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How bonus points work

NOW that HSC students have their ATARs, many will be wondering whether they’ll receive bonus points to boost their chances of getting into their desired course.

‘It’s important for students to do their research and make informed choices about their course preferences,’ says Kim Paino, Director, Information Services at UAC. ‘There are many ways that students can receive bonus points. In fact, many HSC students will receive some kind of bonus.’

Universities select HSC students based mainly on the ATAR, but are also interested in looking at other aspects of a student that will be helpful in the selection process for particular courses.

‘Bonus points are not applied across the board – they’re specific to each institution and course,’ says Ms Paino. ‘It’s important to remember that bonus points don’t change your ATAR – they’re just another selection tool used in conjunction with your ATAR.’

Bonus points can be given for:

- performance in an HSC course relevant to a degree at a particular university, known as a subject bonus (for example, doing well in mathematics may attract bonus points for an Engineering course)
- applying for consideration through Educational Access Schemes (EAS)
- living in or attending a school in an area defined by the university, known as a regional bonus
- other achievements such as being school captain or an elite athlete or performer.

The most important thing for Year 12 students to do now is to finalise their course preferences by Wednesday 6 January 2016 for the Main Round of offers on Wednesday 20 January. Students should carefully check the information from each institution to see whether they’re eligible for bonus points. If they are, they need to factor that in when finalising their preferences.

‘It’s important that students don’t discount their chances of getting into a course based solely on their ATAR and last year’s cut-off,’ Ms Paino says. ‘Because of these bonus points schemes, many students will receive offers to courses even though their ATAR is below the cut-off.’

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