



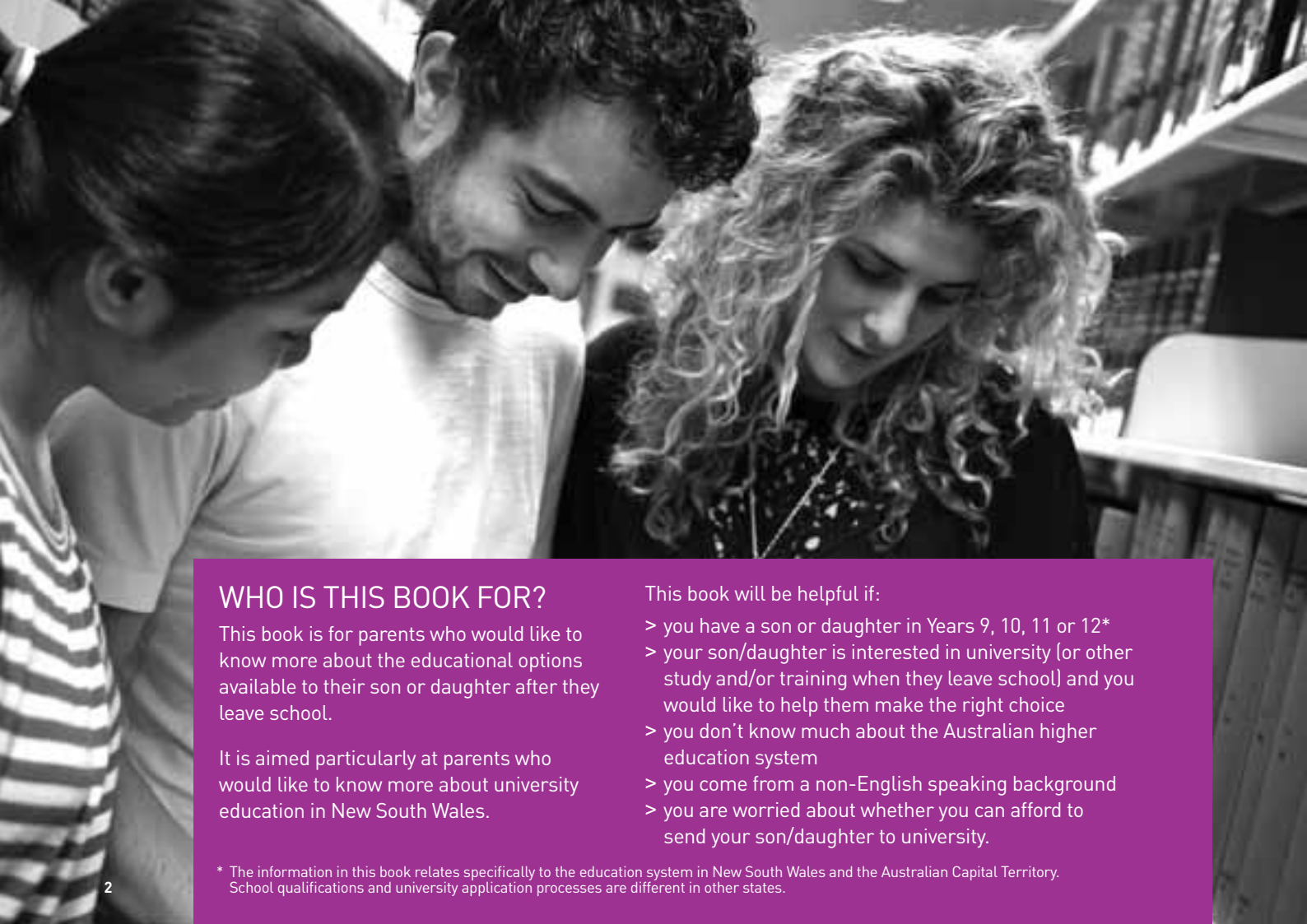
UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

UTS: PARENTS' GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY



equity.uts.edu.au

UTS: WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS TECHNOLOGY



WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

This book is for parents who would like to know more about the educational options available to their son or daughter after they leave school.

It is aimed particularly at parents who would like to know more about university education in New South Wales.

This book will be helpful if:

- > you have a son or daughter in Years 9, 10, 11 or 12*
- > your son/daughter is interested in university (or other study and/or training when they leave school) and you would like to help them make the right choice
- > you don't know much about the Australian higher education system
- > you come from a non-English speaking background
- > you are worried about whether you can afford to send your son/daughter to university.

* The information in this book relates specifically to the education system in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. School qualifications and university application processes are different in other states.

PART 1: SCHOOL STUDY AND POST-SCHOOL OPTIONS	5
Is it important to study beyond Year 10?	6
What options are there after Year 10?	7
What options are there after Year 12?	8
University Study	8
Vocational Education and Training (VET)	9
Apprenticeships and cadetships	9
What do students do when they leave school?	10
How can I help my son/daughter choose the best option?	11
Which HSC subjects should my son/daughter study?	12
Can my son/daughter gain several qualifications?	13
Is it possible to work and study at the same time?	15
Can my son/daughter return to education later?	16
PART 2: THINKING ABOUT UNIVERSITY STUDY	19
My son/daughter wants to go to university. Where do we start?	20
How do we choose the right course?	24
How much does a university course cost?	26
How can we pay tuition fees?	28
HECS-HELP	28
What is a scholarship?	29
PART 3: APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY	33
How should my son/daughter apply to university?	34
Applying through UAC	34
Educational Access Schemes	35
How do UAC preferences work?	36
What happens when the HSC results come out?	37
When are university offers made?	38
What happens next?	39
What if my son/daughter is not offered a place?	40
PART 4: STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY	43
What is university life like?	44
Support for your son/daughter	47
PART 5: WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION	51
Glossary	54



PART 1

**SCHOOL STUDY
AND POST-SCHOOL
OPTIONS**

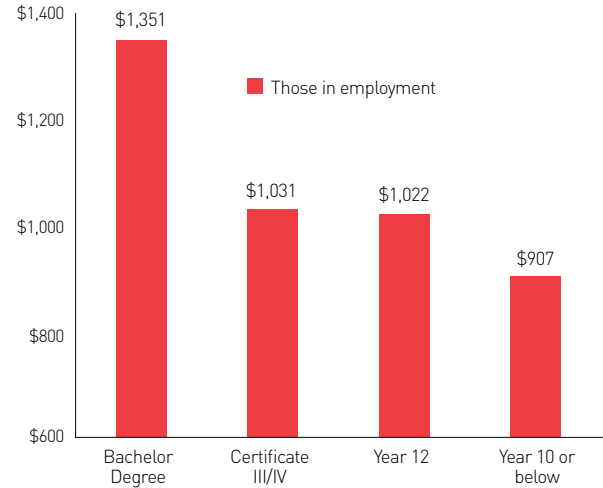
IS IT IMPORTANT TO STUDY BEYOND YEAR 10?

