ACUgate and attainment
PREFACE

ACUgate is the name given to the suite of programs offered by ACU that are funded by the Australian Government under its ‘Widening Participation’ agenda. This agenda requires all Australian public universities to increase their enrolments of groups traditionally under-represented in higher education, namely those from regional and rural backgrounds, Indigenous students, and early school leavers.

Equity Pathways ACU administers and implements ACUgate programs, in collaboration with faculties and sectors of the university, with schools, TAFES and other community partners.

ACUgate programs are grouped under the following three broad headings: Awareness, Aspirations and Access. These headings are reflective of the strategies identified to achieve the goals of the Widening Participation agenda.

ATTAINMENT PROGRAMS – PARTNERSHIPS

In order to deliver the ACUgate programs, ACU has formalised partnerships with selected schools in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and Northern Territory. ACUgate programs are only available to these schools.

ACU aims to create lasting and trusting relationships with partner schools and ideally aspires to establish and maintain a presence in each school throughout an individual student’s life, which could be up to nine years on the journey from Years 4 to 12.

ACU Equity Pathways have developed and designed the ACUgate programs so that the school-university relationship is driven by the wishes and needs of an individual school, the range of programs is diverse and is reflective of a variety of needs.

Attainment Programs – Participation

Attainment programs focus on supporting students after they enter ACU. These programs promote preparedness for and success in academic life. Support for these programs is sought from the Office of Student Success (OSS) through work with the staff in academic skills, disability, careers, counselling and campus life. Other support is sought from the Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC) through its commitment to ongoing development of curriculum and teaching methodology to cater to the changing needs of students. Collaboration with faculties, ACUcom, Libraries, Office of the Academic Registrar, Campus Life and Student Engagement Services is integral to attainment programs so that resources and systems can properly and effectively accommodate student’s changing circumstances and needs.
ACUgate PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

ATTAINMENT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Objectives:
• To enhance preparedness for university life
• Assist academics to design and teach courses that stimulate the best learning from cohorts that have diverse needs
• Set up programs and activities whereby all areas of the university assist students in having the best possible university experience
• Provide the means by which students achieve results that will take them into a successful future

AWARENESS PROGRAMS

Objectives:
• Demystify higher education for target groups by providing opportunities to become familiar with the everyday reality of university education and campus life
• Provide learning-based programs that foster student engagement in learning and illustrate some of the basic links between learning, higher education and careers
• Encourage a perception of university as a positive and beneficial post-secondary option

ASPIRATIONS PROGRAMS

Objectives:
• Continue to engage students in their education by developing the academic skills necessary for university entrance
• Offer several innovative and engaging online programs to develop students’ knowledge of careers and the pathways available to access them
• Provide opportunities for students to visit and use university campuses

ACCESS PROGRAMS

Objectives:
• Provide academic support to assist students to develop higher order numeracy and literacy skills necessary for successful university entrance
• Offer a range of pathways into university other than by the traditional ATAR entry mode
• Provide opportunities for all those despite their educational background, to aspire to higher education
AWARENESS PROGRAMS

MEET THE PROFESSOR

Primary students meet a professor, staff and students of ACU. They are invited to participate in a tour of their local ACU campus, where they participate in interactive activities related to university life. Parents and teachers are encouraged to accompany students on these days.

PLAYING WITH NUMBERS

Primary school students participate in mathematical activities. ACU staff and students conduct a variety of activities that have been developed and researched by the Faculty of Education and Arts. The students explore and consolidate mathematical concepts and learning, whilst their teachers participate and observe, where appropriate. In some instances parents are also invited to participate. The aim of this program is to build a community of practice around mathematical learning and teaching in order that student engagement increases in this discipline.

KIDS AT UNIVERSITY

Kids at University is a 5-day live in experience. It is conducted in January, for Year 5 & 6 in Ballarat every second year and in Sydney for Year 9 every other year. It is open to all current students of ACU partner schools. Kids at University is an academic experience which guides students in preparation for both their immediate and future academic endeavours.

MEET THE PROFESSOR

Primary students meet a professor, staff and students of ACU. They are invited to participate in a tour of their local ACU campus, where they participate in interactive activities related to university life. Parents and teachers are encouraged to accompany students on these days.

