HELPFUL STEPS FOR CHANGE OF PREFERENCE PERIOD

Step 1: Gather information
You now have your results, so you need to gather all of the information that will help you assess your current preference list and make an educated decision about how to re-order your preferences. Some helpful information sources include:

- Tertiary lift outs in *The Age* and the *Herald Sun*
- Publications from the institutions you are interested in
- Information provided to you by course selection officers, course coordinators, the school

Step 2: Assess your list

- **Be Realistic**: For courses that select on ATAR make sure you include course choices that you are likely to be selected for based on last year’s ATAR.
- **Be Informed**: Make sure you’ve got the prerequisites and extra requirements required for any new courses you’re listing (as listed on the VTAC site).
- **Be Safe**: Include at least two courses that you are fairly sure you will be accepted into. It is better to be accepted into a TAFE course than no course at all, and then you can use your studies at TAFE to gain selection into University in the following year/s.
- **Be Honest**: Make sure you are willing to study ALL the courses you include on your list.

Step 3: Get advice
This step is important to ensure you maximise the effectiveness of your preference choices. Most institutions are available during the Change of Preference period to give you advice about their programs. Change of preference advice is also available at the Senior campus. The Careers Room will be open on Monday 14th - Thursday 17th December.

You can also email Ritterman.jennifer.j@edumail.vic.gov.au or Hanlen.debra.anne@edumail.vic.gov.au or call 85990536 during this time

Step 4: Change Preferences
You will need to change your preferences online through [http://www.vtac.edu.au/](http://www.vtac.edu.au/) - log in to the system in the same way as you initially applied. **Ensure you have checked the prerequisites and extra requirements for any course you are adding to your preference list.** The online process provides you with prompts along the way.

Step 5: Relax
You’ve done it! Your preferences, results and all other relevant documentation will be forwarded to the institutions you have applied to. Now you can sit back, relax and prepare for what the future holds.

Please note, if you are planning to be away in January when offers come out, make sure you have someone to open your mail for you. Your offer letter also contains your enrolment details.
RECEIVING AN OFFER

- The **first round of offers for local students** will available on MyInfo from **18 January 2016**. **International offers** available on **8 January 2016**. There will be some **second round offers on 6 February** and supplementary offers later in February.

ACCEPTING AN OFFER

**To accept an offer you must enrol in the course.** You can accept an offer in a later round even if you have already accepted an earlier offer; however, you should withdraw from the original course.

REMINDERS

- Don’t apply for courses **you really don’t wish to do** simply to fill the twelve choices
- Look at **all options** – often the required ATAR at a rural campus is lower than a city one for a similar course; if you are looking at this option, check out accommodation prices and availability.
- Check **clearly-in data from last year** for courses you are applying for and be realistic
- Apply for **both university and TAFE** – remember you can ‘articulate’ from many TAFE courses to university (two years at TAFE often equals one year at university)
- **Don’t think too long-term.** You are likely to have around six careers in your lifetime, so thinking about what you are ‘going to do with the rest of your life’ is unrealistic. Thinking about what you will do for the next five or so years is more realistic.
- Some courses are cancelled and new ones added, so **check the VTAC website regularly**.
- If you have **questions about a course** you can: email or phone the institution. Email and phone numbers are provided at the beginning of each institution’s entry in the VTAC Guide.
- Research the course content via the handbooks on the tertiary websites – Find out what you will study on a day to day basis, not just go by the name of the course.
- Travel to the university to find out how far away it is before you commit.
- Read the **information about scholarships, deferment, special entry schemes**, etc on the pages at the beginning of each institution’s entry in the Guide.

DEFERRING YOUR OFFER

If you are **considering having a year off from study in 2016**, you have been advised to **apply for a course in 2015 and defer acceptance of any offer you receive**. This means that the university holds a place for you for 12 months. **Most** university courses can be deferred (check individual institute entries); contact individual TAFE’s for information. Some universities now offer up to 2 years deferment.

