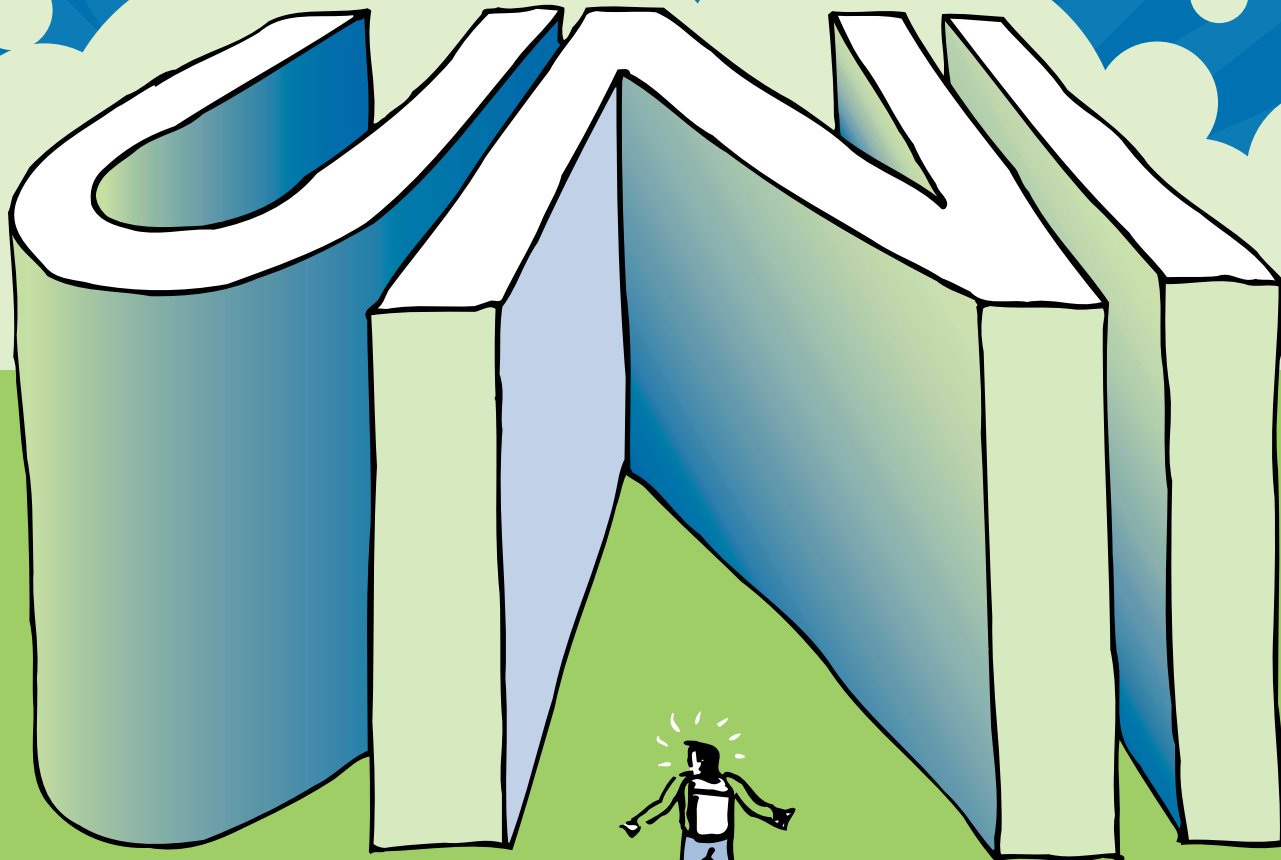


THE



BOOK

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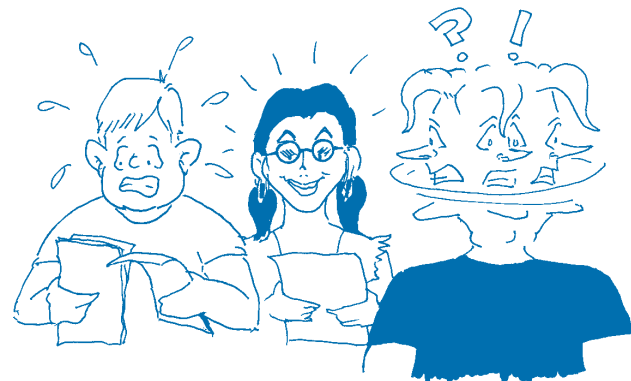
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The Uni Book