PLAYING WITH NUMBERS

Primary school students participate in mathematical activities. ACU staff and students conduct a variety of activities that have been developed and researched by the Faculty of Education and Arts. The students explore and consolidate mathematical concepts and learning, whilst their teachers participate and observe, where appropriate. In some instances parents are also invited to participate. The aim of this program is to build a community of practice around mathematical learning and teaching in order that student engagement increases in this discipline.

PARENT FORUMS

Parents are engaged through participating in programs or being audience to ACU presentations at school parent nights or award nights. These forums can take many and varied forms. They are formulated to meet the needs of partner schools and communities. The forums aim to inform parents of university options and the career pathways available for their children. They aim to demystify set ideas about higher education informing parents of the comprehensive advantages of higher education for their children and increasing awareness and confidence in higher education choices for their future children.

MYSCIENCE

MyScience is a primary school science and technology program. MyScience provides support through the establishment of a sustainable model of collaboration between schools, industry/business and university sector. It stimulates interest and enhances capacities of primary science teachers and students in conducting authentic scientific investigations.

Drawing on and generating extensive research, the critical elements comprising MyScience are:
- Collaborative professional learning for primary teachers
- Mentoring of students by practice teachers of ACU or by neighbouring high school students
- Purposeful and hands-on investigating for teachers and students
- Using science as a context for teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy

Follow this link to the MyScience website: www.myscience.com.au

PARENT FORUMS

Parents are engaged through participating in programs or being audience to ACU presentations at school parent nights or award nights. These forums can take many and varied forms. They are formulated to meet the needs of partner schools and communities. The forums aim to inform parents of university options and the career pathways available for their children. They aim to demystify set ideas about higher education informing parents of the comprehensive advantages of higher education for their children and increasing awareness and confidence in higher education choices for their future children.

KIDS AT UNIVERSITY

Kids at University is a 5-day live in experience. It is conducted in January, for Year 5 & 6 in Ballarat every second year and in Sydney for Year 9 every other year. It is open to all current students of ACU partner schools. Kids at University is an academic experience which guides students in preparation for both their immediate and future academic endeavours.

The program's philosophy is to develop students a love of learning. Students are stimulated and challenged through a range of activities and workshops covering English, Mathematics, Art and Science disciplines. The workshops are designed to help students identify and create meaningful links in their educational journey.

ACU continues the commitment to participating students by embedding relationships with their schools and communities and reinforcing the message of higher education as a viable option for their future.

Follow this link to the MyScience website: www.myscience.com.au
Students and parents are invited to participate in a range of interactive and hands-on activities related to university studies and university life. The range of activities is developed and delivered by ACU staff and ACU students on school sites or on the ACU campus. Participants are introduced to the faculties and different services and supports provided by ACU and introduced to the challenges and excitement of university life.

Experience ‘A day in the life of a university student’. School students are matched with an ACU student and accompany the university student on campus for the day. Together they attend lectures, tutorials and practicals, share lunch in the cafeterias and make use of library services. Shadowing also provides a forum for questions and open discussion between school student and a university student. On return, the school is asked to provide an opportunity for the students to share their university experiences and impressions with their year level cohort.

Partner schools are invited to conduct their staff professional development days on the university campus. This enables staff from partner schools to observe a university in action and to be aware of the most current courses and pathways available to their students. Professional Development Days also provide an interactive forum whereby staff from both schools and universities can discuss challenges that arise when students transition from school to university.

This is a journal that provides a vehicle by which students can reflect on their own learning and education. It is targeted at Years 7 and 8. Students are asked to take time out to identify their learning style, think about how to engage successfully in their learning and map their own progress. In doing this students can identify their aspirations and set goals to achieve them. A hardcopy journal is provided by ACU.

