or tell you how to get more details.

Talk to university staff when they visit your child's school and attend free university Open Days.

All universities have their own websites with information for future students.

The Universities Admissions Centre has information about all courses in NSW and ACT. www.uac.edu.au

HIGHER EDUCATION – Common Terms

ACADEMIC – someone who teaches at a university

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY – a different way of getting to university (not straight from school). Universities sometimes use this term on their websites. See Educational Access Scheme.

ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) – the score your son/daughter is given as a result of sitting their HSC. Universities have a minimum ATAR for each course and this can vary from year to year.

BACHELOR DEGREE – the name of a first degree course and usually takes 3 to 5 years of study. Names of degrees are often shortened to: BA (Bachelor of Arts); BSc (Bachelor of Science); BEng (Bachelor of Engineering) etc.

COMBINED DEGREE – a degree in two areas. It can take 4-6 years of study to graduate from the two degrees. For example, your son/daughter might combine Sports Science/Business if they'd like to run a gym, Arts/Law if they're interested in being a lawyer in the performing arts, or International Studies/Nursing if they're interested in nursing in a non-English speaking country.

FACULTY – a university division e.g. Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Business. Some universities call their faculties schools e.g. School of Medicine, School of Economics.

GRADUATE – a student who has completed a university degree.

HECS-HELP – the government's interest free loan scheme that allows your son/daughter to defer (pay later) their course fees until they are earning wages above a certain amount.

HSC (Higher School Certificate) – the HSC is the NSW qualification of students who successfully complete secondary education. It is awarded on the basis of a combination of school-based and external examination assessments.

HONOURS – an additional period of study – usually a year – during which your son/daughter takes additional subjects (often research-based). Abbreviated to 'Hons', e.g. BA (Hons).

EDUCATIONAL ACCESS SCHEME – an alternative entry to university for students who have experienced long term disadvantages while studying. Visit www.uac.edu for more details.

PATHWAY COURSE – a course designed to help your son/daughter get into university, particularly if they did not complete the HSC or need to improve their English. School Careers Advisors and university staff can help with information about this.

POSTGRADUATE – a student who is studying a second degree such as a Master's or Doctorate, or any level of study beyond a Bachelor's degree. Abbreviation: PG, post-grad.

SUBJECT or UNIT – part of a degree. If your son/daughter studies full-time, he/she will normally do 4 subjects each semester. Each subject is worth a certain number of credit points which count towards his/her degree.

TERTIARY EDUCATION – any study after high school. Also called Higher Education.

TAFE – some high school students study at TAFE as part of their HSC. TAFE also offers courses that will help your child get into a university course.

UAC (Universities Admissions Centre) – UAC has information about all courses for all universities and processes all applications from school leavers for NSW and the ACT. Website: www.uac.edu.au

VET (Vocational Education and Training) – these courses are sometimes taught through your child's high school, a registered training organisation or TAFE. They include courses for hospitality, engineering and trades such as carpentry and mechanics.

SWPHEF MISSION STATEMENT
The Sydney Widening Participation in Higher Education Forum (SWPHEF) consults and works collaboratively with schools and communities to increase the knowledge of students and their families about higher education.

www.swphef.edu.au