The more education your son or daughter can get, the better their future employment prospects will be.

Whether or not they attend university straight away, research shows that if they study beyond Year 10, young people are more likely to find employment, more likely to earn a higher salary and more likely to achieve promotions and pay rises. In 2009 the employment rate for people with a university degree was 86.1%, compared with only 54.5% for people who left school at Year 10.

If your son/daughter thinks they would like to go to university straight after Year 12, they will need to complete the Higher School Certificate (HSC) to obtain a Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). (See 'What is an ATAR?' page 36.)

MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION



Australian Bureau of Statistics Education and Training Experience, 2009 (6278).
This graph shows weekly earnings depending on the level of qualification attained.

WHAT OPTIONS ARE THERE AFTER YEAR 10?

When your son/daughter reaches 17 years of age, they are legally permitted to leave school.

NSW legislation also requires that a young person completes Year 10. For young people who have completed Year 10 but have not reached 17 years of age there are a number of options. They are required to do one of the following on a full time basis:

- > complete the HSC (Years 11 and 12) at school or at TAFE (See 'Vocational Education and Training (VET)', page 9)
- > take some TAFE subjects as part of the HSC while still enrolled at school
- > leave school to begin vocational education, for example at TAFE or a private college
- > leave school to take a New Apprenticeship or cadetship (see page 9)
- > leave school to begin work
- > undertake a combination of work and further education or training.

Making this decision can be time-consuming. As early as Years 9 and 10, encourage your son/daughter to start thinking about what they will do when they leave school.

Even if your son/daughter is planning to complete Years 11 and 12, exploring their options earlier will help them choose HSC subjects and prepare for leaving school.

WHAT OPTIONS ARE THERE AFTER YEAR 12?

UNIVERSITY STUDY

University degrees are internationally recognised professional qualifications. First-level university degrees are known as 'undergraduate degrees', 'bachelor's degrees', 'degree programs' or simply 'courses'.

Different universities offer different courses, and each university has its own way of teaching and its own specialist areas.

The entry requirements for an undergraduate degree are:

- > completion of Year 12 HSC with an ATAR above a specified level (see 'What is an ATAR?' page 36), or
- > completion of a pre-university pathway course or diploma, for example through TAFE or a private college, or
- > several years of relevant work experience.

If you would like to see what courses are available, your local library and your son/daughter's school will have copies of university guides and prospectuses.

The benefits of a degree include:

- > access to professions which require a degree, for example teaching, science, architecture, medicine, law or some branches of engineering
- > the opportunity to work overseas, because university degrees are internationally recognised
- > better opportunities and pay in professions where a degree is an advantage, for example journalism, IT, nursing, creative arts, business, accounting
- > better employment prospects from developing skills such as leadership, teamwork, research and communication which are very attractive to employers
- > the opportunity to pursue a career as a researcher or university academic
- > the opportunity to study overseas; most universities offer exchange schemes or international programs, such as International Studies at UTS which involves overseas study in another language.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses are offered by TAFE and some private colleges. These courses lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

The entry requirement for TAFE Certificate and Diploma courses is:

- > completion of the School Certificate (Year 10), or
- > completion of the HSC (Year 12), or
- > relevant work experience.

If you would like to see what qualifications TAFE offers, pick up a TAFE prospectus from your local library, from your son/daughter's school or from any TAFE college.

You can also view courses and other useful information online at www.tafensw.edu.au

The benefits of vocational qualifications are:

- > improved employment opportunities and pay in any career path
- > practical, hands-on skills and knowledge

- > national certification in a wide range of areas, such as workplace training and assessment, hairdressing, nursing, building trades, agriculture, accountancy
- > flexibility and affordability – courses can be shorter and less expensive than university degrees.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND CADETSHIPS

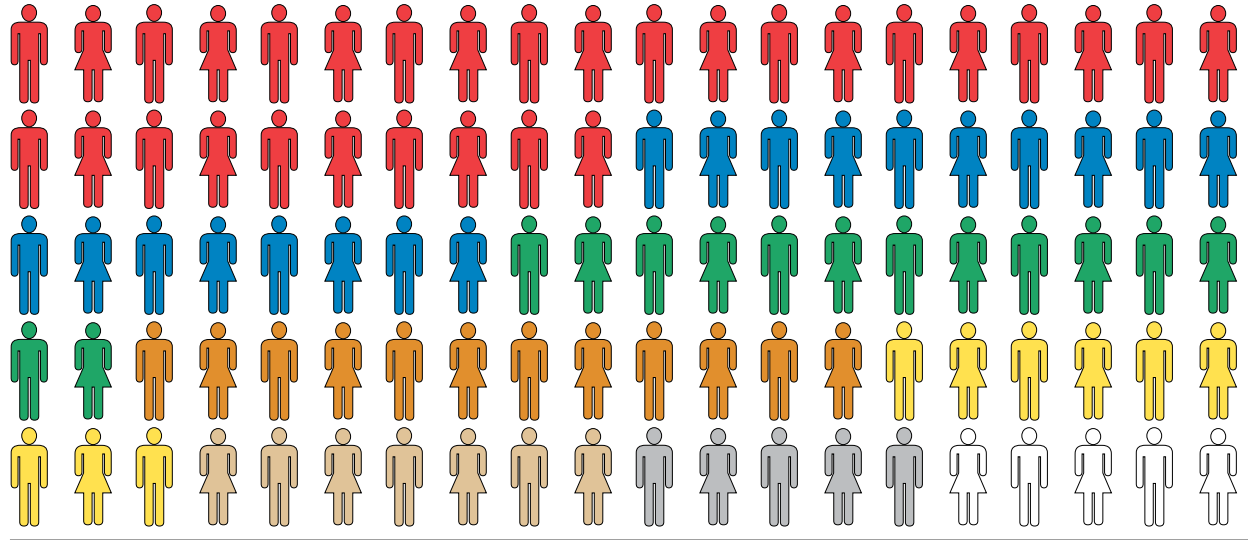
Your son/daughter might also consider an apprenticeship, which combines practical work experience with a nationally recognised qualification (often through TAFE). Apprenticeships are advertised in newspaper and online job listings and through Centrelink offices.


Many national organisations and large companies offer cadetships (combined employment and training programs) to school leavers, for example:

- > the defence forces
- > police and emergency services
- > law firms
- > accounting firms
- > airlines.

