



WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



March 2017

Higher education guidelines for students who spent time in out-of- home care

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These guidelines have been taken from the following report: Harvey, A., Campbell, P., Andrewartha, L., Wilson, J., Goodwin-Burns, P. (2017). *Recruiting and supporting care leavers in Australian higher education*. Report for the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. Melbourne: Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research, La Trobe University.

Higher education guidelines for students who spent time in out-of-home care is published by the Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research, La Trobe University

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March 2017

ISBN: 978-0-9946100-4-1

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The authors acknowledge the funding of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) - National Priorities Pool 2015.

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We are grateful for the additional advice and assistance provided by: Frank Golding, (Care Leavers Australasia Network), Richard Pourau (Western Sydney University), Shioban Downing (La Trobe University).

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Higher education guidelines for students who spent time in out-of-home care

Thinking about uni?

If you're thinking about going to university in Australia then these guidelines are for you!

These guidelines are designed to show you *where* and *how* to start the application and enrolment process. We have focussed on services that people who have experienced out-of-home care are entitled to use to support their transition into higher education.

You might find these guidelines useful if you have ever been in foster care, kinship care, residential care, family group homes, home-based care, independent living, recently left care, transitioned to independence, or are a mature age student from a care background. Collectively, people from these groups are known as 'care leavers' within Australian higher education.

In this guide ...

In this guide you will find **short stories and quotes** from university students who are care leavers and **general information** (with links to webpages) about:

- What do I need to do first? The application and enrolment process
- Where will I stay? Year round accommodation
- How do people pay for uni? Financing your degree
- How will I pay my bills?
- What support does the student union offer?
- Shaping your future one step at a time
- What happens after my degree?
- University jargon
- Seven reasons to consider higher education.

We have provided links to the resources offered by different universities to show examples of the kinds of support available and where you can find these online. Along the way we have included **peer advice** from care experienced students who may have been through a similar situation to you!

STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY

'Where you have been does not define who you are, there is no you, you are who you are in the moment and you can choose who you are in the moment. Yeah you might be a bit behind from other families, but everybody's got their struggles and you are no less important and worthwhile than any other person, and if you want to do something just do it' ('Casey', aged 27).

There is also a brief **glossary** at the end of these guidelines which explains common higher education terms and jargon.

IS UNIVERSITY FOR ME?

University is a place to make new friends, develop skills and knowledge, plan for your future, and enhance your career opportunities upon graduation. The physical location of your university (buildings, lecturers and tutors) is referred to as the university **campus**. This is where you will attend class if you are an on-campus (face-to-face) student.

University is different from school in terms of study and assessment, hours you spend on campus (at the university), time spent in class, and relationships with teachers (or lecturers and tutors). For instance, you can choose which classes you attend to suit your own schedule. Universities encourage independent study, group study and peer learning and provide a number of support services to suit different needs.

There are many different pathways into university and different ways to apply depending on your stage in life. Some people complete bridging programs which enable them to apply for the course they are interested in, while some people apply to university after finishing high school.

A diverse range of courses are offered by Australian universities, including Law, Nursing, Education, Commerce, Science, Health Sciences, Engineering, Psychology, Sociology, Gender Studies, Medicine, Creative Arts, Architecture, Urban Planning, Accounting and Social Work. Undergraduate courses may take between 3 and 4 years to complete, during which time students may choose to work casually or part-time, seek government assistance and other forms of financial assistance.

What do I need to do first? The application and enrolment process

Finding the right pathway into university for you

Applying for university can be tricky. As a first step many universities offer pre-application help and advice to future or prospective students through careers and employment contacts listed online. For instance, [Federation University of Australia](#) has a contact number for people thinking of applying. The Queensland University of Technology has an [introductory page](#) for people considering study, as does [Western Sydney University](#). La Trobe University provides prospective or '[Future Students](#)', including [Indigenous Students](#), with contact names and a phone number for specific questions.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) / Overall Position

The ATAR, or, in Queensland, the 'Overall Position', is the primary criterion for entry into most undergraduate university degrees in Australia. The ATAR and Overall Position are measures of secondary school academic achievement that help institutions to rank applicants for selection to tertiary education courses.

'Alternative pathways'

There are many different or 'alternative' pathways into higher education, which include: bridging and enabling programs, vocational education and training studies, school/principal recommendation schemes, and early starter programs.

