University and your teenager
Information for the parents of secondary school students
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All young people are different. They have different skills and different interests. The challenge for teenagers is in identifying these skills and interests so they may achieve their full potential in a career that they will find satisfying and rewarding. Choosing a career is one of the most important decisions faced by young people. Many young people find this process difficult. However, making a good decision can impact on their success and happiness for years to come.

Parents play a vital role in guiding their children’s thinking from a very young age. Although they don’t always admit it, most teenagers want and need their parents’ help in making these decisions. This booklet is designed to help parents talk to their teenagers and guide them through the decision-making process. Your help is important but remember…

it is his or her choice!

Material in this booklet was produced by the Equity Pathways Office, Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Students Learning and Teaching, Australian Catholic University (ACU) (2012).

The ACU has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of printing. Material appearing in this publication has been adapted from the ACU booklet What you need to know about university. Information for secondary school students and their parents, by Miriam Tanti and Joanne Harris, ACU (2010). The material appearing in the latter publication was developed from a joint project of ACU School of Education NSW and CEO Parramatta for the project: Managing Transition Process: Enhancing school students’ knowledge of post-compulsory pathways and career decision-making skills. The Equity Pathways Office thanks the original authors for granting permission to use and adapt their work.

For more information please call the Equity Pathways Office (St Patrick’s Campus) on 03 9953 3000 or visit www.acu.edu.au
what are your teenager’s choices?

AFTER SCHOOL, TEENAGERS CAN CHOOSE BETWEEN:
• continuing their education at university;
• continuing their education and training through Vocational Education and Training (VET);
• finding employment or a new apprenticeship;
• setting up a business;
• participating in community service or volunteer work.

POST-SCHOOL STUDY IS AN OPTION FOR EVERYONE
There is a wide range of programs and courses available - something for everyone. Young people should consider ALL their options before deciding.

THE AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (AQF)
The following table shows the AQF:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Vocational Education and Training (VET)</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Secondary Certificates of Education</td>
<td>Vocational Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plus</td>
<td>Vocational Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate II</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate I</td>
<td>Certificate IV</td>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate III</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate II</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate I</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: It is possible to progress from one pathway to another. Universities and TAFE Colleges grant credit for previous work and study achievements.

Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations
www.myfuture.edu.au
why go to university?

UNIVERSITY IS ONLY ONE OF MANY OPTIONS OPEN TO SCHOOL LEAVERS. SO WHY CHOOSE UNIVERSITY?

REASONS PEOPLE GO TO UNIVERSITY:
• A university degree is the only way into their chosen career;
• Far more people are going to university these days, so employers expect people to have a university qualification.

PEOPLE WITH A UNIVERSITY DEGREE:
• have lower rates of unemployment;
• have access to a wider range of careers;
• experience higher rates of job satisfaction;
• have a better chance of promotion;
• generally earn more money.

If you would like to learn more about employment opportunities after university, visit the GradsOnline website: http://svc095.wic026v.server-web.com/gradsonline/

Globalisation and technological change are placing greater demands on education and skill development in Australia and the nature of jobs available to young Australians is changing faster than ever. Skilled jobs now dominate jobs growth and people with university or vocational education and training qualifications fare much better in the employment market than early school leavers.

To maximise their opportunities for healthy, productive and rewarding futures, Australia’s young people must be encouraged not only to complete secondary education, but also to proceed into further training or education.

National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, MCEETYA, 2008
When we think of university students, we often have a stereotypical picture in our minds. The truth is that there is no such thing as a “typical” university student. They come in all shapes and sizes, all ages, both sexes, from all backgrounds. They can be rich or poor, from the city or the country. Young people just like your son or daughter go to university. In fact, many students from your teenager’s school have gone to university or are studying at university now.

**COMMON FEATURES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS:**
- a career goal;
- an interest in a particular field;
- an ability in their chosen area;
- the willingness to work hard to get into university and to succeed when they get there.

**HOW CAN MY TEENAGER GET INTO UNIVERSITY?**

Depending on which state in Australia your teenager comes from, the completion of Year 12 and the allocation of a final ranking is the most common way of getting into university. Rankings are a number out of 100 that show how each student performed in their final year of schooling compared to all other students in Australia or in their state. Most universities use this ranking to judge whether a student is capable of undertaking a course. The more difficult a course, or the more popular it is, the higher the ranking required.