WHAT DO STUDENTS DO WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL?

Research about school students has shown that straight after finishing the HSC, approximately:





30 out of 100
will go to
university



18 out of
100 will
go to work
part-time or
casually


14 out of 100
will take a VET
Certificate IV
or higher


12 out of 100
will go to
work full time


9 out of 100
will take a VET
Certificate III
or lower


7 out of 100
will become
apprentices


5 out of 100
will become
trainees, and


5 out of 100
will become
unemployed.

Reference: A survey of 6000 New South Wales students conducted by the University of Melbourne Department of Education 2004.

HOW CAN I HELP MY SON/DAUGHTER CHOOSE THE BEST OPTION?

The options your son/daughter will pursue after school are likely to be based on what jobs and careers they are considering, which in turn should be guided by the things they are interested in and good at.

For example, if your son/daughter is interested in chemistry and likes to help people, pharmacy might be a good career option. They may consider doing work experience in the local pharmacy, a TAFE Certificate III in Hospital/Health Services Pharmacy, and/or a degree in Pharmacology or Pharmacy.

Students do not need to have a career in mind when they finish school. Many people switch between different fields of study, different jobs and even a range of careers throughout life.

Here are some ways you can help your son/daughter to choose:

- > Encourage them to keep an open mind – particularly when they are looking at jobs which may once have been considered suitable only for men, or only for women. Today, there are plenty of male nurses, and plenty of female engineers!
- > Encourage them to talk to you and other people about what they might like to do, and support them in the choices they make.
- > Suggest that they make a list of the study areas and activities they are interested in and good at, both at school and outside school.
- > Encourage them to explore what jobs and careers connect with their interests and abilities (see 'Where to find more information' on page 18 for useful guides).
- > Encourage them to seek work experience or undertake volunteer work in areas they are interested in. You can help by contacting friends and family about work experience their employers might offer.
- > Suggest they discuss the jobs and careers they are interested in with the school Careers Adviser and with friends or relatives in those careers or jobs.
- > Suggest they look at the job ads in newspapers to see what qualifications are required for the jobs that they are interested in.
- > Suggest that they look at the courses offered in the study areas they are interested in (the UAC Guide will help with this search, particularly the online database www.uac.edu.au).

WHICH HSC SUBJECTS SHOULD MY SON/DAUGHTER STUDY?

When your son or daughter is choosing HSC subjects it's important that they choose subjects they enjoy and can succeed in. This will help them achieve the highest ATAR they can (see 'What is an ATAR?' page 36).

Some TAFE courses can also be studied as part of the HSC and can count towards your son/daughter's ATAR.

WHICH SUBJECTS WILL PREPARE THEM FOR UNIVERSITY?

Most universities will recommend which HSC subjects your son/daughter should take to help them understand their chosen course better. They may also need to study a specific HSC subject to be considered for a place in some courses. These subjects are called 'pre-requisites' or 'assumed knowledge'.

University handbooks and course guides will list what subjects are recommended for each course.

If your son/daughter attends a school in the NSW Priority Schools program, NSW Country Areas Program, or National Partnerships (low SES communities) program, they will be eligible for ATAR concession points. At UTS students from these schools get a concession of 10 points, which means they will be considered for courses with an ATAR cut-off up to 10 points above their final ATAR.

Your son/daughter may still be able to get into the course without the recommended subjects, but may have to work harder or take additional subjects to catch up.

HELP ON HSC SUBJECTS FOR UNIVERSITY

Read *University Entry Requirements – Year 10 booklet*, published by the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC). This publication is available through your son/daughter's school, direct from UAC or through the UAC website: www.uac.edu.au/schoolink

CAN MY SON/DAUGHTER GAIN SEVERAL QUALIFICATIONS?

Yes. Many people hold more than one qualification from more than one education provider. Some qualifications provide general skills; others are more specialised, practical or advanced.

Having a range of qualifications makes your son/daughter eligible to apply for more jobs. When they enter the workforce, their career and salary prospects will also be improved if they keep their skills up-to-date by taking short courses.

Some TAFE qualifications are also recognised as 'prior learning' by universities. In other words, if your son/daughter completes a TAFE qualification before applying to university, they will not need to study university subjects that are similar to subjects they have already passed at TAFE. This will shorten their degree and reduce the cost of university study.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION: www.year12whatnext.gov.au and publications from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

TAFE: www.tafensw.edu.au or your local TAFE campus

UNIVERSITIES: www.uac.edu.au or the UAC Guide and university prospectuses (from the library or school)

APPRENTICESHIPS: www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au or your local Centrelink office

MEET FRANK

Frank is a UTS student who chose to go to TAFE before university. After successfully completing junior high school, Frank lost motivation in Years 11 and 12 and got bored with studying. He got a lower UAI than he wanted, but he kept his options open by applying directly to TAFE as well as applying for university through UAC. He'd always been interested in computers, so he listed IT courses as his preferences. Frank was accepted into a Certificate II in IT at TAFE. After successfully completing one semester he transferred to a different TAFE closer to the city to complete his Certificate IV. He eventually earned a TAFE Diploma, which granted him entry into the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology at UTS. During his degree he was able to specialise in his areas of interest: computer networking and internetworking. Frank is now working for an international communications and IT company.



IS IT POSSIBLE TO WORK AND STUDY AT THE SAME TIME?

Yes. Students may not need to be in the classroom all day every day, even if they are studying full-time.

Many university and TAFE courses have flexible timetables or are offered as evening classes, so your son/daughter can work while studying.

Working – either as a paid employee or a volunteer

– before or during study will improve your son/daughter's career prospects by:

- > building their confidence
- > helping them develop basic or specialist work skills
- > providing experiences that will help them make career decisions
- > helping them get employer references and work experience to list on their resumé.

Research shows that more than half of all university students work while they study, and more than two-thirds of other students (for example TAFE students) work while they study.

CAN MY SON/DAUGHTER RETURN TO EDUCATION LATER?

Yes. Many students have a break for a year or two after leaving school and then go on to study at university or TAFE (see Vocational Education and Training (VET)', page 9).

Many people continue to work part-time when they return to study. In fact if your son/daughter is unsure about what direction to take after school, joining the workforce for a few years can be a positive step.

Getting a job can benefit your son/daughter by:

- > helping them find out what they want to do and, just as importantly, rule out what they don't want to do
- > helping them to mature and become independent
- > allowing them to save some money to pay for further study.