Bridging Programs provide one pathway to university

'I lived in a number of different foster homes. I did really, really well at school but ... I didn't finish my VCE. I worked for a number of years, then got the urge to go to university. A friend told me about a Bridging Program and said it would be good to give it a go to test myself out. I enrolled, and found it straightforward and easy to get through.

I guess having had my last experience of education so long ago and I was so disengaged from my education when I was there it was a little bit nerve wracking but there weren't any barriers or difficulties.

There was no automatic guarantee in to uni but fortunately I was offered a place ... so that was my pathway into uni, it was the Bridging Program. I'd recommend a Bridging Program to other care leavers who have been out of school for a while' ('Samantha').

'Kurt' explains that as a mature age student he applied to university through an 'alternative' entry scheme:

Alternative entry into university

'I essentially enrolled in night school to try and improve my grades ... during that time I heard about industrial design, and I thought yeah that's the ticket for me. So I did chemistry and English, I was about to do Physics, but I heard that it wasn't necessary to do industrial design. Then I applied to do industrial design, my grades weren't terribly good, but because I was older than 25 I could get in through alternate entry, and I did. I drew up a big portfolio of ideas and I got in through that. I did the undergrad, thought yeah this is awesome I'm going to do the grad dip' ('Kurt', aged 49).

Here is some more information about alternative pathways into university:

- **School/principal recommendation schemes** provide students in school with early offers to attend university. Offers are made to students before final exam results. These schemes are available to students from selected partner schools.
- **Special entry and educational access schemes** help universities to take personal circumstances into consideration when considering university applications. If your education was affected as a result of disadvantage you may be eligible to apply. These schemes have different names in different states. For instance, in Victoria it is called the [Special Entry Access Scheme](#) (SEAS), and in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory it is called the [Educational Access Scheme](#) (EAS). You will also need to apply for your preferred university course. These application processes can be found online through the Universities Admissions Centre which can be accessed online at: www.uac.edu.au

Special entry and educational access scheme applicants can take the [Special Tertiary Admissions Test](#) (STAT). It is a single application that is sent to all the courses you've applied to. You can choose a category through which to apply. They provide four categories, including Difficult Circumstances, and Disability or Medical Condition. For example, Category 1: [Personal Information and Location](#), includes 'Recognition as an Indigenous Australian', which applies to applicants of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent OR identify as a person of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

- **Enabling programs** are pre-bachelor degrees which prepare you for a university course. Enabling programs are also referred to as [Bridging Courses](#) and [Tertiary Enabling programs](#) depending on the education provider. Preparation or bridging programs give you a taste of university and prepare you with the skills necessary to do well in your university degree. Many programs are provided at no cost and vary in duration, from several weeks to a year or more. **Bachelor degrees** are undergraduate university courses, for example, a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) or Bachelor of Arts (B.A.).
- You can also apply to university on the basis of partial or completed [Vocational Education and Training \(VET\)](#) studies. **VET** studies are skills-based and can often be used as a stepping stone to higher education. VET courses are offered through Registered Training Organisations (e.g. TAFE institutes and private providers). They are also offered through some secondary schools, industry bodies and adult and community education centres.

Look out for:

- Many universities have **university handbooks** with essential information about courses on offer.
- Student webpages and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) webpages may have helpful hints.
- Some universities offer different options for entry without an ATAR. For instance, Federation College's ASPIRE pathway program integrates [Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning \(VCAL\)](#), [Foundation Access Studies \(FAST\)](#) and [Embedded Academic Transition \(EAT\)](#) units.

Getting from high school to university

Support from school careers advisors

'I always wanted to go to university. School gave me lots of encouragement especially the careers advisor. She showed me the different options for applying to university. Saved me a lot of time and effort. A lot of it I did do on my own, but the careers advisor let me know you can apply for this bonus point scheme, for scholarships and all that kind of stuff ... Out of school there was a lot going on as well, so I did see her once a week or once a fortnight ... she helped me a lot' ('Brooke').

Leaving care and going to university

'I applied to go straight into university after high school. There's so much that you're thinking about, well that I was thinking about when I was leaving care you know because my birthday's in the middle of the year as well and DHS were like your payment gets cut off in May and you've still got the rest of the year to go. So I wasn't thinking "yay I'm going to go to university next year that's going to be great fun", you know it was kind of like it was one of the last things that I was thinking about, and I was only thinking about it because I had the foster parents who were encouraging that' ('Kelly').

