CHOICE 2018
Planning your VCE studies for course entry in 2018
Common misconceptions

There are a number of myths and misconceptions about how to get the best ATAR. This booklet explains:

- how scaling works
- why ‘easy’ and ‘hard’ studies don’t matter as much as what you like and are good at
- why completing a VCE language or a mathematics study does not guarantee you a ‘high’ ATAR
- how Higher Education studies affect the ATAR.

Choice includes example VCE programs with a variety of study combinations showing that it is not which studies you choose that affect your ATAR, but how well you perform in those studies.

If you have any queries about this publication, talk to your VCE coordinator or careers teacher, visit the VTAC website or telephone VTAC on 1300 364 133.
**VTAC resources for students**

**VTAC CourseSearch**

VTAC CourseSearch is an online tool for researching your tertiary study options.

Enter your interests to find courses that are suitable for you, and read the course entries to find out more and make sure that you meet the selection criteria.

CourseSearch lists all courses available for application through VTAC, as well as some courses that take applications directly through the institution.

The prerequisite search allows you to develop your own sample VCE program and:

- compare VCE studies with course prerequisites for 2017 or 2018
- sort tertiary course choices by a range of factors.

**VICTER**

*VICTER* is a publication in which institutions outline the VCE study requirements needed for entry into their courses in three years time. This advance information is vital for Year 10 students preparing a VCE study plan and a future tertiary direction.

*VICTER* is available on the VTAC website and is regularly updated so students have access to the most up to date information when choosing their VCE studies.
Other resources

Victorian Skills Gateway

TAFE and Training Line
Telephone 131 823 (8:30am–4.30pm, Monday to Friday except public holidays)
Email tafe.courseline@edumail.vic.gov.au

The Job Guide
Web http://www.jobguide.education.gov.au
Print version http://hobsonsbookshop.com/collections/careers-information

Youth.gov.au
Web http://www.youth.gov.au

Youth Central
Email youthcentral@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Web http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au

Choosing your Year 11 and Year 12 studies: the basics

Check out our video “Choosing your Year 11 and 12 studies: the basics” on VTAC’s YouTube channel for helpful hints on planning your VCE program.

The video explores how to go about planning your VCE program, with comments from students discussing their experiences.

http://www.youtube.com/user/vtacmedia
So many choices

As a Year 10 student about to choose your VCE study program, the choices can seem a little overwhelming. There might be many questions you are asking yourself:

- How do I know what I will want to do in two years? Study? Work? Travel?
- What if I change my mind?
- How do I know which studies are going to suit my interests?
- How do I know which studies are best for me?
- What if I don't get a good ATAR, and what is a good ATAR?

The decisions you make about your studies now are important, but are not the only chance you will have to choose or change your future career. There are many avenues to tertiary study and the career you want. It doesn’t hurt, however, to do some investigation and planning so that you give yourself the best opportunity to be happy with your choices in the long run.

How do you get started?
Think about what you like, what you are good at and which fields of study and types of work you are interested in pursuing. If you are interested in tertiary study then check out *VICTER 2018*, which lists the tertiary courses you will be able to choose from when you finish your Year 12 studies—these are courses that commence in 2018.

Even if you haven't made up your mind about tertiary study yet, keep reading and use the information in this booklet to help you choose your VCE studies.

### Finding your strengths

Tick the activities that you like to do or are good at:

- [ ] Doing things outside
- [ ] Helping others
- [ ] Working with technology
- [ ] Organising things
- [ ] Talking to other people
- [ ] Finding out how things work
- [ ] Being creative
- [ ] Building things
- [ ] Working in a team
- [ ] Working on your own

Now think about jobs that match the things you have ticked. You’re on your way to coming up with a list of options!
Understanding jargon

Sometimes the most confusing thing about making informed decisions is understanding the language used. The following definitions may provide you with some clarity.

Course jargon

Major studies
The main areas of study covered in a course. A course might have only one major study area, or it might have more than one that you can choose between. For example, a Bachelor of Arts might have a wide range of major studies such as history, languages, journalism, photography and sociology.

Scholarships
Scholarships are awarded to students on a range of criteria to help them meet the costs of study. Some scholarships are awarded on merit (i.e. academic or other achievement) but others are based on educational disadvantage or other criteria.

SEAS
SEAS stands for Special Entry Access Scheme. It is a way for VTAC applicants to apply for special consideration in conjunction with their course application. Some institutions also offer special consideration outside of the VTAC process.

