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I’ve got my ATAR, what do I do now?

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 18 January 2017.

Kim Paino, General Manager of Marketing and Engagement at the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC), says there are a few things students need to remember:

1. Many offers are made to students with ATARs below the cut-off. The cut-off is not the ATAR you need for entry into a course because cut-offs include bonus points. Most students will be eligible for bonus points, 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 on university websites to see what bonus points you can get so you can take that into account when choosing your preferences.

2. 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 include bonus points and also change from year to year. Remember too that many students don’t go straight into their first preference in their first year of tertiary study, and instead start in a general degree and apply to transfer after a year of study.

3. 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. For some courses you don’t even need an ATAR. If you haven’t applied through UAC yet, there’s still time.

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

5. The good news is that many HSC students (over 7,000) have already received an early offer through one of UAC’s early offer rounds. 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 getting another offer in the Main Round. You can remove the successful preference completely or move it to the bottom of the list.

6. In addition, some institutions will make direct offers outside of the UAC offer rounds. Don’t worry – you can accept those offers and still be in the running for further offers through UAC. You may need to re-order your UAC preferences though. Offers for most institutions, and for most high-demand courses, will still be through the UAC Main offer round.

7. Remember that 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 you’re not eligible for.

8. Have your final list of preferences locked in with UAC by midnight on Friday 6 January 2017. When you change your preferences, make sure you save them and then print out your application summary and double check that everything is as 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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