When you're in Year 10, things at school start to get a lot more serious. You have to choose subjects for Year 11 and 12, all in preparation for what you might do after you finish school. Some students already seem pretty set on what they're doing - they're the ones you sometimes envy, because they've known ever since they were in grade two what they wanted to be. For most Year 10 students though, the thought of having to choose your life's path is pretty daunting. How are you supposed to know what you want to do after graduating from school? It can feel like everyone's pressuring you to work out what to do with your life when you're having trouble even working out what to do with next weekend.

Among all these decisions is the thought: Will I go to university? Do I want to go? Will I be able to get in? What will it be like once I get there? It can be hard to think about university as an option if you don't know anything about it.



Many high school students don't find out enough about uni because they don't know where to begin. This book can start you on your way to learning more about uni. It gives you an idea of what uni life is all about, shows how learning at uni can differ from learning at school, and includes some tips on choosing courses. Most importantly, it gives you a starting point for questions you should ask yourself and others and lists resources to help you find the answers.



What will i get out of university?

There are a lot of options for you to consider after you finish school. If you choose university, the qualification you will study for is called a degree. You'll begin as an undergraduate student studying a Bachelor Degree, which usually takes three to four years of full time study (or longer if you study part-time). An example of one of these degrees is a Bachelor of Physiotherapy, or Bachelor of Accounting. Many students these days choose to do a combined or double degree, so they study for about five years and get two degrees at the end. So, for example, you can do a combined Arts/Law degree or combined Engineering/Science degree, which gives you qualifications in two areas. Ask your Careers Advisor what kind of subjects each of these degrees includes.

See under 'Finding a direction' for information about TAFE.

Some students start with a generalist degree (see below under 'General Courses'), and follow up with a vocational 'graduate diploma'. Examples include teaching, languages, environmental studies or computing.

Whatever option you choose, there are a number of advantages in going to uni:

Better employment prospects

People with a university education are more likely to get jobs. Many professions require a university degree and, in a highly competitive job market, it helps to have everything going for you. Besides gaining the practical skills and knowledge needed for your chosen career, you'll also gain valuable experience in areas such as communication skills, teamwork, organisation and research skills that employers look for.

Better pay

University graduates earn higher wages. You need to weigh this against getting a job straight after school, when you'll be able to start earning a wage right away rather than waiting another few years. This requires some long-term thinking - it could be worth the wait to earn a better wage in the long run.

Follow your passions

A University isn't always the serious place it appears to be – it's a really vibrant and exciting environment. If there's something you have a passion for and want to explore further than you can at school or on your own, uni is the place to be. Your teachers (lecturers and tutors) are people who are expert in their field. You'll be able to learn more about what you love from people who share your interests, in an environment where the other students are equally interested.

Uni isn't just about study though - it can also be a lot of fun! Uni offers opportunities to get involved in all kinds of activities where you can explore your talents or find new ones. You can join clubs, get involved in sport, theatre or music, write for the student newspaper, go to social events, help with political and other causes - whatever you're interested in, you can pursue it further at uni.

Emily: Bachelor of Arts/Law

There is much more to uni than studying. At first, I was a little overwhelmed by the university campus: it was much bigger than my high school, and there were so many people! However, I soon found that it was easy to make friends, because I shared similar interests with the people in my course. I've enjoyed activities such as drama groups and the Amnesty International group, and I helped edit the Law Students' Society magazine. There is always something going on at uni – from barbeques to live bands – and this makes it a really exciting environment.