Below is a list of the different names given to the final years of school in different Australian states:
- Victoria – VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education)
- New South Wales – HSC (Higher School Certificate)
- Queensland – QCE (Queensland Certificate of Education)
- Western Australia- WACE (Western Australia Certificate of Education)
- Tasmania – TCE (Tasmanian Certificate of Education)
- South Australia – SACE (South Australian Certificate of Education)
- Northern Territory – NTCET (Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training)

Below are the names of the methods used by different Australian states to rank their Year 12 students according to their scholastic performance:
- Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory & Tasmania – ATAR (Australian Tertiary Entrance Rank)
- Queensland – OP (Overall Position)

Most states have a government-run centre that manages entry to public universities. They publish a range of guides each year containing information on courses and entry requirements. Copies of these are sometimes distributed directly to students, can be found at high schools (through careers advisers or at libraries) or can be bought at selected newsagencies.

**Below is a list of the relevant centre for each state and how to obtain a copy of course guides:**

**Victoria – VTAC** *(Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre)*
This centre manages entry to all public universities in Victoria. It publishes several guides every year with information on such things as courses, tertiary entrance requirements and application procedures. Some of these publications are sent directly to high school students free of charge, others, such as the VTAC Guide, can be bought from newsagents for around $15. VTAC also has all of its publications available for download on its website:


**New South Wales & the Australian Capital Territory – UAC** *(Universities Admissions Centre)*
This centre manages entry to all public universities in NSW and the ACT. It publishes several guides every year with information on such things as courses, tertiary entrance requirements and application procedures. Some of these publications are sent directly to high school students free of charge, this includes the UAC Guide. This guide can also be bought from newsagents for around $15. UAC also has all of its publications available for download on its website:


**Queensland – QTAC** *(Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre)*
This centre manages entry to all public universities in Queensland. It publishes several guides every year with information on such things as courses, tertiary entrance requirements and application procedures. QTAC Guide is available for $16 directly from QTAC offices, or by ordering online through the QTAC website, or from selected newsagents.

WHAT IF YOUR TEENAGER DOESN’T GET THE MARKS?

If your teenager does not get into their first choice of course, it is not a disaster. Most who miss out on their first choice find a satisfying alternative.

ALTERNATIVE ENTRY

- Many universities have alternative entry schemes for those who may not get quite enough marks;
- Some courses in special areas require portfolios or auditions (e.g., Performing and Visual Arts).

TAFE/EMPLOYMENT

Students can:

- study Years 11 and 12 at TAFE;
- undertake a Tertiary Preparation, Enabling or Bridging program;
- complete a TAFE Certificate or Diploma, and/or do a workplace traineeship;
- gain employment experience in a related field.

Through these, students can demonstrate their ability to study and apply to enter university as a non-school-leaver.

TRANSFER

The Australian Qualifications Framework (see table on page 4) allows movement between VET and universities, and between institutions. Students can enrol in a similar course (at the same OR at a different university) and, if they do well enough, transfer to their preferred course. Universities can grant credit for what students have completed.

accessACU

accessACU is the awarding of ‘bonus points’ to current Year 12 students and eligible applicants based on the following three areas:

- **Subject bonus** - for applicants who achieve high marks in Year 12 subjects that are relevant to ACU courses;
- **Geographic region bonus** - for applicants who live in areas that are local or have particular relevance to the campus at which they wish to study;
- **Special access bonus** - for applicants who have experienced a social or educational disadvantage due to circumstances beyond their control.

To find out if your teenager is eligible for bonus entry points visit:

**www.acu.edu.au/accessacu**

If the Australian Catholic University (ACU) is your teenager’s choice for tertiary education then there are two alternatives that they should know about:

**EARLY ACHIEVERS’ PROGRAM**

ACU’s Early Achievers’ Program allows students to apply for admission to study at ACU whilst they are still in Year 12.

The Early Achievers’ Program will give your teenager the opportunity to tell us about their leadership skills and involvement in the community as well as academic and career achievements. If successful, your teenager will be accepted into the undergraduate course of their choice early - meaning that they have less pressure placed on them during exams and the summer break knowing that they have a secured place at ACU.

For more information visit:

**www.acu.edu.au/counts**

**Western Australia – Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC)**

This centre manages entry to all public universities in WA. It publishes several guides every year with information on such things as courses, tertiary entrance requirements and application procedures.