MEET JO

Jo left school half way through Year 11. She did retail and secretarial work for a few years and then returned to college to study art. She dropped out after one term and went back to work for another year, then went back to college and completed a Diploma in graphic design. Jo decided she'd like to go to university, but without high school qualifications she wasn't eligible. She completed a university pathway course and was accepted into an English literature degree. She graduated with honours and went on to complete a Master's degree. Jo has worked for the last six years as a successful freelance writer and editor and has recently updated her skills with a Certificate in Editing and Publishing at UTS. Jo wrote this book.



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

The following government publications can help you discuss career options with your son/daughter:

- > *Parents talking career choices*
- > *Job guide*
- > *I can do that too!*
- > *School subjects you like and jobs they can lead to*

You can get these publications from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations www.deewr.gov.au, from your son/daughter's school or from your local library.

Some useful websites:

- > www.yourcareerguide.com.au
- > www.myfuture.gov.au
- > www.year12whatnext.gov.au
- > www.tafensw.edu.au
- > www.uac.edu.au



PART 2

**THINKING ABOUT
UNIVERSITY
STUDY**

MY SON/DAUGHTER WANTS TO GO TO UNIVERSITY. WHERE DO WE START?

Choosing the right course and university can seem very daunting at first.

Your son/daughter will find that they can simplify the search by:

- > identifying the universities they would most like to attend
- > identifying a range of courses that meet their interests and career goals.

Your son/daughter might make their decision based solely on which course they want to study, as some courses are only offered by one or two universities. They do not have to decide on one course only – the UAC application has space for up to nine course preferences.

UNIVERSITY GUIDES AND PUBLICATIONS

Find out as much as you can about universities and the courses they offer by looking at:

- > *The Good Universities Guide*. This is the most comprehensive listing of all courses and providers available in Australia (including vocational courses).

It is published every year and is available in libraries, some bookshops, and online at

www.thegoodguides.com.au

- > *The UAC Guide*. This lists all the university courses available in NSW and the ACT with Commonwealth Supported Places. The printed UAC Guide is available from August each year in newsagents. It costs around \$20, and for an additional \$9 UAC will mail you a copy. It is also available free to schools, and online at **www.uac.edu.au**
- > University prospectuses, course guides and websites. These contain detailed information on individual universities, their courses and campuses, and are published free of charge by the universities themselves.

Your local library or the school Careers Adviser will have copies of university prospectuses, the *UAC Guide* and the *Good Universities Guide*.

TIP

Encourage your son/daughter to start researching before Year 12 so they won't need to research universities and tackle the HSC at the same time.



MEET SERGIO

'I partly came to uni because I saw the difference that a degree made to my mum. Mum's now a partner in two law firms. She couldn't've done that without going back to uni, and it's made a big difference financially.'

Sergio wasn't sure he'd ever get to university – he was expelled in Year 12 and, while he was doing his HSC, he didn't do well. His mum had returned to university, and helped find alternative pathways into UTS. Sergio is now studying Civil and Environmental Engineering.



GOING TO OPEN DAYS

All universities run open days, when anyone can visit the university campus and look around. At open days, university lecturers, staff and current students are there to answer your questions, and there are guided tours of the campus and teaching facilities.

Attending open days can help students decide how comfortable they might feel at each university.

You can help your son/daughter by going with them and encouraging them to get the information they need. Before you go, help them write a list of questions they want to ask, the people they want to talk to and the information they need to collect.

You can find out the dates of university open days on the UAC website www.uac.edu.au and in university undergraduate guides.

NARROWING DOWN THE SEARCH

Encourage your son/daughter to keep a notebook to record their research, so that they can compare courses and unis and make a shortlist of which ones they prefer. Here are some things to consider:

- > If your son/daughter plans to continue living at home, they will need to choose a university that they can get to easily.
- > If your son/daughter wants to move out of home, accommodation will be a factor in their choice.
- > They might find it useful to ask for advice from people who have been to particular universities or who are already working in the career area they are interested in.
- > They should consider which university and which course 'feels' right. Instinct can be a very useful guide!

DID YOU KNOW?

Many universities also run 'experience' or 'taster' days where your son/daughter can experience what it's like to spend a day at uni. For example, UTS runs 'U@UTS Day' for students attending Priority Funded Schools, and a 'Women in Engineering Day' for girls who are interested in engineering.

HOW DO WE CHOOSE THE RIGHT COURSE?

Choosing a degree course and university is your son or daughter's decision. They will be much more likely to succeed if they are studying something they find interesting and relevant.

The university or course which most impresses you as a parent might not be the one your son/daughter feels most comfortable with.

If you disagree with their decision, it's important to try to discuss the reasons for your disagreement. You may want to ask your son/daughter for their views on how the course will benefit them.

If you are concerned about job prospects, you can find out where graduates go by visiting the Graduate Careers Australia GradsOnline website **www.gradsonline.com.au** This is a searchable database with information on the career paths of graduates who have completed study in specific areas.

Ultimately, you may have to accept that what you want for them may not be what they want.

If you really feel your son/daughter is rushing into the wrong decision, you may want to remind them that taking a year off after school could help them make sure their decision is the right one. They can do this after they have made their UAC application, without losing their place at uni (see 'Accepting or deferring the offer' page 38).

LIVING AWAY FROM HOME

If your son/daughter wants or needs to move out of home to attend university, the best place to start is with the housing service run by the university. Information will be available in the university prospectus and on the university website (visit **www.housing.uts.edu.au** to find out about accommodation at UTS). The two main options are to rent private accommodation or live in university accommodation. Both can be found close to campus, and if your son/daughter is receiving Youth Allowance, Austudy or ABSTUDY, they might be eligible for rent allowance (check with Centrelink **www.centrelink.gov.au**)

WHAT IF MY SON/DAUGHTER CAN'T DECIDE?

If your son/daughter can't decide between universities or courses, they should make sure their favourite options are listed first in their UAC preferences. The decision might become easier after they find out which course they have been accepted into, so it's important that the courses they really want are listed as their first preferences.

If they still can't decide or they have a long list of courses covering vastly different subject areas, it may be a sign that they are not ready to go to university. They may be better off deferring their entry for a year (see 'Accepting or deferring the offer', page 38).

If your son/daughter wants to start even though they're not sure where or what they want to study, remind them that it is possible to transfer between courses, and even between universities, after completing one year with good grades.

DID YOU KNOW?

If your son/daughter does not have a specific career path in mind, taking a general degree in a field that interests them (for example, science or communications) will give them skills that are valued by employers and will improve their job prospects.

HOW MUCH DOES A UNIVERSITY COURSE COST?

How much university costs will depend on:

- > the course your son or daughter wants to take
- > what Centrelink benefits they are eligible for (see 'Centrelink benefits' page 30)
- > what scholarships they are eligible for (see 'What is a scholarship?' page 29)
- > whether they are considered a local or international student.

