**Tertiary institutions and courses**

In Australia tertiary level education is provided by:

- government-funded universities
- private universities and colleges
- TAFE institutes.

The qualifications these institutions award are regulated under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF ([http://www.aqf.edu.au/](http://www.aqf.edu.au/)) consists of 10 levels (level 10 having the highest complexity). The levels and associated qualifications are:

1. Certificate I
2. Certificate II
3. Certificate III
4. Certificate IV
5. Diploma
6. Advanced Diploma
   - Associate Degree
7. Bachelor Degree
8. Bachelor Honours Degree
   - Graduate Certificate
   - Graduate Diploma
9. Masters Degree
10. Doctoral Degree

The term 'tertiary' is commonly used to refer to qualifications at AQF levels 5 – 10. The following are other terms you need to understand.

- **Undergraduate courses** - Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree, Bachelor degree.
- **Postgraduate courses** - Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters Degree, Doctoral Degree.

At the end of Year 12 you can apply for undergraduate courses. Normally, a completed degree is required to apply for postgraduate courses. The following are features of undergraduate level qualifications.

**Diploma:**

- Can be 1 – 2 years full-time depending on the institution and course
- Tends to be practical with some theory
- Entry may be competitive depending on demand
- May have minimum entry requirements.

**Advanced Diploma/Associate Degree:**

- Usually 2 years full-time
- Combination of theory and practice
- Entry may be competitive depending on demand
- May have minimum entry requirements e.g. may need to complete a diploma first.

**Bachelor degree:**

- Usually 3 – 5 years full-time
- Mainly theoretical
- Entry is usually competitive
- May have minimum entry requirements.

**Do I have to pay for tertiary courses?**

Most undergraduate courses at government-funded universities are subsidised by the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth Supported Places program. For these courses you pay a portion (student contribution) of the full cost of the course.

Private universities and colleges offer courses on a full-fee basis. This means that you pay the full cost of the course.

Courses offered at TAFE institutes in Queensland can partially government-funded or full-fee.

**Is financial assistance available?**

There are two main ways of gaining financial assistance for your tertiary education:

- Commonwealth Government loan schemes
- Scholarships – Commonwealth Government, institution and industry specific.

**Commonwealth Government loan schemes**

- **HECS-HELP** - a loan available to eligible students enrolled in Commonwealth supported places at government-funded universities. Students repay the loan through their income tax when their income is above a minimum level.
- **FEE-HELP** - a loan given to eligible full-fee paying students undertaking associate degree, degree and higher courses at accredited institutions to help pay part or all of their tuition fees. Students repay their loan through the tax system once their income is
above a minimum level. A loan fee of 25% applies.
SA-HELP – a loan scheme that assists eligible students to pay for all or part of their student services and amenities fee.
OS-HELP - a loan scheme available to Commonwealth supported students who want to undertake study overseas.
VET FEE-HELP – a loan for eligible students undertaking approved VET courses of study with an approved VET provider (e.g. TAFE institutes). A 20% loan fee applies to some students.

Visit the Study Assist website at http://studyassist.gov.au/ to learn more about these Commonwealth Government loan schemes and future changes.

Scholarships

Commonwealth Government scholarships include:

Most universities, colleges and institutes have a scholarship section on their websites. These sites also list selected industry scholarships. You can find more scholarship information on the myfuture, Study Assist and Hobsons Course Finder websites (see links below).

How can I find out about tertiary courses?

There are a number of websites that provide searches for tertiary courses. These include:
My University http://myuniversity.gov.au/. This site has course and university search functions. For each university, you can find information on the number of students and the number of graduates employed.

myfuture http://www.myfuture.edu.au. This is Australia’s career information service. Information about occupations, courses, career decision-making, job seeking skills and much more is available on this website.

Hobsons Course Finder http://www.hobsonscoursefinder.com.au/ On this site you can search for courses, institutions, careers and scholarships. You can also compare these options through the university ratings section on the site. The site has a useful section for school leavers at http://www.hobsonscoursefinder.com.au/Support-Centre/Where-do-I-start

QTAC website http://www.qtac.edu.au. This website provides a search function for Queensland tertiary courses where the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) administers the application and offer processes. The QTAC Guide also provides some course information.

