



FROM THE SENIOR SCHOOL DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

There has been much discussion in the media regarding the increasing number of early offers universities are making to Year 12 students before they sit their HSC exams.

According to an article in The Sydney Morning Herald last week, many universities are filling upwards of 90% of their places with early offers. This is done, of course, to stay ahead of the competition and ensure full enrolments.

Traditionally, HSC results are used by the University Admission Centre (UAC) to rank students through complex algorithms that produce an ATAR. Course ATAR cut-offs are then determined by a market-based system of supply and demand, where courses in higher demand attract higher ATAR cut-offs.

However, success in the HSC is not always an accurate predictor of success at university. Some courses require additional evidence, such as portfolios, entry examinations, and interviews.

When students apply for early entry, they may be asked to submit one or more of the following: their school reports from Years 11 and 12, samples of creative work, references from the school, written submissions, or attend an interview.

Universities have agreed to delay early entry offers until after the HSC trials, but before the HSC exams.

This has several important implications for our senior students, including:

- Year 11 work and results can matter as much, if not more, than Year 12. Students would be wise to work hard across both years.
- Students who find examinations stressful may take comfort in receiving an early offer, relieving some pressure. As a result, they may perform better in the HSC.
- Some students may ease up on their studies after receiving an offer, which can negatively impact the overall performance of the cohort.
- Students should develop interests beyond academics, including community volunteering, sport, Duke of Edinburgh, leadership roles, and other co-curricular involvement. Universities are looking for well-rounded, emotionally intelligent, and resilient students who are willing to persevere and contribute to campus life.
- Many students are unsuccessful at attaining early entry, so it should really be seen as a 'Plan B' rather than a 'Plan A'. Doing well in the HSC is the 'Plan A'!
- Students who achieve success in their HSC are more likely to have developed the necessary discipline, organisation and ability to succeed at university.
- Employers are also looking for similar attributes and qualities.

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