On the Job is an engaging, interactive online program that introduces students to a broad range of careers and their potential linkages to university. The program contains job profiles, games, activities, links, relevant resources and videos. It is highly recommended that On the Job be integrated into Years 5-8 school curriculum. Follow this link to access: apps.acu.edu.au/onthejob/index.htm

Careers Web Quest is an online interactive educational program that employs a problem-based learning approach. It is a team-based activity requiring higher order thinking skills. It introduces students to a broad range of career options and to their links to higher education courses. It is highly recommended that Careers Web Quest be integrated into Years 10-12 school curriculum. Follow this link to access Careers Web Quest: apps.acu.edu.au/careerswq/index.htm

ACU staff provides in-service support to teachers prior to introducing these programs.
YEAR 12 ENGLISH WORKSHOPS

Year 12 English Workshops are offered to students from partner schools and are conducted by experienced Year 12 teachers. The workshop’s focus is primarily to improve examination performance, thus increasing ATAR score for successful higher education entrance.

Conducted in the school holidays at the end of Term 2 and Term 3, the workshops concentrate specifically on the development of writing skills for Year 12 students covering such topics as improving clarity of expression, improving and developing revision techniques and analysing and answering past paper questions. Workshops cater for the range of Year 12 English subjects in different states. This usually requires that two different workshops are conducted in each state. Registration for the workshops is online at www.acu.edu.au/equitypathways.

YEAR 12 MATHEMATICS WORKSHOPS

Year 12 Mathematics Workshops are offered to students from partner schools and are conducted by experienced Year 12 teachers.

The workshops aim to support and encourage participation in the study of mathematics and to assist students to optimise their mathematics grades to enhance university entrance. Conducted in the school holidays at the end of Term 2 and Term 3, the workshops concentrate on consolidation of knowledge in key topic areas and develop effective revision and examination techniques. Workshops cater for the range of Year 12 Mathematics subjects in different states. This usually requires two different workshops are conducted in each state. Registration for the workshops is online at www.acu.edu.au/equitypathways.

UNI STEP UP (USU)

Uni Step Up offers Year 12 students the chance to undertake a first year university unit/s of study. The units of study available and how they are delivered vary from state to state. Currently, units are available from courses in the areas of Education, Health Science, Exercise Science, Arts and Business. Students who successfully complete their chosen unit/s of study, and who choose to enrol in a related ACU undergraduate degree course will receive credit points towards that degree. If students enrol in another university it will be at the discretion of that university to award credit.

Uni Step Up enables students to pursue a vocational pathway earlier than usual, offer the unit/s free, complements and enhances other Year 12 subjects and helps students transition more readily to university in the future.

EDUCATION RECONNECT (ER)

The two categories of Education Reconnect are as follows:

ER1

This program is targeted at students who have achieved an ATAR but for a particular set of circumstances have not been able to start a university degree. This program enables students to stay connected to university without a full time load or financial commitment. They are offered a university unit which can be credited to their degree when they commence full time study. It is also possible for a student to enter ACU through ACUcom. Courses offered by ACUcom will provide a pathway into a degree course where if certain standards are met, units studied will be credited to a particular degree.

ER2

This program targets people who have not achieved an ATAR. They may have worked for some time, may have done a non-university course and now wish to pursue a degree. These people are required to submit a CV, are interviewed by the Equity Pathways Officer on campus, are required to submit academic transcripts of other courses completed and must nominate three referees. The Equity Pathways Officer considers the material and the process of notifying the faculty begins. If agreed by the faculty, a direct entry offer is made to the ER candidate. It is also possible for a student to enter ACU through ACUcom. Courses offered by ACUcom will provide a pathway into a degree course where if certain standards are met, units studied will be credited to a particular degree.

AWARENESS

ASPIRATIONS

ACCESS PROGRAMS
**ACCESS PROGRAMS**

**COME TO DINNER (C2D)**

This event, hosted by ACU brings Indigenous secondary school students and ACU Indigenous staff and students together. Secondary school students will be provided with the opportunity to hear and present from ACU Indigenous staff and students, and will have the chance to engage in conversation with these university representatives about university life.

By experiencing firsthand stories about university life from Indigenous students at ACU, providing an opportunity for students to meet Indigenous staff and explore courses and how to access these courses, students are afforded further opportunity to map out their future and explore how higher education might be part of that future.

**PRINCIPAL'S RECOMMENDATION PROGRAM (PRP)**

The Principal’s Recommendation Program (PRP) seeks to offer students who have experienced educational disadvantage an opportunity to access a degree course at ACU. The PRP is negotiated with partner schools and identifies these students currently doing Year 12. Principals are invited to recommend students in consultation with the student’s teachers, parents and the Equity Pathways Officer working with the school.