Having a degree will increase your son/daughter's future earning potential. In 2009 university graduates had an average starting salary of \$48,000, which is within the top 20% of average earnings in Australia.*

TUITION FEES

All universities charge course fees, known as tuition fees. How much a student will be charged depends on the course they take, the university they attend and their residency status.

Every university lists its current tuition fees on its website, or will send out fee information by post. Most students defer payment using the government loan scheme, HELP (see 'How can we pay tuition fees?' page 28).

Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)

If your son/daughter is a citizen or permanent resident of Australia or a citizen of New Zealand, they can study at undergraduate level in a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) at university.

On a CSP, the federal government pays part of the tuition fees and the student pays the rest. The part paid by the student is known as the 'student contribution.'

*Australian Graduate Survey GradStats 2009. The 2009 average graduate starting salary of \$48,000 was 83% of average male earnings.

UTS has published a booklet called *Money@Uni* to help you work out how much a university education costs, and how you and your son/daughter can manage money while studying.

The amount of the student contribution (fees) will depend on the course your son/daughter takes and the university they go to. At UTS in 2010 the fees for a full-time student in a CSP place range from \$4,249 to \$8,859 per year and most students defer payment using the government loan scheme, HECS-HELP (see 'How can we pay tuition fees?' page 28).

Full Fee Paying Place (DFEE)

The Federal Government phased out DFEE places in universities in 2009. Non-university higher education providers such as private colleges continue to offer them, and at some colleges the government FEE-HELP loan is available to defer the cost.

CHECK YOUR RESIDENCY STATUS!

If your son/daughter is classed as an international student, their tuition fees will be higher and they will not be eligible for many scholarships or the government HELP scheme.

Before your son/daughter applies to university it is important to check their residency status.

If your children were born in Australia they will have taken the residency status you had at the time of their birth. To be classed as a local student, your son/daughter must be:

- > an Australian or New Zealand citizen (including joint citizenship), or
- > an Australian permanent resident.

You can check your son/daughter's residency status through the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship on 131 881 or at www.immi.gov.au

HOW CAN WE PAY TUITION FEES?

Most students defer the cost of tuition with the government's Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP). This loan does not have to be repaid until your son/daughter is earning over \$44,912 per year (2010-11 figure. See www.ato.gov.au for the current earning threshold).

At the start of each semester, students receive an invoice for the subjects they have enrolled in. They will be asked to pay in one of three ways:

- > defer the full amount using the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)
- > pay the full amount (which attracts a 20% discount on the total cost of CSP fees)
- > pay some of the amount now and defer the rest using HELP.

HECS-HELP

If your son/daughter is an Australian citizen or a permanent resident on a humanitarian visa, they can apply to borrow the amount of their student contribution from the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP).

They will not be asked to repay the loan until their salary reaches the threshold for repayment, set by the government each year based on the rate of indexation. (Indexation is a calculation made annually by the government which reflects the cost of living.)

Once your son/daughter earns more than the threshold, they are required to make compulsory repayments to the Australian Taxation Office either directly or through salary deductions through their employer. The repayments will be between 4% and 8% of their taxable income. For example if your son/daughter earns \$45 000 they will only need to pay \$1800 (4%) in that financial year (2010-11 figures).

There are no loan fees, and there is no interest on the loan, however the amount your son/daughter owes will increase each year based on the rate of indexation.

Your son/daughter will need to provide a Tax File Number (TFN) when they apply for HECS-HELP. A TFN application form can be obtained from the Australian Tax Office on 13 28 61 or online at www.ato.gov.au

WHAT IS A SCHOLARSHIP?

A scholarship is a payment made to students which can cover all or part of their tuition fees, and sometimes other expenses such as accommodation. Scholarships are not loans and do not have to be repaid.

The UAC Guide and university prospectuses contain details of scholarships. UTS has a searchable online database of scholarships at www.uts.edu.au/study/scholarships

Scholarships fall into two broad categories: equity scholarships and merit scholarships. Equity scholarships are available to students with a low-income or other disadvantages. Merit scholarships are available to students who show high achievement in academic study or sport.

There are three main types of equity scholarship:

- > Centrelink Start Up/Accommodation Scholarships
- > Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships
- > University-funded Equity Scholarships

Your son/daughter will automatically receive the applicable Centrelink scholarship if they get Centrelink benefits (see page 30).

If your son/daughter is an Indigenous student they can apply for the Commonwealth Scholarships through UAC.

University-funded scholarships are there to help students who can show financial hardship, however other circumstances may also be taken into account, for example if you live in regional or rural Australia, if your son/daughter has a disability/ongoing medical condition or has English language difficulties, or is a sole carer. Applications are made through UAC.

IMPORTANT!

HELP loans are not available to international students, New Zealand citizens, or Australian permanent residents (with the exception of permanent residents on humanitarian visas.) New Zealand citizens or Australian residents must pay the full student contribution up-front, and do not receive a 20% discount on the payment.

CENTRELINK SCHOLARSHIPS

If your son/daughter is studying full-time and receiving ABSTUDY Living Allowance, Austudy or Youth Allowance, then they will receive funding from Centrelink. There are two types of Centrelink scholarship:

- > The **Student Start Up Scholarship** is worth \$1064 every six months (2011 figure)
- > The **Student Relocation Scholarship** is for students who need to move out of home to study, and is worth \$4000 in the first year and \$1000 in subsequent years of study, depending on your circumstances. It is not available to students receiving Austudy.

Your son/daughter does not need to apply for these scholarships. Centrelink will pay them automatically if your son/daughter is eligible.

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS

Commonwealth Scholarships are only available to Indigenous students in a CSP. There are two types: one for general education costs and the other for accommodation costs. Your son/daughter can apply through UAC for both types of scholarship.

- > The Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship is worth \$2254 per year for up to four years (2010 figure).
- > The Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship is for students moving from regional areas and is worth \$4508 per year for up to four years (2010 figure).

Commonwealth Scholarships do not count as personal income, so they do not affect Centrelink payments.

UTS DIVERSITY ACCESS SCHOLARSHIPS

The UTS Diversity Access Scholarships are available to students who can show that they have financial hardship. Priority is given students demonstrating the highest levels of financial need and educational disadvantage.

The scholarship is a one-off payment valued at up to \$2000, and it will not count as personal income.

OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS

Most university faculties also offer their own scholarships and prizes, targeted at students who wish to study particular subjects or who fall into specific categories, or who are academic or sports high-achievers. For what's available at UTS, visit www.uts.edu.au/study/scholarships

CENTRELINK BENEFITS

Encourage your son/daughter to find out what they're entitled to receive from Centrelink by:

- > visiting a Centrelink office
- > calling the toll-free number: for Youth Allowance and Austudy call 13 24 90; and for ABSTUDY call 13 22 17.
- > looking at www.centrelink.gov.au

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR UNIVERSITY

Financial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > www.understandingmoney.gov.au > <i>Money@Uni</i> booklet available from the UTS Equity & Diversity Unit www.equity.uts.edu.au/help_student/study
Centrelink Start Up and Relocation Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > go to www.centrelink.gov.au and type 'Start up scholarship' or 'Relocation scholarship' into the search bar (there are no links to the page within the site)
Information on Fees, HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP, Commonwealth Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > www.goingtouni.gov.au > The UAC Guide and the Equity Scholarships booklet available from UAC www.uac.edu.au
UTS information on general scholarships and Equity scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > www.uts.edu.au/study/scholarships/ > www.uts.edu.au/study/heas.html
UTS Union: information on sports scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > www.utsunion.uts.edu.au

DID YOU KNOW?

Centrelink considers young people to be financially independent if they earn a certain amount or work a certain number of hours over an 18 month or 2 year period. If your son/daughter meets these requirements, their Youth Allowance will not be means-tested against your income.



PART 3

**APPLYING TO
UNIVERSITY**

HOW SHOULD MY SON/DAUGHTER APPLY TO UNIVERSITY?

The Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) administers applications to most universities in NSW and the ACT.*

Your son/daughter can make nine course choices, known as 'preferences', in one UAC application (see 'How do UAC preferences work' page 36).

As well as filling out the UAC application, they may need to go through additional processes to apply for any of the courses they have chosen. For example, they may need to submit a portfolio of artwork, attend an interview or audition, or fill out a university questionnaire. The UAC Guide and university prospectus will contain this information.

* Applications to private higher education providers should be made direct to the institution. These are not listed in the UAC Guide, but can be found in Hobson's Good Universities Guides www.thegoodguides.com.au

APPLYING THROUGH UAC

There are two ways to apply through UAC. There is an application fee of \$25 (2010 figure) for either method.

Online

Applicants can log on to the website and begin their application at any time, save it and return to it later.

The application fee can be paid by credit card, PayPal, BPay or at Australia Post offices.

By phone

Apply-By-Telephone is an interactive system where applicants use the telephone keypad to enter their application information. They should write the information down first on the form in the UAC Guide so that they don't make a mistake.

The application fee will appear on your telephone bill.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your son/daughter can apply to university and TAFE at the same time. This can give them more options if they are concerned that they won't get offered a place at uni.

Being on time

It's important that applications are submitted before the September closing date, as there is an additional fee (up to \$139 in 2010) for late applications.

Even if your son/daughter isn't quite sure of their preferences, they can still make an application – they will have the option of changing their preferences (for no extra fee) after they have applied.

EDUCATIONAL ACCESS SCHEMES

Educational Access Schemes (EAS) help students who may have difficulty getting into university due to financial, physical or other disadvantages.

Your son/daughter should check to see if they are eligible to apply to university through an EAS, especially if their ATAR is likely to be impacted by ill health, disability, financial hardship or other circumstances beyond their control.

EAS application forms are available online or in the UAC publication Educational Access Schemes, which is available from your son/daughter's school. Application forms should be submitted to UAC.

Some universities accept 'alternative entry' applications which your son/daughter can submit directly to the university. For instance at UTS, Indigenous students may apply for admission through the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning www.jumbunna.uts.edu.au

Applicants on permanent resident humanitarian visas can apply through the UTS Special Admission – Refugees Scheme if their previous educational qualifications are not available due to refugee circumstances.

UTS reserves places for EAS applicants in most undergraduate courses. Eligible applicants receive a concession of 10 ATAR points on the normal course cut-off. In addition, students from schools in government-targeted equity programs automatically receive the 10 point ATAR concession on courses selected at UTS.

Students should contact the universities they are interested in attending to find out whether they are eligible for any other access or scholarship schemes.

HOW DO UAC PREFERENCES WORK?

Your son/daughter can list up to nine courses on their UAC form. They can change their preferences anytime until the last 'change of preferences date', which is usually in early January – after they have received their HSC results and ATAR.

Does the order of preferences matter?

Yes. Applicants should enter the courses in order of preference, starting with the course they would most like to do as their first preference. They should not order their preferences based on the ATAR they think they will get.

During the selection process, applicants are considered for each course in turn.

Your son/daughter is likely to be offered a place in the first course for which they meet the ATAR cut-off. For example if they don't have the required ATAR for their first preference but they have the ATAR needed for the second preference, they are likely receive an offer for their second preference.

WHAT IS AN ATAR?

The ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking) is a number between 0.00 and 100.00 that represents the position of your son/daughter's HSC results relative to all students who sat the HSC in the same year.

UAC has a useful PowerPoint presentation called *All about the ATAR*, which can be downloaded from the 'Schoolink' section of their website www.uac.edu.au/schoolink/resources.shtml

Universities use the ATAR to select students for their courses. Most university courses specify the minimum ATAR students need to be considered for a place on the course. This is known as the 'ATAR cut-off'.

The ATAR cut-off is adjusted every year, and the course guides always state the cut-off for the previous year.

DID YOU KNOW?

A high ATAR cut-off does not necessarily mean the course is better. It might mean that the course is more academically demanding, but it might also mean that the course is more popular.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE HSC RESULTS COME OUT?

The HSC results, and your son/daughter's ATAR, are released in mid-December.

Whether your son/daughter gets a higher or a lower UAI than expected, it's important to help them keep the result in perspective – it's not going to ruin their life, nor does it mean that life will now be easier. Leaving school and moving into adult work or study is a challenge, and they'll need your support (even if they won't admit it!)

A higher-than-expected ATAR

If your son/daughter's ATAR is above the ATAR cut-off of their first choice, they are very likely to be offered a place.

Sometimes, students want to take a course with a high ATAR cut-off, but decide not to include that course in their list of preferences because they believe that they won't get in.

If your son/daughter was in this situation, and then got a higher ATAR than expected, they should add the desired course to their list of preferences before early January by lodging a 'change of preference' with UAC.

A lower-than-expected UAI

If your son/daughter gets a lower ATAR than expected and misses out on their first preference, they may still be offered a place in another course on their list of preferences.

If they applied through an Educational Access Scheme they may be offered a place in one of their preferred courses even if their ATAR is lower than the standard ATAR cut-off for that course.

If they don't get offered a place in any of their preferred courses, they can reapply to university in subsequent years – perhaps after gaining some work experience or completing other post-school qualifications.