Laura, Bachelor of Medicine

I'm from a country town and I'm the first one in my family to go to university. I come from a school where there were 120 year 12 students, only three got into this uni, and they're doing other courses so I never see them. I came into the course not knowing a single soul... I mean, it was good but I remember I was so nervous. I went out and made an effort, I went to Orientation camp and stuff like that and tried to go to that hardly anyone knows anybody. At high school everyone conforms but at uni everyone's so individual and different.

Who goes to uni? Will I fit in?

There are some common misconceptions that university is only for certain kinds of people. You know the ones - incredibly bright, very dedicated to their study (possibly nerds), from a wealthy family. Sure, there are some of those people at uni, but there are all kinds of other people as well. Some courses do require a very high ENTER score to get in, others aren't so high (See below under 'How do universities select students' for more on the ENTER.). Universities these days are keen to ensure a wide range of people have access to tertiary study, so this means that students from all kinds of backgrounds are going to uni. If you're worried that you might not achieve

the score you need to get in, most universities have special admissions schemes for students who have had some sort of disadvantage (see 'Special Admissions Schemes' under 'How do I choose a uni course?')

There are thousands of students at uni (some of the larger ones have around 40,000 students) from all different kinds of backgrounds. At uni you will meet other people who've just finished school, mature age students, international students, city students, country students, Indigenous Australian students, students of different abilities, religions and lifestyles - uni is a very diverse place. You'll have the opportunity to meet and learn about all kinds of different people who will become your friends and possibly future workmates.



Nick, Bachelor of Arts

When I got to Uni I was really surprised, and even a bit relieved. The main thing I noticed was the difference in people's reaction to the way I thought and felt about things. Instead of feeling like the freak, the odd one out, I found people actually agreed with my ideas, and me. At school I was even called a 'wierdo' by one of my classmates - because of the way I thought about things. It was reassuring to be taught things in lectures and tutes that were so much more radical compared to the classes of my high school.

What's uni really like?

Central to your decision about whether or not to aim for university is to consider whether it's actually the kind of place you'd like to spend a few years. You might have heard a few things about uni or seen it on a TV show or movie - remember that a university experience is a very individual thing and a story from one person is not necessarily how it will be for you. It will depend very much on which uni you go to, what course you do, what you get involved in, whether you move out of home to attend, etc, etc...

What kind of uni?

Each university has its own atmosphere and personality. Some are in the middle of capital cities, others are in regional or more remote areas; some are over 100 years old while others have started in the last 15 years; some have a single campus and others have a campus in several towns; some have a couple of thousand students while others have up to 40,000 students. It's important that you feel comfortable in the environment, so go to Open Days to check out the campus and decide if it's for you. If you like open spaces, then perhaps the inner-city concrete uni isn't the best choice; if you're dying for a change from your small town then a big, bustling campus could have all the excitement you crave.

How different from school is it?

Uni is very different from school. Instead of being in a structured environment where you are told what to do a lot of the time, you are expected to be a lot more independent and work out what you have to do for yourself. Nobody forces you to turn up to class and there isn't a roll call. You will usually be given the assignment topics at the beginning of each subject and have to hand them in by the due date, often without any reminders from the lecturer. It can be great to have such independence, but this means you have to motivate yourself to turn up and do the work if you want to succeed.

Part of being treated like an adult is that you have to do all of your own organisation related to your course, rather than leaving it all to your parents. No newsletters or administrative letters will go to your parents. The university's relationship will be with **you**, the adult student, so you need to keep track of all the administrative tasks such as fees and dates. Some parents find this really hard, so you'll need to sort out with them how much information you share with them and let them know how you're going - the uni won't even tell your parents what your results are! Remember, this may be a new experience for your parents as well, so it's important to be patient and keep communicating with them.

Your relationship with the teachers at uni will be different from school. Most lecturers (also called academics) and tutors will expect you to call them by their first name and you might only see them for a single one-hour class each week. Some subjects are taught by several different people - you might have one person give both the lectures and tutorials, one person for the lectures and another for the tutorials, or a team of different people might give the lectures because they all have different expertise in parts of the subject.

