

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### APPLICATION AND SELECTION QUESTIONS:

**Q: How do I apply as a year 12 applicant?**

**A:** Applicants must apply through VTAC – Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre - [www.vtac.edu.au/](http://www.vtac.edu.au/). Closing dates are available on the VTAC website. We do not accept Direct Applications.

**Q: What is the ATAR cut off score?**

**A:** Melbourne Campus: 2011 – 66.90. Note: this was the 2011 lowest score; many students accepted into the course have higher scores, in the 90s and 80s.

**Q: What are the prerequisites for 2012?**

**A:** VCE Units 3 & 4: study score of at least 25 in English (any), or 30 in English (ESL), and 20 in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics (any) or Physical Education.

**Q: How do I apply as a non-year 12 applicant?**

**A:** Unless you are a current student at La Trobe University, you must apply through VTAC – Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre - [www.vtac.edu.au](http://www.vtac.edu.au/). Closing dates are available on the VTAC website. We do not accept Direct Applications from non-La Trobe applicants. Applicants should provide further information by completing the [VTAC Pi form](#) available on the VTAC website, including academic performance, work experience and other relevant information. Past education and/or information provided on the PI form will be considered in selection. Non-year 12 applicants may be required to sit the [STAT test](http://www.acer.edu.au/tests/stat) (<http://www.acer.edu.au/tests/stat>).

**Q: I am a La Trobe University student studying another course. How do I apply?**

Students currently enrolled in another course at La Trobe University do not have to apply through VTAC. They may apply by completing an *Application for Course Transfer* form and *Supplementary Information Course Transfer Form*. These forms are available at the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) Student Services reception, and should be submitted here. The closing date is Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (no late applications accepted). Past education and/or information provided on the PI form will be considered in selection. In order to verify pre-requisites, it is recommended to submit certified copies of VCE (or equivalent) studies and any prior tertiary or TAFE studies at institutions other than La Trobe University. Applicants may detail on the *Supplementary Information Course Transfer Form* a short statement (maximum 300 words) their reasons for applying for the course. [Statements exceeding the word limit will be truncated after 300 words with no consideration given to material beyond this point.] Applicants should ensure that they follow all the instructions on the forms and that all the required documentation is certified and submitted with the forms.

**Q: What academic standard is required to achieve a place as a non-year 12 applicant?**

**A:** Non-Year 12 applicants will be considered on their ATAR or GPA (for any tertiary studies), or a STAT test. NOTE: basic knowledge of secondary mathematics (to Year 11) is assumed.

**Q: What if I don't have the prerequisites but have undertaken equivalent study in a university degree?**

**A:** If you have completed a subject that is equivalent to a Unit 3 & 4 in VCE in any of the prerequisite subjects you may be eligible for an exemption from a prerequisite. If applying through VTAC, it is recommended that you request this exemption on the PI form. If you are a La Trobe University student applying via a Course Transfer form (i) include a written request for an exemption with your application, detailing the studies you have undertaken which you believe are equivalent to the pre-requisite; and (ii) supply a copy of a subject syllabus/handbook entry.

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**Q: What if I don't have all the year 12 prerequisites or any equivalent study in a university degree?**

**A:** If you meet some but not all of the pre-requisites, then in order to be eligible to apply, you will need to undertake studies in the pre-requisite subject(s) at year 12 or tertiary level before applying. Single subject enrolment is available at La Trobe University (subject to full-fee payment) or other institutions The Open University Australia ([www.open.edu.au](http://www.open.edu.au) is a good place to start looking).

Applicants for Mature-Age Special Entry may be eligible for an alternative pathway into the course.

Alternatively, you may wish to apply for another university course for which you are eligible, and then consider applying to the Health Information Management course at the end of first year. If you choose this pathway, it would be important to ensure that your course includes subjects that allow you to meet the equivalent of the pre-requisites for Health Information Management (i.e. Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics [any] or Physical Education at first year tertiary levels). For example, the Bachelor of Biological Sciences at La Trobe University lists Year 12 English as its only mandatory pre-requisite, and completion of the core 1<sup>st</sup> Year subjects would be considered as equivalent to meeting the year 12 pre-requisites for the Health Information Management course.