Application processes for higher education enrolment with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) vary depending upon what state you live in and what higher education institution you are aiming for. For instance, if you are in NSW or the ACT you can apply through the [Universities Admissions Centre \(UAC\)](#). The application process online will walk you through each of the required steps. Ways of applying in different states are as follows:

- **New South Wales and ACT** (University Admissions Centre (UAC))

- **Northern Territory and South Australia:** South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC) (www.satac.edu.au)
- **Queensland:** Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) (www.qtac.edu.au)
- **Tasmania:** University of Tasmania (www.utas.edu.au)
- **Victoria:** Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) (www.vtac.edu.au)
- **Western Australia:** Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) (www.tisc.edu.au)

Prerequisites for higher education vary depending on the course and university you choose, and previous studies will be taken into consideration. Some courses will allow you to submit an application **directly** (through 'direct admission') to the higher education provider, while others require applications through your relevant **Tertiary Admissions Centre** (as listed above). To find options for undergraduate domestic students and international students visit your *university admissions webpage*.

If you did receive an ATAR score but are worried it will not be high enough to get you into your preferred course at university, you may wish to apply for an educational access scheme, or sit the [uniTEST](#). Be sure to check that the university you wish to apply to will accept uniTEST scores. For instance, Flinders University and the University of Canberra will consider uniTEST scores.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Students

Support from Indigenous centres

'I am 18 years old and in my first year at university studying a Bachelor of Exercise Science and Behavioural Science. I get a lot of support from the Indigenous unit on campus. As an Aboriginal student I can access free tutors, organise keystones to success and if I want to go in and I don't understand something I can have someone to talk to and we sit there for an hour and work that out. I'm working towards becoming a sport psychologist or exercise scientist, because I'd like to help people improve their skills in the sporting world' ('Dale').

In addition to the pathways we have described in the sections above, many universities have Indigenous student support units and programs which provide culturally sensitive information and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people thinking of applying to university. For example:

- The **Oodgeroo Unit** at Queensland University of Technology provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with academic, personal and cultural support, and is also a research unit. The [Oodgeroo webpage](#) contains information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people considering higher education, including through the [Centralised Assessment Selection Program](#) (CASP). CASP is an alternate entry pathway to university study which considers prior learning and other personal achievements, and may provide students with a bursary for study or living costs. CASP also offers units of study in: Indigenous history, culture and current issues.
- Through their **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)** webpage, Western Sydney University offers the [School of Medicine Indigenous Program](#). They also offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students the option of applying through their Alternative Entry program. The application process involves submitting your application online and then participating in a two day program.
- Deakin University's **Institute of Koorie Education (IKE)** offers Community-Based Education programs to all Indigenous Australians across the nation. Courses are available in faculty undergraduate and postgraduate studies across the arts, education, health, business and law.

Indigenous units may also offer cultural programs and events. For instance, Indigenous student service units at La Trobe University offer the [Sport Occupations and Aspiration Raising](#) camp

(SOAR), which is a free four-day camp that introduces Year 9 and 10 Indigenous students to university and sports occupations. [Information evenings](#) for prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students are a good way to find out more about university, how to apply and what course you are interested in. Support is also offered to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students at most universities. [CALD](#) support workers can assist with information about courses and pathways into employment.

Where will I stay? Year round accommodation

Some universities offer residential ('rez') services to their students which includes on-campus accommodation. Many universities have an accommodation website containing information about how many days per year accommodation is available (e.g. 365 days per year) and how you can apply. Applications received before a certain date may be given special consideration and many universities **recommend applying early** to secure a place. In Victoria, VTAC provides a [list of universities](#) offering accommodation.

The University of Newcastle, for example, has a subsidised accommodation program designed for care leavers called [Live, Learn, Grow](#).

Accommodation may be subsidised, or [Accommodation Services Access Scholarships](#) may be available.

LEARNING LIFE SKILLS

'Start look at getting skills in all factors of life, so if you are living out of home in accommodation share housing or in a place by yourself, try cooking classes. You have to learn how to cook, I didn't know how to cook! Also, I feel exercise and organisational skills are quite an important thing' ('Chris', age 23).

How do people pay for uni? Financing your degree

HECS-HELP (previously known as HECS)

After you have applied for your course you can organise finance for your degree. The costs of higher education are substantial. However, it is important to remember that *no* tuition money is required up front.