Selection criteria
You must meet institutional and course selection criteria to be eligible for entry into a course. No matter how good your ATAR is, unless you also meet the prerequisites and complete the selection requirements you will not be considered by course selection officers for their courses.

Prerequisites
Prerequisite studies are VCE studies that you must have successfully completed in order to qualify for a course. Courses with Prerequisites specify which VCE units are required. VICTER 2018 lists the prerequisites required for the courses you will be applying for when you finish your VCE.

Selection requirements
These are requirements set for a course—in addition to completion of the VCE—that you must satisfy to be considered for selection. These may include attending an interview, presenting a folio, or submitting a supplementary form.

Selection requirements for art and design courses at some institutions are published in their policy statements in VICTER 2018.

If you want a hint of what’s to come, check out Selection requirements under the course information in CourseSearch on the VTAC website.

Additional considerations
Additional considerations are factors that are not required, but if completed may add to your course application. For example, some courses will give subject bonuses to Year 12 students. Other courses may look at your work experience and how it might help you successfully complete the course.

ATAR and scaling jargon

ATAR
The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank is an overall percentile ranking reflecting your comparative Year 12 achievement compared to all other Year 12 students in a given year. Your ATAR is developed from an aggregate of your VCE study scores after scaling (see ATAR calculation and scaling definitions over the page). To be eligible for an ATAR you need a minimum of four permissible scorable studies and to have successfully completed the VCE. ATAR calculations are subject to the restrictions outlined in VICTER 2018.
**ATAR calculation**

**Primary four**
The four studies that are counted first in the calculation of the ATAR. The primary four aggregate is made up of the VTAC Scaled Study Score in one of English, English (EAL), Literature or English Language added to the next best three permissible scaled scores.

**Increments**
An increment is 10% of any fifth and/or sixth permissible scaled score that is available. Increments are added to the primary four during the calculation of the ATAR.

**Aggregate**
The total produced by adding the primary four to a maximum of two available (and permissible) increments. A maximum of six studies can contribute to the ATAR. Any additional studies are visible on your application.

**Higher Education studies**
The VCAA provides very capable students with the opportunity to undertake some approved Higher Education study as part of the VCE. These studies are recognised as Higher Education studies contributing to completion of the VCE. If you are undertaking such a study, it may count as an increment (fifth or sixth) study provided the conditions outlined in **VICTER 2018** are met.

**Scaling**
A VCE study score provides an indication of your relative performance in a particular study. Scaling adjusts for differences in abilities of students undertaking different studies, so that the scaled scores are comparable across different studies. It ensures that students are neither advantaged or disadvantaged on the basis of the studies they choose. All VCE study scores are scaled (see **ABC of Scaling**) by VTAC.

**Study groupings**
Study groupings list related subjects under a common heading. There are restrictions on how many studies from one study grouping can be used in prerequisite and subject bonus statements, and ATAR calculation. English and mathematics are the most common. For a complete list refer to **VICTER 2018**.

**VCE study score**
A score from 0–50, determined by the VCAA, which shows how you performed in a study relative to all other students doing that same study. It is based on your results in school assessments and examinations.

**(VCE) VET studies**
VET programs with Unit 3 and 4 sequences can contribute to the ATAR in two ways. VET sequences with scored assessment are counted the same as any VCE study (in the primary four or as an increment). VET studies with no scored assessment recognised by the VCAA may be counted as fifth and/or sixth studies. The increment will be 10% of the average of the primary four VTAC scaled study scores.

**VFE (VET and Further Education) studies**
Unscored VET programs recognised but not approved by the VCAA as VCE VET. VFE calculations are subject to the restrictions outlined in **VICTER 2018**.

**Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)**
Like the VCE, the VCAL is a recognised senior secondary qualification. The VCAL is another pathway to tertiary study. Students who undertake the VCAL are generally focused on training at TAFE, apprenticeships or getting a job after completing Year 12.

**VTAC scaled study score**
A score from 0.00 to 55.00, determined by VTAC, which shows how you performed in a study, relative to all students doing all studies. It is based on the study score, but also uses the performance of the entire study compared to other studies.
VTAC
The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) is the central office that administers the application and offer process for places in tertiary courses at universities, TAFEs and most independent tertiary colleges. VTAC receives and forwards application information and supporting documentation to the course selection authorities at institutions. After selection decisions have been made, VTAC sends offer messages to applicants on the institutions’ behalf.
• VTAC provides a central point of contact for applicants, by ensuring that relevant information is collated into one place and distributed to the institutions.
• VTAC calculates the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank and is responsible for scaling the VCE study scores into VTAC scaled study scores.
• VTAC conducts online and face-to-face information sessions for secondary school students and their parents, careers teachers and adults returning to study.