Contact the Future Students Centre on 1300 135 045 for information on alternative study options and Special Entry to La Trobe.

**Q: Do I need to sit a STAT test? If so, how do I apply to sit the STAT test?**

**A:** Applicants applying through Category 1 of the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) for mature age consideration must sit the STAT Multiple Choice.

Non-year 12 applicants have the *option* of supplementing their academic record by sitting the STAT if they:

- Have an ATAR attained in 2010, or earlier, which is below the 2011 clearly-in ATAR for the course.
- Have TAFE or other qualifications with ungraded assessment (only pass/fail results rather than actual grades).
- Have TAFE or university qualifications, obtained in 2010 or before, not deemed competitive for entry.

Application is via the VTAC website

**Q: If I don't have year 12 or previous tertiary study, how well do I need to perform on the STAT test?**

**A:** A range of factors is taken into account in selection; competition for places varies from year to year.

**Q: If I don't get into Health Information Management this year, how can I improve my chances for next year?**

**A:** You will only be eligible to be considered once you have met the pre-requisites. You may wish to consider continuing in your current course and striving to improve your academic record. Consider looking for work experience in a hospital, eg with a Health Information Manager. This will help you gain a greater understanding of the Health Information Management profession, see if this is the career for you, and strengthen your application.

**Q: I am a current La Trobe University student doing my first year in another course in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Can I apply to transfer to 2<sup>nd</sup> year Health Information Management?**

**A:** Yes students who have completed the seven first year subjects common to Health Sciences courses, plus one elective subject, can apply at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> Year to enter 2<sup>nd</sup> year Health Information Management.

**Q: I am studying another course in the science and/or health field. If I apply to the Health Information Management course, will I get credit for subjects I have already completed?**

**A:** Students enrolling in Health Information Management who have completed any previous tertiary study can apply for Advanced Standing (exemption or credit) for equivalent subjects already completed. Applications for advanced standing are only considered after enrolment. Students in the Health Information Management course with substantial advanced standing may discuss with the Course Co-ordinator options for tailoring their course plan (eg. taking some 2<sup>nd</sup> Year subjects in the same year as their 1<sup>st</sup> Year subjects), subject to meeting pre-requisites, and timetabling. This process applies to students from La Trobe and other universities.

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**Q: If I have a prior degree will I need to do the Bachelor & Master double-degree program?**

**A:** If you have a prior degree you may be eligible to apply for the Graduate-Entry Master degree in Health Information Management, if you meet pre-requisite subject requirements.

**ABOUT THE COURSE:**

**Q: How many places are available each year?**

**A:** Approx. 50-60 students from a combination of Year 12 and non-year 12 (plus eligible International students).

**Q: How many years is the course?**

**A:** The Bachelor of Health Sciences and Master of Health Information Management is a four year full-time course.

**Q: Is the course offered part-time?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: Does the course have Commonwealth Supported Places?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: Can I apply for mid-year entry into the course?**

**A:** No.

**Q: How many contact hours is the course?**

**A:** These are variable across the four years of the course. In the first two years, there are approximately 14-16 contact hours per semester. Classes are spread more across the week in 1<sup>st</sup> Year, but efforts are made to contain the on-campus class timetable to 2-3 days per week in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of the course. The exceptions are when students are required to attend Professional Practice (Clinical) placements 4-5 days per week.

**Q: Does the course cover industry experience?**

**A:** Students undertake Professional Practice (Clinical) placements in a range of areas including hospitals, government health departments, health research and screening centres, and community care/public health environments. You will complete placements in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of the course. Each placement has formal learning outcomes. We provide agency/hospital supervisors with guidelines on activities and experiences for students.