- If you are an Australian citizen the **Commonwealth Government** pays for part of your course (through what is called a 'Commonwealth Supported Place', CSP), with your tuition fees being initially covered by an income-contingent loans scheme, called **HECS-HELP** (Higher Education Contribution Scheme-Higher Education Loan Programme) . You can get a HECS-HELP application form from your university. You only have to pay the HECS-HELP loan back once you start earning a certain income, and the debt is drawn from your salary when you begin work and earn over a certain amount. More information about applying for HECS-HELP is available from the Australian Government [Study Assist website](#).
- **Before gaining Commonwealth assistance you must be enrolled with an [eligible Australian education provider](#).**

Scholarships

Applying for scholarships

Towards the end of year 12 'Olivia' (age 21) applied for university using the Victorian Special Entry Access Scheme and was accepted into a Bachelor of Sport Science. She also applied for an equity scholarship available through the university. She says:

'I enquired on their page, I just said "Hey what scholarships do you offer?" and they sent me an email saying that I could be eligible.'

There are different types of funding to support higher education participation. As you scroll through the online Tertiary Admissions Centre relevant to your location you can find different scholarship and bursary opportunities. Scholarships provide financial support to students while they are studying. There are many different types of scholarships, which can be based upon work experience, academic achievement, or life experience. These may include: [Institutional Access and Equity Scholarships](#) and [Commonwealth Scholarships](#).

Some universities offer more than *80 different kinds* of scholarships, including: [work scholarships](#), [accommodation scholarships](#), [equity scholarships](#) and scholarships for [Indigenous Australians](#). Indigenous Australian are also offered supported through the [Aspiration Initiative](#) which offers scholarships for undergraduate study at Australian universities as well as postgraduate scholarships for study in Australia and overseas. Many universities offer their own scholarships for Indigenous Australian. For instance, Western Sydney University offers the [Pathways To Dreaming Indigenous Achievement Scholarship](#).

- Some scholarships are one-off payments but others can be for the duration of the degree.
- Particular paperwork may be required during the application process, but if you do not have the paperwork you may not be excluded. Make sure you get in contact with someone at the university to see what options they can provide for you.
- Many of these scholarships prioritise students most in need (i.e. ranked criteria is based on financial disadvantage criteria), which means that they are designed for students who have faced hardships or will need financial support.

Scholarship funds do not have to be repaid.

Targeted funding for care leavers

Applying for targeted funding (funding *only* available to care leavers) is a great way to ensure you are receiving all the support to which you are entitled. There are some [bursaries](#) and [scholarships](#) specifically for people who have been in out-of-home care and these are often listed under the 'scholarships' page on your higher education provider webpage. For instance, Western Sydney University offers the NSW Department of Family and Community Services Out-of-Home Care Pathways [Scholarship](#).

Does the higher education institution you are considering have a website specifically for people who have experienced out-of-home care? [Swinburne University](#), [Federation University](#), and [La Trobe University](#) all offer access scholarships for care leavers. Some universities have gathered together information online regarding the resources available to assist [care leavers](#). A search of the term 'care leaver' or 'out-of-home care' on your university webpage should direct you to the relevant page.

How will I pay my bills?

ORGANISING FINANCES

'Apply for all financial aid that you can including Centrelink, equity scholarships, also try and get a job. Apply for as many jobs as you can so you get a part time job, and then yeah kind of get money, because that's the one thing that's really going to mess you up if you don't have it, especially the stress of bills and accommodation etc' ('Chris', age 23).

Government Assistance: Youth Allowance and Student Start-up Funding

Many students qualify for the Youth Allowance which is a means-tested payment for full-time students and Australian Apprentices generally aged 16 to 24 years old. Youth Allowance may be paid for the duration of your degree on a fortnightly basis. You can apply by going to this webpage:

<http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/studentincomesupport>

If you are eligible to receive student payments you may also be eligible to receive the **Student Start-up Scholarship** or **Student Start-up Loan** and the **Relocation Scholarship**.

Youth Allowance and Start-up Scholarships do not have to be repaid.

Loans

Interest free **student loans** often ranging between \$2,000 and \$5,000 may be available through the university or student union to support essential living expenses like the cost of computers, textbooks, practicum costs, rent or bond, utilities, and food. Student Loans may also be referred to as 'Financial Schemes', 'Financial Assistance', 'Bursaries', or 'Student Grants'.

Pathway Plan

A **pathway plan** or **leaving care plan** sets out your aims and goals for the next phase of your life after you turn 18. The plan might be written with a case worker or other members of your support network and may contain important information regarding living arrangements, employment and income, further education and, if relevant, cultural support. Plans may include financial support up to the age of 21 in Victoria, and 25 in other states, with current variations in Queensland and the ACT. This plan may include the [Transition to Independent Living Allowance](#) (TILA) which is a one-off payment of up to \$1,500 for young people aged 15–25 who are moving from care and who qualify for independent status under Centrelink guidelines.

