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How to choose your courses

ATARs have been released and many HSC students will be turning their attention to how to order their course preferences in time for the Main Round of offers on Wednesday 20 January.

Kim Paino, Director, Information Services at UAC, says there are a few things students need to remember:

1. If your ATAR is not what you’d hoped for, don’t lose heart. You can still leave your first preference in place because cut-offs do change from year to year. Carefully consider your lower preferences to make sure you include courses that have lower cut-offs than your ATAR. Remember that many students don’t go straight into their first preference in their first year after school, and instead start in a more general degree and apply to transfer after a year of study.

2. If your ATAR is well below your expectations, you may be feeling like you have no chance of studying next year. The good news is that there are many other options available. Some universities have foundation or pathways programs that can lead to entry into a degree course. You could also study at TAFE or a private college, which usually don’t require an ATAR for admission.

3. If your ATAR is higher than expected, think carefully about what you want to do next year. Try to resist any advice that you shouldn’t ‘waste’ your ATAR on a course that has a much lower cut-off than your ATAR. It’s your ATAR so it’s your choice.

4. You may be eligible for bonus points for some courses at some institutions, which means you could get an offer to a course even though your ATAR is below the cut-off. You need to do your research so you can take that into account when choosing your preferences.

5. If you’ve received an early offer but would like to try for another offer, you need to remove the successful preference from the top of your list or it will ‘block’ the lower preferences and prevent you from possibly getting another offer in the Main Round. You can remove it completely or move it to the bottom of the list.

6. Some courses have prerequisites and/or additional selection criteria that you must meet to be considered for an offer. Don’t waste a preference on a course that you’re not eligible for.

7. Have your final list of preferences locked in with UAC by midnight on Wednesday 6 January 2016. When you change your preferences, make sure you save them and then print out your application summary and double check that everything is how you want it.

If you need advice, call the ATAR Enquiry Centre on 1300 MY ATAR (1300 692 827) or from mobiles on (02) 9119 5012.

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For further information (media only) contact: Diane Jardine, Communications Officer, on (02) 9752 0775 or Kim Paino, Director Information Services, UAC on (02) 9752 0760 or 0409 155 112