**Q: Are there requirements for going on placements?**

**A:** Police Checks and Working with Children checks are required for the Professional Practice placements in clinical and community settings in this course. All students are required to obtain and pay for a Police Check prior to undertaking their placements. For important information about clinical placements, visit [www.latrobe.edu.au/health/study/placements](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/health/study/placements)

**Q: Are there any additional costs?**

**A:** Each student should allow approximately A\$395 for clinical coding books, purchased every two years, and A\$30-60 for a memory stick (purchased from any supplier). These remain your personal property. Prior to commencing placement, students must obtain a Police Check, at a cost of approximately A\$15.50, and a Working with Children check, at a cost of approximately A\$77. Accommodation costs for clinical placement vary according to the venue. There is a limited number of Scholarships available (from the professional association – the Health Information Management Association of Australia) to support placement accommodation; these are awarded on a competitive application basis.

**Q: What does my first year entail?**

**A:** In 1<sup>st</sup> Year, students undertake seven core subjects with students from other health sciences courses, plus one elective subject. During 1<sup>st</sup> Year students focus on learning basic human biosciences, exploring the factors

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influencing health, and developing an understanding of health professionals' roles in the health and community service sectors. The primary teaching method in the Faculty of Health Sciences is EBL (Enquiry Based Learning).

**Q: Which campuses of La Trobe offer the course?**

**A:** The course is offered at the Melbourne (Bundoora) campus. A couple of senior-level subjects are taught (part-) online. All other subjects have online support for classes, eg student discussion groups, learning resources.

**Q: Can I take intermission during the course?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: Can I Early-Exit' if I do not wish to complete the Master Degree?**

**A:** Students who do not wish to proceed to complete the Master degree may leave with a profession-specific Bachelor of Health Science after successful completion of Years 1, 2 and 3; they are qualified as Clinical Coders and may find work in hospitals, where there is a massive shortage of qualified Clinical Coders, Australia-wide. Note that they do not have a professional qualification in Health Information Management, which requires completion of the final year.

**ACCREDITATION OF THE COURSE****Q: Is the course accredited? Can I Early-Exit' if I do not wish to complete the Master Degree?**

**A:** The course is fully accredited with the peak professional body, the Health Information Management Association of Australia. All of our graduates therefore are eligible for membership of the professional Association.

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES****Q: What Career Opportunities do I have?**

**A: There is a huge shortage of qualified Health Information Managers, throughout Victoria and around Australia.** Health Information Managers are in great demand throughout the healthcare sector. They typically work in a wide range of interesting positions. For example, in hospitals they work: in the management of Health Information Services; general and clinical administration; clinical governance/risk management; as the Hospital Privacy Officer; as clinical database managers; as health data and casemix analysts; and as specialist clinical coders and coding auditors. Health Information Managers also work in: government health departments; health computing/software development firms; health information technology and electronic health record projects; health research centres (eg state Cancer Council); health screening programs (eg BreastScreen); clinical trials; the pharmaceutical industry; and the National Coroners Information System.

**Q: What are the likely opportunities in the future?**

**A:** The Commonwealth Government's policy of Activity-Based Funding in all states means that the current shortage of Health Information Managers will increase further in the foreseeable future. Similarly, the Commonwealth Government's e-Health agenda means that Health Information Managers' skills and knowledge will be in even greater demand. This is reflected in the states (eg Victoria) where the state government's e-Health programs employ many Health Information Managers in hospitals around the state and in the state Department of Health. The pay is good. The demand for Health Information Managers is so great that it will be impossible to fill all the available positions. This presents wonderful opportunities for our graduate Health Information Managers.

**Q: Why should I do Health Information Management?**

**A:** This is an interesting and varied course. It is a relatively small and very supportive profession. There are many, many jobs available for graduates. There are flexible working hours (no shift work). The pay is good. Health Information Managers make a big, big difference working behind-the-scenes. Their work is essential for hospitals to function, for Victoria and Australia to have good quality information about the health status of Australians, for patients' information to be kept private and confidential, and for the future planning of healthcare services for all Australians.