A solid leaving care plan can help facilitate your educational goals. If you do not yet have a plan, why not reach out to your support network and start creating one?

To find out more about the funding that is available to you, contact your preferred higher education institution.

Students can also contact [Equity and Diversity](#), and Widening Participation offices to see if out-of-home care projects/supports specific to students from out-of-home-care are available.

What support does the student union offer?

Many universities have a student union which offers a range of services that students are entitled to use, including [text book vouchers](#), [peer support and study skills programs](#), free [legal support](#), [Clubs and Societies](#) and bookstores. **Unions usually operate independently of the University to privately and confidentially support your needs.** Their services may include the following:

Financial Planning and Aid - This service may also be called 'Financial Counselling' and can help you with budgeting, managing different sources of income, and accessing funding you are entitled to. Good financial planning is important!

Student groups and societies - Making connections and building networks is streamlined by the student groups and societies on campus. Simply sign up to the group that you are interested in. This can be a great way to make lasting friendships.

Advocacy - This is the process through which students are supported by staff working with the student union to address an academic, administrative or welfare related issues (e.g. special consideration, assessment issues).

There are also groups outside the university sector that could provide support or advocacy e.g. CREATE for under 25s and CLAN for older Care Leavers.

Emergency accommodation - This service is designed for emergencies like not having a place to stay. Clothing and food may also be provided.

Travel and Cost of Living support - Including subsidies for travel to and from university.

Shaping your future one step at a time

Deferring and changing courses

'I applied to go straight into university after high school. I got into university to do a Bachelor of Nursing and I relocated there for a month. I wasn't really coping that well with it so I deferred and worked for 2 years and then tried a diploma of nursing and figured it wasn't for me'.

Kelly decided to do a different degree to the one she was enrolled in, which was a tough decision to make. However, she is now happily enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts and receives a lot of support from her housemates ('Kelly').

Studying can sometimes be stressful and sometimes you just need to talk to someone, find out what your options are, or be pointed in the right direction! Most university support services or welfare services are free and intended for you to use if and when you need them. Support services include mentoring and counselling.

Mentoring programs are offered by many universities and are a great way to settle into university life. Western Sydney University offers a [MATES](#) program for new students. MATES stands for Mentoring and Transition Equals Success. La Trobe University offers a [Connect Mentor Program](#).

Counselling is a confidential and private service for all students and focuses on social and emotional wellbeing. Individual counselling may be offered in person, [online](#), and via telephone. Self-help resources are also available for dealing with stress and anxiety, relationship concerns and study habits.

Finding a counselling service

'If I had to pick one thing that I would say to a student who was say 23 and had lived in care and was now going to go to uni, I'd say find a counselling service and be prepared that the emotions related to that experience which may not be apparent in the everyday here and now might come up, and you will then have help dealing with them' ('Lauren', age 44).

Culturally sensitive support services are offered by most universities in Australia. Services range from counselling to academic support. Some universities have an Indigenous counsellor for students to access, while other universities offer support through specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools, [units](#) and [centres](#).

Most universities offer careers service and support. For example Federation University offer [Student Careers and Employment Services](#), while the University of New South Wales have a [Careers and Employment](#) webpage which provides information about career planning and professional development advice. Careers advice and course advice is offered to all students to help you find the right course for you.

Mature Age students (over 21 years of age) are entitled to access university support services, and are also supported by the university through special entry access schemes and bridging programs that recognise prior work experience as well as academic qualifications.

Study Groups (also called Peer Assisted Study) can be a great way to learn course material and make new friends. Many universities have study groups already set up for students to attend. It often pays to look for these groups in the 'Clubs and Societies' webpage of your university.

Putting time into study

'The amount of time put in equals marks ... When I started going to uni the year I passed was when I studied heaps. One of my big things was just to go to everything ... literally going to every single lecture, that is really, really important and I think a lot of students really don't understand that' ('Chris', age 23).

Look out for:

- [Student advisors](#), [learning advisors](#) and [mentors](#) are there to provide information and direction.

What happens after my degree?

Considering postgraduate study

'I took some time off between school and university to figure out exactly what I wanted to do. So I started university as a mature age student. I wasn't sure I would be able to do it but I surprised myself and went on to complete a Masters degree with the support of my supervisor, after that I was then able to enrol in a PhD. I thought I'd like to get back into research, that's when I approached my supervisor, and I got in ... And yeah I'm loving it' ('Kurt', age 49).