Amanda, Bachelor of Arts/Science

The key difference is that it's up to you to get involved. There are heaps of opportunities to join clubs and societies. The hardest bit is the first step, going on arts camp, or hiking with the mountaineering club - stepping out of your comfort zone and meeting new people. These experiences are awesome and as it turns out everybody is usually really friendly and you get to meet great people.

There is also a lot less contact between staff and students. The upside is that you are absolutely free, it's up to you whether you attend or hand in assignments, however the downside is there can be less incentive to work and you miss out on close contact with teachers.

Uni is also a lot bigger than school and you could have classes and other activities spread all over campus. Large campuses are like a small town, with shops, cafes, sports centre, post office, huge libraries and maybe even a theatre and cinema.

How does a uni day work?

We can't tell you exactly what your everyday uni life will be like - every student's day is different. Depending on your course, you might have a busy timetable with classes all day, or you might have a lot of time in between classes and only have classes on a couple of days a week. A course that includes practical classes, such as in the sciences or architecture, will have a lot of contact hours: that is, time spent in lectures, tutorials and pracs (practical or laboratory sessions). Other courses such as Arts or Commerce have fewer contact hours but you are expected to do more independent study outside of class.

University life is not as regimented as school life. There are no 'bells' to end classes and even lunchtimes and breaks will be up to you. Unlike school, where you have the same hours each day, you might find that your university hours vary widely - one day might be filled with classes from 8am to 5pm, while the next might have only one lecture. A good guide to how much time you will spend on your study if you are a full time student is to think of it like a full-time job, including time spent in class and time on independent study.

What sort of classes will I have?

Lectures

The main style of teaching at uni is in lectures - these normally take about 50 minutes where the lecturer speaks on that week's topic while you take notes. Lecture theatres can be huge - sometimes holding up to 400 students.

Tutorials/seminars

The lecture will usually be followed sometime later in the week by a tutorial (or tute), in a group of around 20 students. This smaller group is where you have the chance to discuss the topic with the tutor and your classmates and ask any questions that arose from the lecture.

Practical sessions/classes (pracs)

Students in the health sciences, engineering and science courses spend a lot of time in practical classes (or pracs), which are very similar to the pracs you do in science at school. You'll work in small groups with other students. Pracs are usually compulsory (a roll will be taken) and can go for up to three or four hours.

Practical or clinical placements

If you're studying teaching or one of the health sciences such as nursing, medicine, physiotherapy etc, you're likely to have several placements during your degree - that is, time spent in the professional workplace such as a school, hospital or medical clinic learning the skills for your career.

What if I need help at uni?

A lot of school students think that since universities are so big and you're supposed to be acting like an independent adult, this means that you have to struggle through any problems by yourself. This is far from the truth! Uni is full of people who can help you with just about anything. The difference from school is that you have to go and find this help for yourself, rather than having people watching over your welfare constantly.

So, if you're having trouble with your studies, you can ask your tutor or lecturer for help. Universities have services to help you with things like essay writing, research and preparing for exams. You'll find counsellors, doctors, Indigenous officers, language assistance, disability officers, financial aid, housing officers and careers advice.

The Student Union or Student Association is also a source of advice and help. They have student representatives elected each year to look after students' rights and to provide services, resources and activities. The Student Union can provide welfare assistance, advocacy and referral to other services.

Will anything be the same as school?

'I wish I had known that uni is not so scary after all. When I started I was really afraid to do things, like go up to a lecturer. It would be good if students knew not to be scared, but just to get involved.'

Doris, Commerce

'I had this idea from talking to people with older brothers and sisters who'd gone to uni that... it's all really hard. I was surprised at how much of it is similar to school.'

Andrew, Science

University can seem like a completely different world, but it does have some similarities to school. Think of uni as a progression of your education – and not the last step, either. Uni will give you an opportunity to build on your strengths and focus on what you're really interested in.

University isn't an entirely foreign place. You will still be a student member of an educational institution, and you might even identify more as a student, since you'll be a student by your own choice. Don't underestimate the skills you'll gain at school, especially during your final year – these will be excellent preparation for life at uni. You can develop many skills, perhaps in relation to your responsibilities at school, at home or in part-time work, which will help you make the change to the independent

environment of uni. These skills may include decision-making, taking responsibility for completing tasks, managing your time and communicating with your teachers.