Contact details:
Telephone: 1300 364 133
Email: http://www.vtac.edu.au/contact-us.html
Web: http://www.vtac.edu.au
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/vtacguide

VCAA
The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) administers the two Victorian senior secondary certificates. The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is awarded for the successful completion of secondary education and provides pathways into tertiary education, training and work. The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a practical work related certificate and provides pathways into training, apprenticeships and work. The VCAA is responsible for all assessment and scoring of VCE and VET studies. Once your VCE and VET results have been issued, your study scores and grades are passed on to VTAC for the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

Contact details:
Telephone: (03) 9032 1700
1800 134 197 (for country callers)
Email: vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au
Web: http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au
Institutions and qualifications

Types of courses
Courses available to current Year 12 students through VTAC include bachelor degrees, associate degrees, advanced diplomas, diplomas and certificate II–IV courses.

A bachelor degree is an award for a three to four year tertiary course and associate degrees require at least two years full-time study.

Diplomas and advanced diplomas generally require at least two years full-time study, although some offer an accelerated one year program.

Diplomas are designed to teach theoretical knowledge and improve technical and creative skills, while certificate IV courses can be (but are not always) the first year qualification of a diploma and are largely focused on preparing students to go straight into the workforce.

Higher education courses
Higher education courses provide professional qualifications with an emphasis on theory and the development of transferable skills. Some courses are vocational, leading to careers in clearly identified areas, while others are ‘generalist’ with no vocational skills component.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) Courses
VET courses provide both professional and para-professional qualifications with an emphasis on practical skills and vocational outcomes that lead into higher level training, higher education or employment. A wide variety of study areas are offered.

Types of institutions
Universities, TAFE providers and independent tertiary colleges all offer courses through VTAC. There are also 20 independent tertiary colleges which administer their own applications and offers but promote their courses through VTAC. These institutions are listed in the VTAC Guide and in VICTER 2018.

Universities
...offer mainly three and four year degree courses, although some offer diplomas, advanced diplomas, double degrees and honours programs of differing lengths. Courses may be offered full-time or part-time. Many university courses have prerequisites.

Prerequisite studies for specific courses are listed in VICTER 2018 and should be read closely when planning your VCE program. Students can use this information in VTAC CourseSearch to plan their VCE program and work towards the course they would like to do.

TAFE providers
...offer certificate I–IV, diploma and advanced diploma courses. Most courses are offered either full-time or part-time. Some TAFE providers also offer Higher Education degree courses.

Many VET courses don’t have prerequisites, so VICTER 2018 provides an overview of the types of courses that can be undertaken at TAFE providers. Generally, TAFE courses offered through VTAC are post-Year 12 and include certificate II–IV, diploma, advanced diploma and degree courses.

Independent Tertiary Colleges (ITCs)
...offer a range of courses including certificate, diploma, advanced diploma and degree courses.
Scaling and the ATAR

Why are studies scaled?

In calculating VCE study scores, the VCAA does not determine any measure of overall performance in the VCE, but rather the performance of each student in each individual study. In order to facilitate selection, institutions require an overall measure of the performance of students undertaking the VCE.

Before the scores of different VCE studies can be added together for the ATAR, they need to be scaled to take into account the different ability levels of the students taking different studies. This ensures that the ATAR provides a fair comparison for all students regardless of the combination of studies they take. This is called the VTAC scaled study score.

Principles of scaling

Scaling is the process which adjusts VCE study scores to ensure that:

- you can take the studies that you enjoy and are good at,
- all studies are treated equally in the ATAR, and
- tertiary institutions can fairly compare students who have taken different combinations of studies.

Scaling adjusts for differences in the ability of students across all of their studies.

This ensures scaled scores are comparable across different studies, i.e. a 25 in one study is equal to a 25 in another.

The strength of competition is measured by how well the students performed in their other studies.

- If competition is high—study scores are scaled up.
- If competition is low—study scores are scaled down.

For example, students who studied Economics in 2014 were of above average strength in their other studies. Therefore the scaling process adjusted the study scores upwards so that the average scaled score for Economics was set at 32.

The 2014 Psychology students averaged around 28 in their other studies, therefore the scaling process adjusted the study scores downwards.

When are study scores scaled?