Once you have settled into your higher education course it will be time to think about the next stage of your life. Like 'Kurt' you may want to undertake more study, especially if you have high grades! After a Bachelor degree, you can often apply to study Honours or a new postgraduate coursework or research degree, such as a Masters degree or a graduate diploma.

You may have met with a career planner when you first enrolled to find out which subjects suit your interests and career goals. The careers office is a good place to seek advice and start your planning for life after your studies. Many education providers have a careers counsellor, a careers and employment team, or a careers mentor scheme available. For instance, the [careers team](#) at La Trobe University offer advice about [career options](#), provide interview practice and help students create a career pathway.

Aiming high

'I think aiming high is really important despite the circumstances, you might get knocked down a lot if you do have a very demotivating carer or a negative carer but I think striving for your personal best is the most important thing' ('Brooke', age 18).

University jargon

Year 11 & 12 Certificates

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)	ATAR is a measure of secondary school academic achievement that helps institutions to rank applicants for selection to tertiary education courses.
Higher School Certificate (HSC)	Secondary school students who successfully complete senior high school level studies (Years 11 and 12 or equivalent) in New South Wales are awarded a Higher School Certificate (HSC).
Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE)	Secondary school students who successfully complete senior high school level studies (Years 11 and 12 or equivalent) in the Northern Territory are awarded a Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE).
Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)	Secondary school students who successfully complete senior high school level studies (Years 11 and 12 or equivalent) in Queensland are awarded a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).
South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)	Secondary school students who successfully complete senior high school level studies (Years 11 and 12 or equivalent) in South Australia are awarded a South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).
Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)	Secondary school students who successfully complete senior high school level studies (Years 11 and 12 or equivalent) in Tasmania are awarded a Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE).
Tertiary Admissions Centres (TAC)	Tertiary Admissions Centres play a major role in university admissions processes. They receive applications and forward them to the universities. Universities then decide who they will offer positions to.
Universities Admissions Centre (UAC)	The Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) processes applications for admission to most undergraduate courses at participating institutions (in NSW and the ACT).
Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)	Students who successfully complete high school level studies (year 11 and 12 or equivalent) in Victoria are awarded a Victorian Certificate of Education or VCE.
Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)	Secondary school students who successfully complete senior high school level studies (Years 11 and 12 or equivalent) in Western Australia are awarded a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE).

Other terms you might come across

Admissions	The Admissions office will assist you with your enrolment and application process, they may also be called the 'Enrolment Office'.
Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)	A Commonwealth supported place (CSP) is a <i>government subsidised higher education</i> enrolment. CSPs are available to domestic students and most undergraduate students studying at university are enrolled in a CSP. This simply means the Commonwealth Government pays for part of your course, which is the case for most domestic students in Australia.
Higher Education Contribution Scheme-Higher Education Loan Programme (HECS-HELP)	Higher Education Contribution Scheme-Higher Education Loan Programme (previously known as HECS) is a loan scheme which means that no tuition money is required up front. The loan can be paid back over time, after you begin work and start to earn a salary over a certain amount.
Mentoring	Mentoring is when you receive advice from a person with knowledge and/or experience in a particular area. This may be a formal or informal arrangement.
Means Tested	Some forms of financial assistance may be 'means tested' which means that your family income will be taken into consideration. However, many people leaving care become independent upon turning 18, as a result of this independence you will be entitled to many forms of means tested financial support.
Open days	This is a specific day when potential and new students are invited on campus to explore the university. There are often information booths set up so that you can ask questions and get brochures.
Outreach events	Outreach events often involve different activities and presentations and are designed to give people extra information about university. They can be held on campus, at school or at community centres.
Pre-enrolment	Pre-enrolment refers to the period in which you are thinking about university and how you will apply.
Student Finance	Student finance refers to financial support for students and the different kinds of funding available to students.
Student Advisors	A Student Advisor is a person who provides advice and direction. Students Advisors can be your first point of contact at the university.
Support Services /Student Welfare	Support services are often offered through the student union and may include counselling and financial advice through programs and one on one meeting sessions with staff.

Seven reasons to consider higher education

1. Having greater access to a wide variety of jobs after graduation, and having the capacity to earn more money
2. Living independently and being in control of your future
3. Gaining confidence through your experience and achievements
4. Finding clubs and societies to suit your personal and political interests
5. Learning and pursuing your own interests in a welcoming and supportive space
6. Having the chance to make lifelong friends
7. Choosing the town or city where you want to live.