WHEN ARE THE UNIVERSITY OFFERS MADE?

Most offers are made in the Main Round in mid-January; Late Round offers are made at the beginning of February; and Final Round offers are made a week later.

Your son/daughter will be notified by post if they are successful in receiving an offer of a university place. The offers can also be viewed on the UAC website (www.uac.edu.au) and are published in newspapers.

If your son/daughter does not get a Main Round offer, they will be automatically considered again in the Late and Final Rounds (provided there are still places available in the courses they have listed). They may also be offered a place in a course which is not their first choice.

ACCEPTING OR DEFERRING THE OFFER

When your son/daughter receives an offer letter, there will be instructions in the envelope telling them how to accept the place.

If your son or daughter decides they need more time before starting university, they can ask the university to 'hold' their place for a year. This is called 'deferring'. There will be instructions in the envelope telling them how to defer their place.

If your son/daughter doesn't accept or defer one of the offers by the date stated in the offer letter, they will lose any places offered.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

When your son/daughter has accepted a place, the university will send them a letter confirming their place. The university will also send information to help them prepare for starting university.

The information sent by the university will contain important details such as the date that they should attend university to enrol (usually just before the start of semester) and the date first semester begins (when formal classes start).

UTS sends Enrolment and Orientation Week information to new students. Specific course information is provided at the beginning of the teaching period. Other universities may send different information.

WHAT IF MY SON/DAUGHTER IS NOT OFFERED A PLACE?

MY SON/DAUGHTER DIDN'T GET AN OFFER FOR THEIR FIRST PREFERENCE. SHOULD THEY TAKE ANOTHER OFFER?

Many students fear that they will 'lose momentum' if they don't start uni straight after school. If your son/daughter is keen to start uni straight away, they can take the place they have been offered. They may choose either to continue in that course, or to re-apply for their first choice (through UAC) after completing first year.

MY SON/DAUGHTER DIDN'T GET A PLACE AT UNI AND SEEMS NOT TO KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT. HOW CAN I HELP?

Your support and encouragement will help them get through this disappointment. It could be useful to sit down together and go through all their options. Will they go out to work? Will they try to enrol in TAFE or a different university course? Will they apply for university again next year?

CAN MY SON/DAUGHTER APPLY AGAIN NEXT YEAR?

Yes. They will be classed as a non-school leaver, and their UAC application will take into account any work experience and further study they may have done since leaving school, as well as taking into account their HSC results from the previous year. Universities provide information about what kind of qualifications should be included in the UAC application.

If your son/daughter doesn't work or gain other qualifications before applying to university again, they will still be considered on the basis of their HSC results.

Since the ATAR cut-off for some courses may be lower the following year, your son/daughter might even be offered a place in a course that they didn't get into the first time they applied.

Universities don't have age limits – your son/daughter can apply or re-apply at any age. Years of work experience may increase their chances of being offered a place.





PART 4

**STUDYING AT
UNIVERSITY**

WHAT IS UNIVERSITY LIFE LIKE?

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIVERSITY YEAR?

Teaching usually begins at the end of February or the beginning of March. Two or three weeks before teaching starts, students will be invited to attend Orientation. At Orientation they will:

- > enrol in their course
- > choose their subjects for first year
- > get to know the university campus
- > be encouraged to meet their lecturers and other students
- > have the opportunity to sign up for student societies or sports clubs
- > be invited to attend informative lectures on topics such as managing money and seeking study assistance
- > find out about free and discounted support services available at university and learn how to access the services they need.

HOW IS UNIVERSITY DIFFERENT FROM SCHOOL?

Your son/daughter will find university very different from school. Most universities are much bigger than schools – some campuses are so large they are like small towns!

Your son/daughter may not be in class all day, every day. Most undergraduate timetables have gaps in them, which students use for studying, socialising or working.

University staff will treat your son/daughter as an adult, and will expect them to take responsibility for their own study, their social life and their behaviour. You will notice that this will encourage greater independence.

Your son/daughter will have to manage their own time to attend timetabled classes, study outside of class and produce written assignments or study for exams. The university will not chase them for late assignments or for non-attendance.

It may take a while for your son/daughter to get used to this, but by second year most students become proficient at managing their own time.



MEET CHRIS

Chris's son Michael graduated from a UTS Bachelor of Science.

'Uni's a different environment from school, it's a different social network ... just having the inputs from different cultural groups has expanded his thinking. He's become more independent ... he's still the same Michael, but he's become more his own person. Able to look after himself. I was happy that he made the choice that he wanted to do, I just tried to facilitate the process.'

WHAT HAPPENS IF THEY WANT TO DROP OUT OR CHANGE COURSES?

In the early weeks of university, many students feel overwhelmed. First year is often the hardest, and you should encourage your son/daughter to stick with it. The university counselling service is also available to help students cope with uni.

If your son/daughter is still unhappy, encourage them to find alternatives – such as moving to another university or course (through UAC), enrolling in TAFE, or finding a job – so they won't feel directionless when they leave university.

They may also take 'leave of absence' from their course for up to a year. This allows students some time off to explore other options while their university place is reserved for them. When they return to university the following year, they simply resume their studies.

If your son/daughter chooses not to continue with their uni course, or if they want to drop a subject, it's very important that they withdraw before the semester census date in late March (for Autumn semester) or late August (for Spring semester). If they don't make a formal withdrawal, they will have to pay the fees for all subjects in which they are enrolled, even if they do not complete them.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY SON/DAUGHTER FAILS A SUBJECT?

Students who have failed a subject may be encouraged to repeat the subject in the following year. If they failed because they had difficulty with the subject, they may be able to get tutoring from the university.

Your son/daughter will need to either re-take the same subject (especially if it is a core subject) or another subject of equal value to complete their degree.

Some universities have a network of experienced students who work as 'peer tutors', providing one-to-one tuition to students who need academic support. At UTS this program is called U:PASS, and is run by the Student Services Unit.

Encourage your son/daughter to talk about their options with their tutor or the university counsellor. Nobody likes to fail, but it's not the end of the world!

SUPPORT FOR YOUR SON/DAUGHTER

WHAT SUPPORT IS THERE AT UNIVERSITY?

Universities genuinely want their students to complete their courses and succeed in their studies.

All universities offer services and programs to support their students.

At UTS the services provided for students include:

- > Health (medical doctors)
- > Counselling (psychologists)
- > Special needs assistance for students with disabilities
- > Study skills workshops to help with English language, IT, research and general academic skills
- > Childcare facilities
- > Learning and community support for Indigenous students (www.jumbunna.uts.edu.au)
- > Financial advice
- > Career advice (including job noticeboards)
- > Second hand book stores, newsagents, print and copy services
- > Multi-faith chaplaincy
- > and prayer rooms.