VCE studies are always scaled in the year in which they were undertaken. This may not necessarily be the year in which you receive your ATAR. If you do a Unit 3 and 4 study in Year 11, the study will be scaled that year.

This scaling process is carried out each year for each VCE study and VCE VET program for which there is a study score. There are no pre-determined outcomes—the adjustments are based on the performance of students each year. Nevertheless, the process is very stable and there is little difference from year to year in terms of the scaled score.

Mathematics

VCE mathematics studies are designed to cater for students of differing abilities and interests. Specialist Mathematics is the most difficult, followed by Mathematical Methods (CAS) and then by Further Mathematics.

To ensure that students undertaking the more difficult mathematics studies are not disadvantaged, all three mathematics studies are scaled against each other as well as being scaled against all other studies. The higher of the two resulting scales is used.

Like all VCE studies, there is no point choosing the more difficult mathematics unless you are capable of performing well.
VCE Languages (previously LOTE)
As a result of government policy to encourage the study of languages, a further adjustment is made during the scaling process. Each VCE Language is adjusted up by adding five to the initial scaled score average. All students of a VCE Language receive an adjustment, but it is not a uniform adjustment.

For scores at or close to 30, the adjustment is 5, but the adjustment decreases as the score moves away from 30. For full details refer to *VICTER 2018*.


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### Choosing subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects I like and am good at</th>
<th>Careers that match my skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Choosing your VCE studies

Selecting your VCE program based on studies that are scaled up will not guarantee you a high ATAR. The ATAR is based on your overall performance in VCE studies, not just one or two studies.

You are better off choosing studies that:

- you enjoy,
- you are good at,
- reflect what you are interested in studying at tertiary level, and
- help provide you with more career options if you are undecided.

Scaling ensures that all studies are treated equally in the ATAR calculation, so that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged by the studies they undertake.

Courses I could study

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Subjects I might need to take

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______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
The following examples are based on real ATARs to provide an overview of how subject choices can affect your ATAR calculation.

**KIM**

Here is an excellent example of a student who knew what she liked, what she was interested in and good at. Kim chose studies based on all of these factors and as a result was in the top 6% of the state even though five of her six studies were scaled down.

Kim completed Dance in Year 10 so her study score was scaled in 2012, and Health and Human Development in Year 11, which was scaled in 2013. Her results for these two subjects were included as increments because they were her lowest two scaled scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Unit 3/4 Results</th>
<th>GA 1</th>
<th>GA 2</th>
<th>GA 3</th>
<th>Study Score</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
<th>2014 Aggregate Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38.04</td>
<td>38.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Visual Communication Design</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Further Mathematics</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41.57</td>
<td>41.57</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Health and Human Development</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37.20</td>
<td>3.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25.27</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aggregate truncated at 1 decimal place 173.4

2014 ATAR 94.80
JADE

Jade did not choose her subjects based on her interests. She chose two studies that were scaled up, even though she wasn’t very interested in them. Jade did not excel in any of her studies and even though two of her six studies were scaled up including a VCE Language study, the ATAR was still not as high as it might have been if she had chosen studies based on what she was good at, interested in and enjoyed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Unit 3/4 Results</th>
<th>GA 1</th>
<th>GA 2</th>
<th>GA 3</th>
<th>Study Score</th>
<th>Scaled score</th>
<th>2014 Aggregate Contribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>English (EAL)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>E+</td>
<td>E+</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.21</td>
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<td>VCE Languages: Chinese First Language</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>E+</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Mathematical Methods (CAS)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.71</td>
<td>17.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>E+</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.25</td>
<td>1.72</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>E+</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>E+</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.10</td>
<td>1.71</td>
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Aggregate truncated at 1 decimal place 88.5

2014 ATAR 35.70
ALEX

Alex didn't know what he wanted to do when he left school, so he chose a wide range of studies that he was good at. He performed well across all of his studies, met the prerequisites of the course he was interested in and was offered a place. It is also interesting to note that all of Alex’s studies were scaled down but this didn’t prevent him getting the ATAR he was aiming for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Unit 3/4 Results</th>
<th>GA 1</th>
<th>GA 2</th>
<th>GA 3</th>
<th>Study Score</th>
<th>Scaled score</th>
<th>2014 Aggregate Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>Health and Human Development</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>25.59</td>
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</table>

Aggregate truncated at 1 decimal place 135.6

2014 ATAR 75.35
**PETA**

Peta attempted an approved Higher Education study.