The TISC Guide is distributed to all Year 12 students in WA. It can also be bought from newsagents for around $10. For the most up-to-date course information use the course search function found on the TISC website:

**www.tisc.edu.au**

**Tasmania**

Applications to higher education institutions in Tasmania are made directly to the institution. Applications to universities in other states are made through the relevant tertiary entrance centre.

**South Australia and the Northern Territory – South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC)**

This centre manages entry to all public universities in SA and the NT. It publishes several guides every year with information on such things as courses, tertiary entrance requirements and application procedures.

The SATAC University Guide is distributed to all Year 12 students in SA and the NT, and can also be bought from newsagents for around $12.

**http://satac.edu.au/**

All TAC Guide prices are accurate as at April 2012. Please consult the relevant Tertiary Centre for prices of later editions of TAC Guides.

**SUBJECTS**

Many courses require students to have undertaken particular subjects in the final years of high school. These subjects are known as prerequisites. Publications from the centres that manage university entrance in each state (please see above) outline the prerequisites for particular courses.
University can differ greatly from high school. Many universities are much larger than schools, with some having tens of thousands of students at a single campus. Attendance at class can often be very different too, with timetables having large gaps, and some courses requiring students to be in class for fewer hours than at high school. Another major difference is that students are treated like adults by the university and their teachers, and are expected to take responsibility for their work, attendance and behaviour. If students do not turn up to class or forget to hand their work in, they will not be chased. Most manage to adapt successfully to these changes.

**WHAT SUPPORT IS OFFERED TO STUDENTS TO TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY?**

Most universities offer a range of programs to support students to adapt to their new environment.

**ORIENTATION**
Orientation programs are offered to all new students and run just before the start of first semester. They generally aim to help students to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings, meet staff and other students, and get useful information about the coming academic year, such as where to get text books and what services and support are provided to students.

**TRANSITION PROGRAMS**
These programs are offered by some universities to new students and generally run throughout the first year of study. They aim to assist new students to meet other students and to develop skills to adapt to university life. Examples include: mentoring programs; support to students to set up study groups; and study skills workshops.

**ACU SMART**
ACU Smart is a program designed to ease the transition from school to university and to help prepare new students for university studies. Students receive the opportunity to meet new peers and academic staff, develop new study skills, and gain an insight into what to expect from the coming year.

**OFFICE OF STUDENT SUCCESS**
This office is all about ensuring students’ lives at ACU National are fulfilling, by successfully working with them to meet their personal and academic needs. The office understands that success means different things to each student and exists to support their goals at university. For more information: www.acu.edu.au/242942

**Counselling Service**
This service can provide students with access to professional counsellors to assist them with a range of personal issues and concerns. This service ensures counselling sessions are confidential, so information students share with a counsellor will not be discussed without their permission. The Counselling Unit also offers workshops and has recently developed online materials under a ‘Live Smart’ Project to support students with interactive electronic resources.

**Equity & Disability Unit**
This unit provides services to promote access and equity for students with disabilities or long-term medical conditions. The service aims to provide an environment in which all students can participate fully in the life of the University. Disability Advisers can provide students with an assessment and relevant adjustment plans to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

**Campus Life**
This service aims to engage students in Campus Life to ensure a fulfilling university experience. It immerses students into the culture of the campus, university events and networks within and outside of the university. The service supports local campus student associations and the ACU National Student Association (ACUNSA), sport and recreation activities, and clubs and student societies on each campus. Students can join the Campus Life student leadership programs, community engagement and volunteering or cultural diversity events to experience more of ACU campus life.
WHAT WILL IT COST?

COURSE FEES

VET

Fees vary greatly between institutions and courses.
Average full-time VET student tuition charges range from $400 to $1500 per year. Some have additional charges for course materials. Most TAFE colleges also charge amenities and service fees.
Most require students to pay their fees up-front.

UNIVERSITY

Australian citizens and permanent residents are entitled to a Commonwealth Supported Place, this means that students make a contribution towards the cost of their education and the Australian Government contributes the majority of the cost (known as the Commonwealth contribution) directly to the education provider. Students also have the option of deferring payment of fees until they begin earning $47,196 a year.

The Going to Uni government website has further information about university fees and payment options:
www.goingtouni.gov.au

WHAT IF WE CAN'T AFFORD IT?

COURSE FEES

HECS-HELP ASSISTANCE

Anyone can go to university regardless of their ability to pay as the Australian Government runs the Higher Education Contribution Scheme—Higher Education Loan Programme (HECS-HELP).

