A direct university pathway scheme that will offer consistent entry requirements for military veterans was launched at the ACU Brisbane Campus on Monday 26 August.

In an Australian first, the new pathway scheme will make ACU the first Australian university to offer consistent entry requirements for veterans, regardless of state of residence and study.

The pathway scheme will allow for adjustment factors following two years of military service; veterans are eligible to receive a Selection Rank in Queensland, NSW and ACT; these ranks vary for the same service.

The direct entry university pathway scheme is part of the wider ACU Student Veterans Support Program (SVSP) that aims to provide ongoing support to veterans, from applying and enrolling, to timetabling and orientation, as well as academic, counselling and financial support.
ACU Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Dr Stephen Weller officially launched the program at a ceremony in front of guests that included Director Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority ADC-Weston Creek Captain Patrick O’Brien RAN, Federal member for Blair the Hon Shayne Neumann MP, Member for Buderim the Hon Brent Mickelberg MP, ACU Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Innovation) Professor Zlatko Skrbis, ACU Pro Vice-Chancellor Engagement Professor Sandra Jones, CEO of Australian Student Veterans Association Matthew Wyatt-Smith, Enoggera Barracks representatives, and ACU student veterans.

“University study provides a significant pathway in the transition to civilian life from the military for many veterans,” said Dr Weller.

“Research shows that most student veterans are not identified within higher education institutions. Many veterans feel marginalised and unsupported on campus, with most universities lacking specific support services, programs, and organisations for them.

“In launching the scheme, we aim to promote the academic success, empowerment, and professional development of student veterans through advocacy and supporting resources, to alleviate transitional issues for veterans and help them enjoy success.”

Earlier this year, ACU partnered with the Australian Student Veterans’ Association (ASVA), La Trobe University, Charles Darwin University and Western Sydney University. They successfully applied for a grant to fund a major national project to increase access to and support of younger military student veterans in higher education.

The Department of Veterans Affairs funded the capacity-building project ‘From the Military to the Academy’, which enabled ACU to develop a framework to bring together activities across the University to support current and future student veterans.

Through this framework ACU has appointed its first Student Veteran Administration Officer who has worked with staff across the university to develop a comprehensive program to support student veterans across all ACU campuses, beginning with the establishment of the first ACU Student Veterans Association chapter.

The SVSP has already made considerable progress in exceeding the goals of the funded project and has laid the groundwork for a smooth transition for military veterans enrolling in the direct university pathway scheme for 2020.

With thanks to ACU.