Higher Education studies can include first year university studies and advanced standing TAFE courses, recognised by the VCAA and made available to VCE students who are very capable academically and have the endorsement of their school principal. Upon satisfactory completion, such a study may contribute as an increment in the calculation of the ATAR. Peta’s result in the Higher Education study program contributed 5.0 to the aggregate. Results in Higher Education studies can only contribute as an increment, not as part of the primary four, and the increment will be based on the student’s performance in the particular study.

See **VICTER 2018** for more information and calculation details about Higher Education studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Unit 3/4 Results</th>
<th>GA 1</th>
<th>GA 2</th>
<th>GA 3</th>
<th>Study Score</th>
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<th>2014 Aggregate Contribution</th>
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<td>A+</td>
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<td>A+</td>
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**Aggregate truncated at 1 decimal place**

| 196.2 |

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SAM

Sam chose a range of studies including VCE VET Interactive Digital Media. This example shows how scored VET studies can be included as an increment. However, they can also contribute to the primary four.

VET in Schools programs contribute directly to completion of the VCE. VET programs with Unit 3 and 4 scored sequences are calculated for the ATAR in the same way as other VCE studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Unit 3/4 Results</th>
<th>GA 1</th>
<th>GA 2</th>
<th>GA 3</th>
<th>Study Score</th>
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<th>2014 Aggregate Contribution</th>
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Aggregate truncated at 1 decimal place 126.4

2014 ATAR 68.50
TESS

Tess completed a VCE VET Building & Construction Program that does not have a scored component. This means that this study could only contribute to the ATAR as an increment. The increment is calculated as 10% of the average of the primary four studies. In this example it means that the ATAR increment for Building & Construction was 3.28 and was included as the sixth study.

See VICTER 2018 for more information about VET and VFE studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Unit 3/4 Results</th>
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Aggregate truncated at 1 decimal place 138.0

2014 ATAR 77.10
KRIS

Kris was interested in studying in the humanities field, so he chose mostly humanities-based studies to meet the prerequisites for those courses. Kris enjoyed these studies and was good at them so he performed well overall and received a good result. He met the prerequisites for the course he was interested in and was offered a place.

It is important to note that Kris did not undertake any mathematics studies and completed two studies from the English group. The highest English study after scaling is counted first and a maximum of two studies from the English group can be included in the Primary 4. In this example, the second-highest English study is counted as an increment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Unit 3/4 Results</th>
<th>GA 1</th>
<th>GA 2</th>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>History: Revolutions</td>
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MIA

Mia completed a VCE Language in German and the scaling process added 5 points to the mean of the initial German scaled score, giving her a scaled score of 36.84. As a result her VCE Language Scaled Study Score was included in the primary four.

Choosing a language does not guarantee 5 extra ATAR points. The 5 point adjustment is made to the average or mean scaled score, prior to finalising the scaled score for the language. Interestingly, German was one of only two studies which were scaled up and Mia still achieved an ATAR in the top 11% of the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Unit 3/4 Results</th>
<th>GA 1</th>
<th>GA 2</th>
<th>GA 3</th>
<th>Study Score</th>
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Aggregate truncated at 1 decimal place 159.7

2014 ATAR 89.75
Students say
Hannah, 19

CHOOSING YOUR VCE STUDIES

“Do the subjects that you have a passion for and enjoy the most. You will find your results benefit in the end.”

Why did you choose these studies?
These subjects were of most interest to me. I enjoyed learning and getting myself prepared for what could possibly be an area of future career/study.

What resources were the most helpful?
The careers centre—receiving advice to help with decisions about subject selection and further study.
Teachers—having help whenever was needed, either questions via email or one on one discussions about progress.
Practice exams/practice questions for each subject—having an idea about what the exam will be asking you makes it much easier to be prepared and save time when answering exam questions—it also gave me much more confidence.

What do you wish someone had told you before you chose your studies?
Nothing different from what I had previously heard—‘do what you love and enjoy what you learn’.

Do you have any suggestions for others choosing their VCE studies?
Do the subjects that you have a passion for and enjoy the most. Your work will seem much more organised and it will be enjoyable. You will also find your results benefit in the end.

YOUR VCE EXPERIENCE

“The competitive nature between students was difficult at times, but kept everyone striving to do their best.”

Was Year 12 what you expected?
It was better than I expected—a large work load but extremely enjoyable.

What was the most difficult part?
Trying to fit in school work with all extracurricular activities and commitments. Although once I was organised it was easy to not get caught up in wasting time.