Bernadette, Bachelor of Early Childhood Education

For my whole school education I grew up in a small country town. This meant that I had to move out of home. This was very exciting and nerve-wracking at the same time, as it meant big changes to my life overall. Where would I live? Who would I know? Would I get lost in a place like Melbourne? Would I get home sick? How would my parents feel about the decision?

My transition to university was very smooth because I joined in orientation week. It was from the orientation week that I met my really close friends. I was also shown different places around uni from the bookroom, to libraries, to restaurants and cafes, to toilets around the campus.

Overall I have found university to be an adventure – fun, exciting, scary, life changing, nerve-wracking and very worthwhile.

Questions to ask students about uni life

- What's the typical workload for a student in this course?
- What do you enjoy about your course? Is there anything you don't enjoy?
- What do you do in between classes?
- Where do you go for lunch?
- What if I don't like the course once I've started?
- What else is there to get involved in, outside of classes?

Who to ask about uni life

- If there is a particular university you might like to attend, or one near your home, contact them or check their website to find out if there are any **events for school students**.
- Don't just read the glossy brochures, talk to **people who've been there...** If you don't know anyone personally, ask any university speakers who come to your school, or go to Open Days and chat to current students who can take you on guided tours.
- **University staff**, such as lecturers and administration and services staff, can also answer your questions about classes etc. You can find these people at Open Days or other programs for school students.
- University **recruitment, prospective students or schools liaison office**. Remember, universities employ people solely to answer questions from prospective students – so ring them as much as you like!
- Your school **careers advisor**.
- Your teachers (particularly those teaching subjects you really like).
- University **transition programs** - they exist to help students make the move from school to uni, and often have publications and websites with a lot of information about what to expect from uni life.

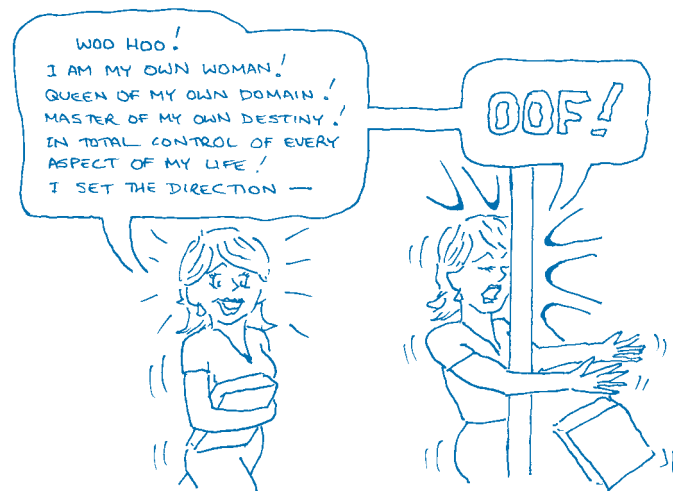
Finding a direction

How can I choose my subjects to give me the widest range of options for future study?

If you have even the slightest idea that you might like to go to uni, your choice of subjects for your final school years should be based on two important principles:

- your interests and abilities
- fulfilling any prerequisites for entry into courses that you may be interested in (if you know already)

If you already know what you want to do at uni, then make sure you find out whether there are any prerequisites. Prerequisites are subjects you must pass to qualify for entry into a particular course. Some courses have no prerequisites, others are impossible to get into if you haven't done the subject or obtained the necessary grades in that subject. You can find the prerequisites in the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre guide (VTAC – or equivalent in your state), university handbooks and course guides, which you can get by phoning individual unis or checking their websites. Some courses also have recommended subjects which, while they aren't compulsory in order to get into the course, can give you a very good background in the area.