HECS-HELP assistance helps students to pay for their study costs. It is like a loan from the government for all or part of a student’s contribution amount. HECS-HELP loans are interest-free (but are indexed to inflation).

A HECS-HELP debt does not have to be repaid until earnings reach a certain threshold ($47,196 a year).

The more earned, the higher are repayments, until the debt is paid. Repayments are generally taken out of people's salaries, through the tax system.

All HECS-HELP and student contribution figures are accurate as at April 2012. Please consult the relevant web links for updated figures.

OTHER COURSE-RELATED EXPENSES

Universities usually charge a general services fee and courses often require students to buy materials such as textbooks, art materials or lab equipment. All students should also have easy access to a computer.

ACCOMMODATION COSTS

If your teenager chooses to attend a university away from home, they may need to find accommodation and there are varying costs associated with this.

Renting - This is a common choice for many students. It can require more responsibility than some options, such as the need organise and pay for rent, bills and meals. However, it can also be a great learning experience. For those wishing to house-share, information on available houses can be found on noticeboards at, or near, the university. Some universities also offer support, such as online accommodation listings and advice provided by student services.

• Government assistance- Some state government housing departments offer financial support to assist those eligible with the payment of housing rental costs.

Living with a host family/boarding/homestay - This option consists of paying money to the live-in owner of a house to rent a room, with meals and utilities often included. Universities can often refer students to people offering this.

College/On-campus accommodation - Some universities have colleges or residential halls at or near their campuses. There are costs involved and rooms are often furnished and meals provided.

Hostels - This option can be good if students want to live in the company of other students. Individual hostels can house students from more than one university.

University managed houses - These are properties owned or rented, and managed, by the university for use by its students. It is similar to on-campus accommodation, however residences are usually located away from the university.

OTHER LIVING EXPENSES

Most universities offer information on costs of living while at university on their websites. Search for financial aid/assistance when doing any research.

OTHER COURSE RELATED EXPENSES

From semester 1, 2012 it is compulsory for all commonwealth supported students and fee-paying undergraduate students enrolled in an award course in all Australian universities to pay a Student Services Amenities Fee (SSAF).

Full time students are required to pay $131 per half year ($262 annually). Part time students are required to pay $98 per half year ($196 annually).

MAXIMUM STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS PER FULL-TIME YEAR, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Contribution band</th>
<th>2012 Student contribution range (per Equivalent Full-Time Study Load)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 3</td>
<td>$0 - $9,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, dentistry, medicine, veterinary science, accounting, administration, economics, commerce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 2</td>
<td>$0 - $8,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing, built environment, other health, Allied health, engineering, surveying, agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 1</td>
<td>$0 - $5,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities, behavioural science, social studies, education, clinical psychology, foreign languages, visual and performing arts, education, nursing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Priorities</td>
<td>$0 - $4,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics, statistics and science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information visit:
www.studyassist.gov.au

Costs of units of study vary from course to course and university to university, but must be within a range set by the government, as shown in the table below:

2012 Student contribution range (per Equivalent Full-Time Study Load)

$0 - $9,425
$0 - $8,050
$0 - $5,648
$0 - $4,520
SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships fall broadly under the following headings:

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS

The below scholarships are provided by the Australian Government to students experiencing financial hardship, to those needing to relocate for university, and to those from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background. They do not need to be repaid.

Student Start-up Scholarship

This scholarship is paid to all students receiving student income support, such as Youth Allowance, Austudy and AbSTUDY. It is received for each year of a student’s course. In 2012 this is valued at $2050.

Relocation Scholarship

This scholarship is paid to all students needing to relocate for university, and to those from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background. They do not need to be repaid.

Student income support, such as Youth Allowance, Austudy and AbSTUDY. It is received for each year of a student’s course. In 2012 this is valued at $2050.

Indigenous Enabling Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships

To be eligible for this payment, students must be an Indigenous Australian, enrolled in a full-time undergraduate degree, able to demonstrate financial disadvantage, prove that they have had to relocate for their university studies and that they will have to pay accommodation costs. In 2012, this payment is valued at $4754, and is available for a maximum of four years.

Indigenous Access Scholarships

To be eligible for this payment, applicants must be a commencing student, an Indigenous Australian, enrolled in either a full-time undergraduate degree or eligible enabling course, and able to demonstrate financial disadvantage. This is a one-off payment. In 2012, it is valued at $4485 and is paid in two installments.

Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarships

To be eligible for this payment, applicants must be an Indigenous Australian, enrolled in a full-time undergraduate degree and able to demonstrate financial disadvantage. In 2012, this payment is valued at $2377, and is available for a maximum of four years.

Indigenous Enabling Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarships

To be eligible for this payment, students must be an Indigenous Australian, enrolled in a full-time undergraduate degree, able to demonstrate financial disadvantage, prove that they have had to relocate for their university studies and that they will have to pay accommodation costs. In 2012, this payment is valued at $4754, and is available for a maximum of four years.

Equity Scholarships

These scholarships usually carry the same requirements as the Commonwealth Scholarships (described above). They are applied for through individual universities and vary in the level of financial support and what students may receive.

Some tertiary admissions centres, such as VTAC, produce publications listing all of these types of scholarship available in their state.

Course-specific & Academic Merit Scholarships

These are offered by individual university faculties or courses and can range in value. High marks in Year 12 and/or community service are usually required.

Some of these scholarships need to be applied for through individual universities or faculties. Some may be distributed automatically during the allocation of tertiary rankings.

CENTRES THAT MANAGE ENTRANCE TO UNIVERSITY, SUCH AS UAC AND VTAC, OFTEN PRODUCE PUBLICATIONS LISTING SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE.

COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SCHOLARSHIPS

Some community organisations and corporate businesses offer scholarships for TAFE and university students. Application requirements can vary greatly.

For a list of these types of scholarship that are available, visit: www.myfuture.edu.au, click on ‘The Facts’ and then ‘Awards and Scholarships’.

ASSISTANCE WITH OTHER COURSE-RELATED EXPENSES

TEXTBOOKS

It is recommended to students to wait until the first week of classes to find out which textbooks are essential to own or if they will be available at the university library. Textbooks can also be bought second hand. To access these, students can look at departmental notice boards to see if students are selling their old ones, or visit book exchanges and second-hand book stores.

COMPUTERS

All universities offer access to computers on campus at computer labs or libraries.

Many universities also offer bursaries to students to help with the payment of course-related costs. Look on individual university websites to find more information about this option.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Some students are eligible for government financial assistance such as Youth Allowance, Austudy or AbSTUDY. In addition to this, recipients can also sometimes qualify for:

• Rent assistance
• Health Care Cards (provide discounts on a range of living costs)

For more comprehensive information on these services and eligibility please look online: www.centrelink.gov.au or visit your local Centrelink office.

There are also scholarships and bursaries available to eligible students (please refer to section in this booklet under the heading ‘Scholarships’).

Most universities also offer financial aid services or information advising students on such things as budgeting, financial assistance, student loans and bursaries available.

PART-TIME WORK

Students can work part-time, but a limit on this is recommended. Those on Youth Allowance, Austudy and ABSTUDY can earn up to $236 per fortnight (increasing up to $400 from 1st July 2012) without payments being affected.

All figures are accurate as at May 2012. Please consult the relevant web links for updated figures.
What you need to know about university

It is common for young people to be uncertain about what they want to do. Exploring the range of employment, education and training options will help them to make decisions. You can help by talking through these options. You can also help them develop the skills they need to make decisions and achieve their goals.

As a rule, you should start speaking with your teenager and helping them as early as Years 9 and 10, as there are subjects for study in Years 11 and 12 that may be prerequisites for entry to some university courses. Having university preferences set-out before the stress of Year 12 is also recommended.

HELP YOU CAN GIVE INCLUDES:

IDENTIFYING
• their own interests, attributes and abilities;
• their hopes and plans for the future;
• the type of work or study she/he would like to pursue.

EXPLORING
• the range of job and study pathways available after school;
• the career option or options that might suit their interests, attributes and abilities;
• the alternative pathways in their chosen field;
• the entry requirements for their chosen pathway.

GOAL-SETTING AND DECISION-MAKING
• setting long-term goals for their chosen career/study pathway;
• breaking down long-term goals into small steps;
• keeping their options open;
• attending events like university open days to find out more about courses, careers and university life;
• choosing actions today that can help them progress towards their goals (eg, selecting appropriate subjects).

GETTING THERE
• working consistently at school;
• persevering, even when things may seem tough;
• believing in their own ability to succeed;
• not giving up - staying focussed on their dream.

REMEMBER...
It is the young people who must live with their choices. Avoid placing pressure on your teenager to follow a particular path. They need advice, but also need you to listen!