VCE Studies
Dance, Theatre Studies, Drama, Psychology, Biology, English, Further Mathematics

Geelong College

Now Studying:
Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)
Deakin University
What do you wish someone had told you before you started Year 12?
It doesn’t have to be as difficult as it seems. If you are organised and use your time wisely, Year 12 will be fun, enjoyable and challenging all at the same time.

If you could do it again would you do anything differently?
No, I don’t think I would. I was very busy in Year 12 with lots of sport and extracurricular commitments, but I organised my time and prepared myself consistently.

Who or what helped you keep going?
My family was a great support, but friends, teachers and my tutor were a major contributor to how I remained focused throughout the year. The competitive nature between students was difficult at times, but kept everyone striving to do their best.

What changes did you make to your life during Year 12?
I made sure I didn’t have too many late nights. I stopped competing in calisthenics as it was another commitment I did not have time to take on. I made sure I ate well and kept hydrated and did all I could to remain fit and healthy with sport and social activities.

What advice can you give to others studying Year 12?
Make sure you plan your timetable for study, sport, activities, social functions and free time before you begin the year. If you have a well-constructed study timetable and know what you are to do each day you will remain focused and up-to-date with your studies. You also won’t feel as guilty when having some down time or socialising with friends.

CHOOSING TERTIARY COURSES
“Don’t rush into a course because you are influenced by parents, teachers or others. Make sure you evaluate your own interests and talents and what you will be interested in studying for a long time.”

Why did you choose your course?
I didn’t have an exact idea of what I wanted to do when I finished Year 12 and so I began with an arts degree in order to explore a range of subjects that were of interest to me. That guided me to what my real passion is today—psychology.

What resources did you find really helpful?
The VTAC Guide—looking up various courses and their subjects on offer. Attending open days and finding out about different institutions and what they offer.

What advice can you give other students choosing courses?
Don’t rush into a course because you are influenced by parents, teachers or others. Make sure you evaluate your own interests and talents and what you will be interested in studying for a long time. Go to as many open days as you can to get a feel of the campus, location, how the course is run and what subjects they offer.

What value did you get out of open days?
I got a feel for different universities, how they run, how classes are scheduled and the location, if and how I would be able to live in the area/on campus etc. It was also great to hear about the experiences of current students and how they enjoy their course.

What would you have done differently in researching your courses?
I would have gone to more open days and have spoken to more people about their experiences.
Students say

Jessie, 19

CHOOSING YOUR VCE STUDIES
“I was aware of the high expectations of each subject.”

Why did you choose these studies?
I chose these studies as they were relevant to my chosen career and I enjoyed the content they covered.

What resources were the most helpful?
The most valuable resources were my teachers who provided me with constant guidance and support.

What do you wish someone had told you before you chose your studies?
Ballarat Clarendon College ensured that I was well-prepared for Year 12. Direction was given in regards to prerequisites for university courses and I was aware of the high expectations of each subject.

Do you have any suggestions for others choosing their VCE studies?
Choose subjects that are relevant to your course and that also interest you. This will make studying easier and you are more likely to do well in those subjects.

YOUR VCE EXPERIENCE
“I focused on fully applying myself during Year 12 so that I could succeed and not look back with any regrets.”

Was Year 12 what you expected?
Year 12 was better than I expected and I had a memorable and rewarding year. I really enjoyed learning in a supportive environment where education was valued. I embraced opportunities to succeed and devoted myself to studying, however, I was also involved in other aspects of school life.

What was the most difficult part?
The most difficult part of Year 12 was maintaining a balance between my homework, exercise and sport, and social life, whilst ensuring I had adequate sleep. Making time for everything was a challenge but it was important for me to prioritise.

What do you wish someone had told you before you started Year 12?
Enjoy every moment of Year 12 and do not take this opportunity for granted.
If you could do it again would you do anything differently?
I would try and eat a more balanced diet as I believe nutrition is significant in contributing to productivity, sleep and mood.

Who or what helped you keep going?
I am a motivated student and I was driven by my determination to achieve the best ATAR I possibly could. I was fortunate that my family and school were able to provide me with invaluable educational opportunities and I wanted to make the most of these. I focused on fully applying myself during Year 12 so that I could succeed and not look back with any regrets.

Mr Shepherd, Ballarat Clarendon College principal, also inspired me through his quotes, particularly “you create your own luck” in which he emphasised the importance of working hard in order to be rewarded with satisfying results.