INDEPENDENT TERTIARY COLLEGES

These are found throughout the Guide. They offer both diploma and degree courses. Be aware that **fees for these courses** can be quite high.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How should I order my course choices?
You should always list your preferences in the order that you would like to accept them, that is in preferential order. The course at the top of your list should be the course that you want to study the most. The next is your second favourite and so on. Most importantly, all the courses on your list should be courses that interest you. The list should be made up of courses that you have researched and are reasonably confident that you will be considered for during selection.

**ATARs from previous years should only be used as a guide as they change from year to year.**

2. Do I have to change my preference?
Changing your preferences is not compulsory. If you feel happy and confident with your initial list of preferences that you lodged with VTAC there is no reason to make the changes.

If you decide to change your preferences, be sure to check that you have satisfied all the prerequisites and extra requirements for the courses you are adding.

3. Do I have to change all of my preferences or can I just change some of them? What if I only want to change one course on my list?
If you are altering your original preferences list in any way, that is adding courses, deleting courses or simply changing order, you need to put a new list in to change any preferences. Ensure that you follow the guidelines in the VTAC Guide 2016. There is no minimum number of changes you can make to your list – just ensure that you have met all requirements of any new programs you may be adding to your list.

4. Who selects me for the courses I am interested in?
Universities and TAFEs appoint selection officers for each individual course. It is the selection officer who decides which applicants will receive an offer. VTAC acts as the administrative body for the processing of applications they are not involved in the selection process.

5. How do I find out what the clearly-in rank will be for the courses that I’m interested in?
Clearly-in ranks are not set in advance. Selection officers do not know what the clearly-in ranks for any course will be until after selection is completed. Clearly-in ranks change from year to year and are determined by:

- the number of places available in that particular course;
- the number of applications; and
- the applicants’ Year 12 results.

6. The course I’m interested in does not list a clearly-in rank; it just lists ‘RC’. What does this mean?
‘RC’ indicates that a range of selection criteria applies. Not all courses choose students based on their ATAR alone. A course that has ‘RC’ listed will have extra requirements such as information sessions, pre-selection interviews, tests and special information forms, etc. that must be met to be considered for selection. Please check the VTAC Guide for details regarding extra requirements for each course. Courses that use a range of selection criteria as the basis for selection do not publish a clearly-in ATAR.

7. What other criteria do selection officers consider when selecting students?
Entry for some courses is determined by ATAR results alone. For other courses, entry can be determined by performance at interview; quality of your portfolio; or even a combination of all of these things. Selection
officers will also take into consideration any additional information you may have provided on any Supplementary Information form requested.

To find out what criteria a selection officer will be using when making selection decisions, look at the course entry in the VTAC Guide 2015. Each course entry has a Selection Mode section. This section will tell you what factors are considered when assessing suitability of applicants.

8. What does ‘middle-band’ selection mean?
For courses that use the ATAR for the basis of selection there is a two-stage process.

Stage 1
The selection officer for the course ranks the applicants by their ATAR score. The top 80% applicants are identified. These applicants are considered ‘clearly-in’.

Stage 2
The remaining 20% of applicants are selected by using additional information. Students considered for these places are said to be in the middle band. These students do not have ATARs high enough for automatic selection, but have ATARs above that which are automatically eliminated. Their application is considered using the middle band criteria. Each course listed in the VTAC Guide has a ‘middle-band’ section that outlines what the selection officers are looking for when re-ranking the middle-band

9. What do the terms ‘clearly-in ATAR’ and ‘fringe ATAR’ mean?

Clearly-in rank
A clearly-in ATAR for a course indicates that point at which and above, all Year 12 applicants were offered a place in the previous selection period. So, if the clearly-in ATAR for a course in 2014 was 87.9, an applicant with 87.9 or above was made an offer for that course.

Fringe ATAR
The fringe ATAR is the point above which the majority (95%) of offers were made. Only a small number of offers (5%) for a program are made below the fringe.

10. What if I missed the Change of Preference date and time? What can I do?
If you did not change your preferences during the designated period, your initial list of preferences will be your final list. You do however have one small window of opportunity after first round offers in January to apply for a Negotiated Offer.

These offers are designed to give applicants a final opportunity to apply for a program lower down on their list or not on their list of preferences.

You negotiate directly with the Institute- not via VTAC.

Best wishes for the future,