University and college websites provide the most detailed information about their courses. Brochures, handouts, open days and career markets are also excellent ways of finding out about courses. Each year in July there is a Tertiary Studies Expo (TSXPO) in Brisbane where Queensland, interstate and some overseas institutions have booths (see http://www.tsxpo.org/).

Which is the best university?

All Australian universities offer accredited courses that can lead to employment. Consequently, the better question is ‘Which is the best university for me?’ Consider the following when researching universities.

- Is the course offered at this university a pathway to the job I eventually want?
- Where is this university located? Can I realistically travel there? What are the transport options?
- Will the university help me gain work experience in my career area of interest while I do the course?
- How hard is it to get into this university?
- Are the courses at this university full-fee or are they subsidised by the Commonwealth Government and eligible for Commonwealth Government HELP loans?
- Do graduates get jobs after completing courses at this university? What and where?
• What support services are available at this university?
• What co-curricular activities (sport, clubs, etc.) are available at this university?
• What is the ‘atmosphere’ of the university like?
• Is it important to me to go to the same university as my friends?

The following resources provide comparative information and/or student feedback about institutions and their courses.

• My University website
• Hobsons Course Finder website
• Good Universities Guide book (see http://hobsonsbookshop.com/)
• Rate your Uni website http://www.rateyouruni.com.au/ - this site provides an opportunity for current students to rate their university.

How do I apply for tertiary courses?

In Queensland you apply online through QTAC for most Queensland undergraduate courses. The QTAC website has information sheets and movies to help you understand the application and offer process.

You can apply for most interstate courses through the tertiary admissions centres below. Each of the websites provides information about the courses available and the application process for the relevant state.

• New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory - University Admissions Centre (UAC) http://www.uac.edu.au/
• Victoria – Victoria Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) http://www.vtac.edu.au/
• South Australia and the Northern Territory – SATAC http://www.satac.edu.au/
• Western Australia – Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) http://www.tisc.edu.au/

Apply directly to institutions not using these admissions centres. This includes the University of Tasmania (http://www.utas.edu.au/).

Helpful websites

Queensland university websites

Australian Catholic University http://www.acu.edu.au/
Bond University http://www.bond.edu.au/
CQUniversity http://www.cqu.edu.au/

Griffith University http://www.griffith.edu.au/
James Cook University http://www.jcu.edu.au/
Queensland University of Technology http://www.qut.edu.au/
The University of Queensland http://www.uq.edu.au/
University of Southern Queensland http://www.usq.edu.au/
University of the Sunshine Coast http://www.usc.edu.au/

TAFE Queensland institutes

• TAFE Queensland Brisbane http://tafebrisbane.edu.au/
• TAFE Queensland East Coast http://tafeeastcoast.edu.au/
• TAFE Queensland Gold Coast http://tafegoldcoast.edu.au/
• TAFE Queensland North http://tafenorth.edu.au/
• TAFE Queensland SkillsTech http://tafeskillsitech.edu.au/
• TAFE Queensland South West http://tafesouthwest.edu.au/

Selection of other Queensland institutions that offer tertiary courses

APM College of Business and Communication http://www.apm.edu.au/
Australasian College of Natural Therapies http://www.acnt.edu.au/
Australian Agricultural College Corporation http://www.aacc.edu.au
Australian College of Applied Psychology http://www.acap.edu.au/
Billy Blue College of Design http://www.billyblue.edu.au/
Design College Australia

Endeavour College of Natural Health
http://www.endeavour.edu.au/

Jazz Music Institute http://www.jazz.qld.edu.au/

JMC Academy http://www.jmcacademy.edu.au/


Martin College http://www.martincollege.edu.au/

New York Film Academy (Australia)
http://www.nyfa.edu.au/

Queensland Institute of Business and Technology
http://www.qibt.qld.edu.au/

Queensland School of Film and Television
http://www.qsft.qld.edu.au/

SAE QANTM http://sae.edu.au/

Sarina Russo Institute http://www.sri.edu.au/

UQ College http://uqcollege.edu.au/