What changes did you make to your life during Year 12?
During Year 12 I had to make sacrifices to my social life so that I could prioritise my studies. I stayed in the boarding house on weekends to complete my homework, and always allowed time to seek extra help. I also sacrificed sleep, but still ensured that I had enough to be productive during the day.

What advice can you give to others studying Year 12?
Every student has the potential to achieve high academic results, however, this requires commitment and motivation. You only have one chance to complete Year 12 and it really is a short study year. Make sacrifices, and be proactive with studying, as your ATAR can be significant in determining your career path. Approach Year 12 with a positive attitude, and always totally apply yourself, as this gives immense self satisfaction, and does not allow for any regrets. Despite all of the study, try and enjoy your last year of secondary school because I wish I could go back and do it all again!

CHOOSING TERTIARY COURSES
“Open days are an excellent way to gain an insight into university life.”

Why did you choose your course?
Throughout my schooling, I always knew that I wanted to become a paramedic. I was totally focused on doing whatever it took to achieve my goal of pursuing study in a career which I am so passionate about.

What advice can you give other students choosing courses?
Be confident in choosing your course and do not underestimate the workload required at university. You have to be prepared to be dedicated and work hard to achieve high results. Do not just choose your course because it will lead to a job, but instead choose your course because you are genuinely passionate about it becoming your career. If you are doing something that you love... you will never work a day in your life!

What value did you get out of open days?
Open days enabled me to make comparisons between universities and ultimately choose a university that was appropriate for me. Open days are an excellent way to gain an insight into university life and become familiar with course expectations.

What would you have done differently in researching your courses?
I would not have done anything differently in researching courses. Prior to studying at ACU, Mum and I attended open days, made various phone calls and did extensive research to confirm that I wanted to study at ACU. It was also valuable to contact other students who had recently finished my chosen course.

My school also provided guidance through interviews in which a university plan was established.
Students say

Lachlan, 20

CHOOSING YOUR VCE STUDIES
“I wish that I had heard about their personal experiences with each subject. It is difficult to know what to expect.”

Why did you choose these studies?
I found these studies interesting and engaging. These were also the areas that I was strong in.

What resources were the most helpful?
Past exams for each subject.

What do you wish someone had told you before you chose your studies?
I wish that I had heard about their personal experiences with each subject. It is difficult to know what to expect.

Do you have any suggestions for others choosing their VCE studies?
Choose the studies that you think you will find enjoyable.

VCE Studies
English Language, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematical Methods, Further Mathematics, Physical Education

Whitefriars College (Donvale)

Now Studying:
Bachelor of Health Science/
Master of Physiotherapy Practice
La Trobe University
YOUR VCE EXPERIENCE
“Having some downtime every night to exercise, walk the dog or play sport made a huge difference.”

Was Year 12 what you expected? Yes.

What was the most difficult part? The level of stress, in particularly leading up to exams.

What do you wish someone had told you before you started Year 12? I wish that someone had told me more about how to cope with stress and deal with the tension leading up to exams.

If you could do it again would you do anything differently? I would spend more time doing past exams, writing mind maps, etc, rather than hand writing and copying notes.

Who or what helped you keep going? The teachers I had were always great support and offered encouragement.

What changes did you make to your life during Year 12? I reduced the amount of hours I was working at my job. I would sometimes skip training for sport in order to keep on top of the workload.

What advice can you give to others studying Year 12? Ensure you have a balanced life. It’s easy to burn out if you only focus on study. Having some downtime every night to exercise, walk the dog or play sport made a huge difference.

CHOOSING TERTIARY COURSES
“It was great to talk to academics and people who are currently working in the industry.”

Why did you choose your course? It was an area of work that interested me. I wanted to work with people and find the human body interesting.

What resources did you find really helpful? Careers teacher, course guides, friends that were currently studying at university.

What advice can you give other students choosing courses? Investigate thoroughly what the course involves and what are the likely career outcomes.

What value did you get out of open days? It was great to talk to academics and people who are currently working in the industry.

What would you have done differently in researching your courses? Spoken to more people currently working in the industry. Open days are often very busy and you don’t get lots of time to think about questions or have a lengthy discussion with professionals.
Students say

Eileen, 18

CHOOSING YOUR VCE STUDIES
“Look at all options. Even though philosophy wasn’t offered at my school, I could have studied it through distance education.”