You've probably heard people telling you to 'keep your options open'. This means not dropping subjects that you might need as prerequisites later on. Often, people interpret 'keeping your options open' as meaning that you need to do a final year heavy in Maths and Science subjects, for example. For many courses, this is true. These subjects also tend to be scaled up when calculating ENTER scores. However, if Maths and Science aren't your strength, it's not a good idea to choose a subject that you really can't stand just because it might get you some extra points. You are far more likely to get a better score if you study subjects that you're interested in.

How do I choose a uni course?

Thinking about what course you'd like to aim for is important because it helps you make the right subject choices now and gives you some motivation. But don't panic if you can't decide now! Plenty of people who are now at uni, or are now in the workforce, are doing things they never dreamed of when they were in Year 10. The range of course options available to you can be bewildering and the careers they may lead you to are ever increasing and changing - even if you read every career guide there is, there are hundreds of jobs that aren't described in these guides.

Unfortunately, there is no secret formula for choosing exactly the right course or career. There is one very important rule though that you need to stick to: do what you are interested in. A lot of research has been done to determine what makes a university student succeed in their study, and the strongest indicator of success is choosing a course you find interesting and relevant to your career goals. Think about your schooling so far and which subjects you do best in: chances are, they're the subjects you enjoy. The same principle applies to university.

How do universities select students?

To be eligible for selection into a uni course, you must:

- successfully complete the Victoria Certificate of Education (VCE), or the equivalent in your state
- complete each of the prerequisite subjects for the course, if there are any
- get the marks required in each of those prerequisite subjects.

Your year 12 study scores will then be ranked according to the results of all students in the state for that year: this forms your ENTER score (Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank). Some courses use extra information to select students. For example, visual art courses usually require a folio of work, and for some health science courses such as Medicine and Physiotherapy you have to sit an extra test. University course guides will include all this important information.

Andrew, Bachelor of Science

I started coming to open days in about year 9 so I got a feel for how big the university was, how many people would be here. I came in year 10 and spoke to someone about what subjects would be best to do. I didn't quite know what I wanted to do after year 12 but I thought it would be something to do with science. It was something to aim for because I knew that I could branch out after I'd got into the Bachelor of Science. I think that really helped, I knew about year 10 what steps I had to take to get into university and what course I wanted to do.

Questions to ask about choosing final year subjects

- Do I like these subjects?
- Do I understand what these subjects are about?
- What are my strengths – can I realistically manage these subjects?
- What are the prerequisite subjects for the courses I'm interested in?
- Are any Year 12 subjects recommended for entry to this course?

Questions to ask when choosing a uni course

- What kinds of jobs do people go into after doing this course?
- Can I combine this course with one from another faculty?
- Are there any special admissions schemes to help me get into the course?
- Are there any other ways into this course, apart from secondary school, such as TAFE courses?
- Does this course have any links with industry?
- What methods of teaching and assessment are involved in each of the subjects?
- What are the core (compulsory) subjects that this course covers?
- How many students are in each class?
- About how many hours of classes per day/week does this course involve?

- What are the special features of this course?
- How difficult is it to transfer into another course once I have gained entry to a university?
- Can I take some time off before starting my course, or take a break during the course?

Who to ask about choosing a uni course

- Your careers advisor.
- Other teachers.
- University recruitment, admissions or prospective students' office.
- Students doing the course.
- Careers information centres.

Other places to look for information about courses:

- Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) guide (or the equivalent in your state)
- 'My future' - career information service <http://www.myfuture.edu.au/>
- Career Guide Australia - <http://www.yourcareerguide.com.au/>
- 'Which course? Which university?' The Department of Education, Science and Training's guide to courses, careers and graduate outcomes. <http://www.dest.gov.au/tenfields/>
- TAFE institutions in your state

What about TAFE?

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) is another option for you to consider after finishing school, with a huge range of courses to choose from. These courses are shorter than a university course – usually one or two years – and also have very good job prospects. If you really want to go to uni, it is often possible to complete some TAFE study and then transfer into a university course, where the TAFE subjects may give you credit towards a uni degree. This can be a good option if you're not sure you want to go to uni just yet, or if you don't get the Year 12 score you need to get into the uni course straight from school. Ask the universities and TAFE institutions about course transfer and possible credit.