IS UNIVERSITY SAFE?

Universities are as safe as the areas in which they are located. Most have well-lit campuses, and many also have secure parking, CCTV monitoring and patrolling security guards. Campuses are often busy late into the night: libraries are usually open until 9 or 10pm, and evening lectures (usually for postgraduate and mature students) can run as late as 9pm.

City universities can seem daunting, especially for students who come from country areas. However, most students can find accommodation close to campus, and city universities are usually well-served with public transport.

Universities that are some distance from public transport often offer free 'Security Buses' that take students from campus to the closest railway station.

As with any other place, students need to take commonsense safety measures such as not leaving bags unattended, not leaving valuables in sight, avoiding walking alone late at night or in unlit areas, letting friends know where they are, and not putting themselves at risk through alcohol or drugs.

WHAT SUPPORT CAN I OFFER?

University study can be more demanding and time-consuming than the HSC, and will require many hours of study even out of class and semester time.

- > Be prepared to make fewer demands on your son/daughter (e.g. housework, family events etc.) during exam time or when assignments are due.
- > Celebrate your son/daughter's successes. If they're unhappy with something they have done, it's better to remind them of their successes and help them put their disappointment behind them so that they can move on with a positive attitude.
- > If your son/daughter is having problems, encourage them to talk about them with their tutor or the university counsellor – especially if they won't talk to you!

If you think your son/daughter is struggling, talk to them directly before approaching anyone else.

The best way you can help is to:

- > Listen to your son/daughter if and when they need to talk. You don't have to offer solutions, but you can suggest they seek help from university services.
- > Encourage your son/daughter to use university services such as careers advice, counselling, academic support and skills workshops.
- > Take a positive interest in their life – particularly in the progress of their studies and their sporting and social achievements.
- > Try not to interfere or offer unwanted advice – this is a period when they need to manage many situations independently.





THE FUTURE...

University is a life-changing experience for students and their families.

You will see your son/daughter take on more adult responsibilities, begin to take control of their own life and follow their own goals.

There are always ups and downs, however the vast majority of students enjoy and value their time at university.

When the course of study is completed there will be a graduation ceremony at which you, your family and your son/daughter can celebrate the achievement.

We hope to see you at UTS someday!

PART 5

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

The best way to find printed information is through your son/daughter's school, or by visiting your local library, where the librarian will be able to help you find what you need, and where you can use the public computers to browse the web.

The following are some of the most useful publications and websites for you and your son/daughter to read. Good luck!

The HSC

All about your ATAR published by the Universities Admissions Centre.

UAC 'how to' guide for HSC students published by the Universities Admissions Centre.

www.hsc.csu.edu.au – HSC Online has a parent's section in 10 community languages.

www.boredofstudies.org – Bored of Studies is an online community reference for HSC students.

Jobs and Careers

Parents Talking Career Choices published by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and also available online from **www.deewr.gov.au**

Job Guide published by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and also available online from **www.jobguide.deewr.gov.au**

www.myfuture.gov.au – government site for helping young people plan for the future.

www.year12whatnext.gov.au – government site for Year 10–12 students about what options they have after school.

www.gradsonline.com.au – site giving statistics on where university graduates go after graduation from specific courses.

University Study

The best way to find out the facts about university is to ask the universities themselves at open days, or through their information email or telephone contacts.

University Entry Requirements – Year 10 booklet, published by the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC).

The Good Universities Guide, published each year by Hobson's Guides.

Educational Access Schemes, published by the Universities Admissions Centre.

The UAC Undergraduate Guide, published by the Universities Admissions Centre.

www.uac.edu.au – Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) website.

www.thegoodguides.com.au – comprehensive list of all further education courses and providers in Australia.

www.goingtouni.gov.au – government website giving information on universities, HECS-HELP, fees and scholarships.

www.tafensw.edu.au – NSW TAFE website offering career advice and vocational courses.

Financial Advice

Money@uni, published by the Equity and Diversity Unit of the University of Technology, Sydney and available online at **www.equity.uts.edu.au/outreach/index.html**

www.understandingmoney.gov.au – the government's financial advice site.

www.centrelink.gov.au – or visit your local Centrelink office.

GLOSSARY

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY A different way of getting to uni (not straight from school).

ATAR Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank. Your son/daughter's ATAR ranks their HSC results against other students who sat the HSC in NSW that year. Universities set a minimum ATAR for entry into courses. This changes each year.

BACHELOR DEGREE A first-level degree, usually 3 to 5 years. Degree titles are often abbreviated to: BA (Bachelor of Arts); BSc (Bachelor of Science), BEng (Bachelor of Engineering) etc.

COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTED PLACE (CSP) The kind of university place your son/daughter is most likely to study in, during their first undergraduate degree. The government pays part of the course fees, and your son/daughter pays a student contribution, which they can defer using HECS-HELP.

COMBINED DEGREE A degree in two areas. It can take 4-6 years, and graduates earn two degrees. For example, your son/daughter might

combine Sports Science/Business if they'd like to run a gym, Arts/Law if they're interested in being a lawyer in the performing arts, or International Studies/Nursing if they're interested in nursing in a non-English speaking country.

EDUCATIONAL ACCESS SCHEME (EAS) An alternative entry to uni which takes into account disadvantages that might have affected your son/daughter's academic achievements.

FACULTY A university division e.g. Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of IT, Faculty of Business.

GRADUATE A student who has completed a university degree.

HECS-HELP The government loan scheme that allows your son/daughter to defer their student contribution if they study on a Commonwealth Supported Place.

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

GLOSSARY

PATHWAY COURSE A course designed to help your son/daughter get a place in a university degree, particularly if they did not complete the HSC or need to improve their English language skills. See www.insearch.edu.au for more information about the UTS pathway provider, INSEARCH.

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

SPECIAL ENTRY SCHEME See Educational Access Scheme.

SUBJECT Part of a degree. If your son/daughter studies full-time, they will normally do 4 subjects each semester. Each subject is worth a certain number of credit points which count towards their degree.

TERTIARY EDUCATION Any study beyond secondary school.

TVET TAFE courses your son/daughter can take as part of their HSC. Some count towards their UAI.

UAC Universities Admissions Centre. UAC processes all undergraduate admissions for all universities in NSW and the ACT. Website: www.uac.edu.au

UNDERGRADUATE A student studying at university for the first time, or Bachelors' degree level study. Abbreviation: UG, undergrad.

VET Vocational Education and Training. Most VET courses (also known as vocational courses) are offered through TAFE.