Why did you choose these studies?
I chose English Language instead of the usual English because, for me, English Language was so much more exciting. You learn the basics of English such as grammar which is a really important skill anyone will need for their future careers. English Language comes under the field of linguistics which is a social science and I love science. This led me to choose Chemistry, Biology and Psychology (Chemistry more so because it is a prerequisite for many courses) as well as Maths Methods. History: Revolutions was a subject I chose out of sheer interest in certain aspects of world history.

What resources were the most helpful?
Study groups definitely were some of the most influential resources a student can have. Depending on the people you’re with, you can get a lot out of a study group such as different points of views and teaching others, making sure you really know what you have learned. Exams are also extremely helpful, both for revision and learning from mistakes.

What do you wish someone had told you before you chose your studies?
Look at all options. I wanted to study philosophy. Even though it wasn’t offered at my school, I could have studied it through distance education and may have had more motivation than when studying history.

Do you have any suggestions for others choosing their VCE studies?
Pick what you like and pick what you need. You’ll do well in subjects you’re passionate about and make sure to check prerequisites for the courses you’re looking at.

VCE Studies
English Language, Chemistry, Biology, Psychology, Mathematical Methods (CAS), History: Revolutions

Glen Waverley Secondary College

Now Studying:
Bachelor of Science
University of Melbourne
YOUR VCE EXPERIENCE

“When people say cramming is not effective, trust them.”

Was Year 12 what you expected?
Year 12 was more than what I expected. Sure, the stress of SACs and exams built up, but it was also a year of fond memories with friends who stuck by—and camp was awesome.

What was the most difficult part?
The most difficult part was regular revision, because on most days you just can’t be bothered and just want some sleep. Although regular revision does make your life easier when SACs and especially exams come around.

What do you wish someone had told you before you started Year 12?
Listen to what people say. Think and act on it. When people say cramming is not effective, trust them and don’t cram. You just might save your brain from the pain.

If you could do it again would you do anything differently?
Go out with friends more often, not cram, and revise regularly—would have saved me a heap of time come exams.

Who or what helped you keep going?
Knowing my friends were in the same boat, my own career goals and my family kept me going through my Year 12 life. Oh, and chocolate.

What changes did you make to your life during Year 12?
Took up volunteering as an extra-curricular activity and never regretted that decision since. Other than that, not much change at all.

What advice can you give to others studying Year 12?
Try and revise regularly, procrastinate less, and don’t just complete exams but actually look at your mistakes and learn from them. Keep your head down and trudge on through. Sooner rather than later, you’ll be facing the timer at the exam room.

CHOOSING TERTIARY COURSES

“Don’t go to open days just for the free stuff—actually talk to people like staff and students.”

Why did you choose your course?
Science was always my favourite subject at school and Bachelor of Science was the right choice for me. I was thinking of a career in research (life sciences) and science provided more flexibility for subject choice than biomedical science.

What resources did you find really helpful?
The teachers and career advisers I talked to were really influential in not only the choice of the course but also the university. They provided insights into some courses I looked at. Also university students in online forums helped me make my decision on what course to take.

What advice can you give other students choosing courses?
Don’t choose a course because of its prestige or because your parents or others think you should choose it. Choose a course you can see yourself being passionate about and motivated to learn and gain experience in. Think of your career goals and what will get you there and don’t forget there are many options and career paths no matter how long they take to reach your goal.

What value did you get out of open days?
Don’t go to open days just for the free stuff (although those are good too!). Actually talk to people like university staff and students about your options. Ask them about prerequisites, career paths and what studying the course is like for students. Another useful thing I got out of open days was checking out the universities and their atmosphere, seeing which universities caught my eye and provided a good environment and study and fun for students.

What would you have done differently in researching your courses?
Look at the subjects offered beforehand just so I know what I am getting myself into for the next three years of my life. Check out the university handbook and have a look at the majors and subjects offered and the expected time commitment for each.
What next?

**Do**

- think about what interests you have and what you like doing
- check out which VCE studies your school is offering
- talk with your careers teacher or VCE coordinator
- talk to your family, friends and neighbours and ask them about their work
- keep your options open
- explore VTAC CourseSearch to start researching the types of courses you will be eligible to apply for
- attend open days

**Don't**

- panic if you have no idea what studies to take up
- choose studies that you don't like just because you think doing those studies will help you get a 'good' ATAR—your ATAR represents your performance across all of your studies
- choose studies based on their scaling—there is no point selecting a study that you struggle with simply because it is scaled up. Selecting your VCE program based on studies that are scaled up will not guarantee you a high ATAR