Special Admissions or Alternative Entry Schemes

One of the factors in choosing a course will be whether you think you can achieve the ENTER score you need to get in. If you're worried that you might not get the score, contact the university to ask if they have special admissions schemes. These go under different names at each university, so you need to ask the admissions offices for information. Most universities have these schemes to help you if you've had some sort of disadvantage that's affected your schooling such as living in a rural or isolated area, disability or serious family hardship. Such schemes take into account any disadvantage which may have affected your academic record at school, and in many cases will allow entry to students whose year 12 score falls just below the usual entry score.

Claire, Bachelor of Forestry/Science
I expected uni to be just a big party sort of thing, and not much work. But it's a lot of work. Everyone says it's not much, but it is. I think you have to be prepared to do some work, but still be prepared to have fun and juggle the two. Don't be a workaholic but don't be a partyaholic basically!

I really have no idea what career I want, but I'm interested in doing something at uni. What can I do?

Even if you're not sure what career path you'd like to follow, there are opportunities to try a few different things at uni and discover your true passion along the way. There are two major types of courses at university that suit different people depending on their goals:

Vocational courses

These courses prepare you for a particular kind of vocation or career. Courses such as health sciences (physiotherapy, nursing, medicine, naturopathy), engineering, law, forestry, teaching, architecture or journalism usually include work placements and are designed to give you qualifications for a particular job. These are good courses to do if you know what career you want. This is not to say that completing one of these degrees forces you into that exact job: there are always opportunities to pursue careers in related fields using the skills you gain from that degree.

General courses

These courses begin with quite general subject areas and you can specialise later in the degree, depending on your interests. They include courses like Arts, Commerce and Science. Doing a general degree is a great way to try study in a few different fields before settling on a specialisation. You can also combine a couple of these and do a double degree (see under 'What will I get out of University?').

What if I hate the course once I get there?

This can happen! Some students find that the course they chose is nothing like they expected, or they change their goals along the way. Once you've started a course, it is possible to change either your subjects, your course or the uni, if you do your research and work to get the marks necessary for a transfer. The best strategy is to choose a course you're really interested in from the beginning, to maximise your chances of enjoying it.

Elena, Bachelor of Arts

I have been supporting myself financially since moving to Melbourne from Perth as a 17 year old. I rent a house with two friends I made at uni, and can support myself by working part-time at a market research company. I also get some government benefits. Juggling work, school and a social life can be hectic to say the least, but it's also a lot of fun. I've made friends from attending lectures and tutorials, but I've made even more friends at my workplace (which largely consists of university students like myself). I've also gained a lot of work experience. In this way, supporting myself financially while studying has been a perk, not a hindrance!

Money, Money, Money

How much will it all cost?

There are three major areas to consider when working out how much it costs to go to uni. These are:

Course fees

The fees for the course will depend on which course it is, which university you choose, and which subjects you do. These fees may change from year to year, so it is very important that you check with the individual university – through the prospective students' office, admissions office or student administration – to make sure you have the correct, up to date information.

Australian students beginning university from 2005 will enter the course in one of two fee structures:

- Commonwealth supported place, also known as a HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) place. This means you pay a contribution towards your study while the government subsidises the rest. You do not have to pay this upfront: instead, you can defer all of your HECS payment until after you've finished study and are working. (see below under 'How will I pay for it?')
- Fee paying place. Under this scheme you would pay the full cost of your course but you can get a loan which, once again, you can pay off once you have a job.

Course related costs

These depend on which course you're doing and include things such as books, stationery, computer, photocopying, field trips, and materials required to undertake the course (eg a lab coat if you're doing science, art materials for a graphic design course, etc).

Living costs

Do you know how much it costs your family to feed, clothe, house and entertain you? Don't forget to take these things into account when budgeting for uni. How much money you need depends on whether you stay with your family or move out of home to attend uni. Unless distance makes travel each day impossible, most students still live at home while going to uni, especially for the first couple of years while they establish themselves. Universities provide information about the average cost of living. You should ask the student financial aid section of the university for this information, as costs vary.