The application is to be completed by end of Term 3 of the current year. The principal provides a letter of recommendation that outlines the reasons for application and the student’s suitability. Year 11 and Year 12 reports of transcripts are also required with the application.

**ACU SMART**

ACU Smart is a tertiary preparation program. It is designed to ease the transition from school to university and to prepare new students for university studies.

The two day course is conducted the week before orientation week in an environment which is supportive, interactive and friendly. It aims to build confidence for a successful start at ACU. It provides an opportunity for students to meet heads of campus, lecturers and current students. It is also an opportunity for students who enter ACU through direct entry programs such as PRP and ER.

ACU students assist the work of Equity Pathways officers. Students of ACU are employed to play a support role in the delivery of ACU's Equity Pathways programs.

**ATTAINMENT PROGRAMS**

**STUDENT2STUDENT**

ACU students assist the work of Equity Pathways officers. Students of ACU are employed to play a support role in the delivery of ACU's Equity Pathways programs. This supports the idea of students talking to students through peer support. The Student2Student program is a support program for students throughout their course.

ACU students are employed to play a support role in the delivery of ACU's Attainment programs. This supports the idea of students talking to students through peer support.

**ASPIRATIONS**

ACU students assist the work of Equity Pathways officers. Students of ACU are employed to play a support role in the delivery of ACU's Attainment programs. This supports the idea of students talking to students through peer support. The Student2Student program is a support program for students throughout their course.

ACU students are employed to play a support role in the delivery of ACU's Attainment programs. This supports the idea of students talking to students through peer support.
FACULTY SUPPORT

Faculties are integral to all Equity Pathways programs. It is the faculties who provide the expertise for Teacher Professional Development, who showcase courses within the university to visiting students, who conduct career specific workshops, who mentor and guide Uni Step Up and the Principal’s Recommendation Program students and who integrate learning and teaching to support students in their studies. Through specific funding faculties facilitate specific projects working with partner schools especially in STEM related activities. 

OFFICE OF STUDENT SUCCESS (OSS)

The OSS supports all Equity Pathways programs. This support is particularly integral to programs such as Uni Step Up, Principal’s Recommendation Program, Aspirations Days, Professional Development Days and ACU Smart. Such services as student counselling, support for students with disabilities, careers advice and academic skills support are equally important for enabling ongoing support to students on campus. All areas of OSS work collaboratively with Equity Pathways in further developing and supporting programs for student success throughout their time at university.

ACUCOM

ACUCOM provides pathway options for students from Equity Pathways partner schools. ACUCOM is crucial to Equity Pathways work. Diploma courses and Certificate IV courses from ACUCOM articulate into degree courses for students. Often this is the best option for students who wish to enter university through Education Reconnect and the Principal’s Recommendation Program.

LEARNING AND TEACHING CENTRE (LTC)

Embedding Equity Pathways work through the university LTC includes Learning Environment Online (LEO) and Information Technology. These areas collaborate with Equity Pathways to support students with their technological needs. The LTC are also active throughout the university in developing curriculum and teaching methodology to facilitate changing cohorts of students with diverse needs.

LIBRARIES

Collaboration of Equity Pathways & ACU Libraries. Libraries commit to work collaboratively with Equity Pathways to support their programs wherever possible. Presently the Library staff is involved in school visits, campus tours, ACU Smart and they also provide resources for Uni Step-Up students.

ACADEMIC REGISTRAR

Tracking enrolled students. The Academic Registrar’s office works to support Equity Pathways in developing and implementing tracking mechanisms for the students who engage in Equity Pathways Programs. Systems are devised through this unit to facilitate Equity Pathways access programs for new students to ACU.
The Australian Catholic University’s (ACU) Equity Pathways is committed to widening participation by increasing awareness of higher education, building aspirations of students, providing pathway options to access higher education and ensuring that when at university students have a successful and rewarding experience.

It aligns with the ACU’s Mission, with its fundamental concern for justice by acting in Truth and Love, committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good.

ACU’s Equity Pathways responds to the Commonwealth Government’s 2009 policy Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System, that aims to foster Australia’s economic and social progress by making it a successful participant in the future global knowledge economy.