Find out how much you'll actually need to pay up front, how much you can defer until you get a job, and how much the ongoing living expenses are.



How can I pay for uni?

Going to uni can seem very expensive. The most important thing to remember is that you can defer your course fees and pay them later, once you have started earning a good income. Some people worry about leaving university with a debt, but consider it an investment in your own future.

There is also a range of scholarships to help you with the cost of your course. Some of these include an accommodation and living allowance. At the University of Melbourne, for example, there is a large range of scholarships, some of which will pay for your entire HECS contribution plus a living allowance. Other scholarships

give you money towards accommodation. Check with the universities you're interested in to find out their range of scholarships and how to apply. You should always apply for scholarships even if you think you don't have a chance, because you never know your luck!

If your family has a low income, you might be eligible for government assistance such as Youth Allowance or Abstudy. Many students also have part time or casual jobs to support themselves while studying – just be careful that you don't have to do so many hours at your job that your study suffers.

Questions to ask about student finance

- What are the fees for this course? Can I defer the payment?
- What initial set up costs will I have, such as buying books?
- How do I apply for Youth Allowance or Abstudy?
- What kind of scholarships do you offer and how do I apply?
- Will the course give me time to do some part time work outside of study?

Who to ask about student finances

- Student Financial Aid services
- Current students
- Centrelink – to see if you're eligible for any government financial assistance
- University scholarship offices
- University recruitment or prospective students' office
- Check the Department of Education, Science and Training's website for students at http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/student_info.htm

Your parents and teachers

What if my family doesn't agree with the idea of uni?

Choosing to aim for uni is an adult decision that only you can make for yourself, but life will certainly be a lot easier if your family supports the idea. If they haven't been to university themselves and don't know many people who have, they may not understand the benefits of going. They might think you'd be better off getting a job straight away, especially if your family is under some financial pressure. You need to carefully consider why you think uni

is the best option for you, collect as much information as you can about what you can do at uni and how it will benefit you, and then talk to them about it. Try to involve them by sharing your ideas and asking them to come along to open days with you so that the idea becomes an option in their mind. Some universities also have programs and publications especially for parents, to help them learn more about university and the many opportunities.



What if I feel pressured by others to do something I'm not interested in?

Your family, teachers and friends are certainly a useful resource when it comes to making a decision about your future - they know you pretty well and will have some ideas about what you could do. In the end, however, who's going to have to go to all the lectures, write the assignments and sit the exams? Not your family or teachers - you! So the ultimate decision has to be one that you make. A lot of research is done into what makes a successful uni student, and one of the most important factors is whether they've chosen the right course for themselves. Could you really imagine spending three or four years studying something you really don't like?

While their advice is well meaning, sometimes parents and friends are basing their advice on out-of-date knowledge about employment opportunities (the job scene can change very quickly) or because they don't want you to 'waste' a good Year 12 score. If you achieve a score that is higher than what you need to get into your preferred choice, don't think you should aim for a different course simply so that you don't 'waste' the score.

Kim, Bachelor of Science

I remember my parents kept dropping hints like 'why don't you do pharmacy' or 'what do you think about medicine?' I don't know what I want to do yet and if I pick those things I might be limited in my choices. So I think they got the message and they kind of left me alone. I think some parents don't do that and they really pressure their children to do well to get into a course and then they find they don't like it or it doesn't suit them. One of my friends was pressured into doing a degree that she doesn't really like... and now she's really stuck because she's failed subjects.

Claire, Bachelor of Forestry/Science

Make sure you do something you are going to enjoy, not [just] something that's going to give you a good job. I was going to do Biomedical Science, but I would have hated it! I did Forestry, and everyone asked me why I did it because of my score [which was very high], but I did it because I want to do it. That's the only reason I'm here basically. It makes me really want to work harder, so I can be the best at what I enjoy.

Good luck!

We hope you have found the information in this guide a useful starting point. Just remember to think about your goals, stick to what you love and keep asking questions to get as much information as you can. This will help you make a decision that's right for YOU.

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