

What I Wish I Knew podcast transcript



Title: What I Wish I Knew

Episode 3: About VTAC: from preference tips to scholarships

Creator: Swinburne Marketing

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[Intro music up]

00:00:04:02 - 00:00:22:02

Sam

Hi everyone, and welcome back to episode three of What I Wish I Knew, Swinburne's VTAC podcast for year 12s. I'm your host, Sam Eddy, and I'm joined by Swinburne student Sam and our two VTAC experts, Elise and Amanda. So we've covered what goes into choosing a course, and ATARs and Entry Requirements in episodes one and two.

00:00:22:08 - 00:00:45:18

Sam

If you've missed them, make sure you check them out because there's lots of helpful tips on there. Next up we're going to be talking about VTAC applications with tips on accepting offers and what to avoid with VTAC preferencing. So it probably leads into a good question for you Amanda here around VTAC preferencing. And I can imagine students make mistakes with VTAC preferences and can you share some of those?

00:00:45:18 - 00:00:49:13

Sam

Obviously without names, but what are some good blunders you've seen?

00:00:49:13 - 00:01:09:13

Amanda

The biggest blunders are usually getting the course codes wrong. So one of the things that career practitioners do is that once preferences have been done, we can actually go in and check our students preferences. But not every school is as well resourced as the school that I'm at who pays me to do those sorts of jobs.

00:01:09:15 - 00:01:38:13

Amanda

So I guess if you don't have a careers practitioner who's doing that sort of thing, you know, logging into the tech and checking your preference list and really making sure that you've put the right campus is really, really important. And also in the past, I've had students who have put them in order of the ATARs, so they've wanted to get into a particular course, but the way they've put them into, their preferences is they've put the highest ATAR at the top and all the way down to the bottom ATAR.

00:01:38:13 - 00:01:44:17

Amanda

And then are very confused when they get that first preference and say, but hang on, that's not the course I wanted.

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Sam

Yeah, right.

00:01:45:06 - 00:01:56:15

Amanda

I actually wanted my third preference because that was a better location for me. So what I say to my students all the time is the first course you put in is your dream course. So where do I really want to go next year?

00:01:56:16 - 00:02:10:08

Amanda

What's my dream course? And then keep asking yourself, if I didn't get into that course, what would be my next, the next place that I'd really like to go? And that becomes your second preference all the way down to then your pathways.

00:02:10:08 - 00:02:12:14

Sam

And take the numbers completely out of consideration.

00:02:12:14 - 00:02:13:06

Amanda

Take the numbers out.

00:02:13:07 - 00:02:13:14

Sam

Yeah.

00:02:13:14 - 00:02:20:11

Amanda

And, from the time in which a student does an application in sort of August, September, they actually have access to their preferences.

00:02:20:11 - 00:02:24:13

Amanda

They can change them as many times as they like before the results come out.

00:02:24:18 - 00:02:24:24

Sam

Yeah.

00:02:24:24 - 00:02:41:12

Amanda

And I really like to have all of that done before the results come out. So what I'll do is generally wait until my students have finished their exams and then contact them and say, hey, I noticed that you you know, you've got these courses but you don't really have a solid backup plan.

00:02:41:12 - 00:02:58:08

Amanda

Do you want to have a chat about what we could put on your list. You've maybe you've still got two preferences blank. So we could put a diploma down there. And then during change of preference period, do you need to come and see me and speak about, you know, what are my options and what could I do?

00:02:58:08 - 00:03:23:13

Amanda

And that's where we'll always look at what are those pathway options? And there's things that young people don't even know about, like most universities or particularly the dual sectors. So when I say dual sector, they're all universities and TAFEs. They're actually both. And so they have really strong pathway programs where you can get you might start in a diploma and then it gives you credit towards the degree and you just continue on with your studies.

00:03:23:13 - 00:03:34:06

Amanda

So there are legitimately lots and lots of options and really young people don't need to panic if at the end of the day, the result is not what they thought it would be.

00:03:34:09 - 00:03:35:07

Sam

Yeah, 100%.

00:03:35:07 - 00:03:49:08

Elise

I'd love to add on to that in terms of pathways too. I think there's another kind of situation that I think some students maybe don't always think about in terms of a pathway, but, it's always really important too to know if you've got any kind of subject prerequisites and that you've met the requirements for that.

00:03:49:08 - 00:04:10:24

Elise

So for example, a lot of courses at a lot of institutions are going to need a 20 in English or 25 in English. And you know, I've heard of students getting 90 plus ATARs and getting a 19 in English and not being eligible for a huge range of courses that they otherwise thought they would be in that, you know, being a really big surprise to them because they're obviously really high achieving students and really like high performing as well.

00:04:11:01 - 00:04:29:02

Elise

But you know, that that they're not eligible now for a huge range of degrees because of that as well. So it's that's why it's really important that, you know, even if, you know, you're really confident in your academic ability, it's really important to make sure you are putting different pathways and alternatives down. And that will allow you to get where you need to be, just in case you do fall short of something like a subject prerequisite as well.

00:04:29:04 - 00:04:56:05

Amanda

And that's the same with early closing dates too. Students need to really look at if there's any folios. So, universities that have selection tasks or folios or, you know, other criteria for selection, most of

those, will need to be on your VTAC list by 30th of September. So you just need to make sure that you've, you know, you've gotten into VTAC early, you've done your preferences before

00:04:56:05 - 00:05:16:13

Amanda

Timely applications close because for two reasons: You might have extra requirements that you've got to do. They don't need to be done by the 30th of September necessarily, but that course has to be on your list by the 30th of September, and you don't want to end up with extra fees. So it becomes a lot more expensive to apply to VTAC after the 30th.

00:05:16:18 - 00:05:41:13

Elise

Yeah, definitely. And that probably yeah links back to what I was talking about with subject prerequisites earlier that yeah, there are some courses that will have interviews and portfolios that you might have to do even auditions as well. So again, just really important to check what is a requirement for the course that you're looking at. Because you need to make sure for a lot of those that you have done them sooner rather than later, and make sure that, you know, you've been in touch with the institution if it's, you know, an audition or something to make sure that that's scheduled in as well.

00:05:41:13 - 00:05:47:13

Sam

If that is the case, Elise does VTAC actually provide that information once you put that preference on?

00:05:47:13 - 00:05:56:08

Elise

Yeah so you will get a notification from VTAC for that as well. So if you do preference any courses that have additional requirements, then you'll also get an email about those as well

00:05:56:08 - 00:05:57:00

Sam

From VTAC?

00:05:57:01 - 00:05:58:00

Elise

Yeah from VTAC.

00:05:58:00 - 00:06:03:12

Sam

Okay great. So that takes us to the end of our questions for VTAC there

00:06:03:12 - 00:06:24:24

Sam

But what I wanted to move on to next was to have a conversation around scholarships, because there is a lot of sometimes misunderstanding, I guess, would be the best way to describe it, around who can actually apply for a scholarship. And so I think I'll start again with the yourself, Elise because obviously VTAC does house most of the scholarships for institutions.

00:06:24:24 - 00:06:29:20

Sam

So if a student wants to apply for a scholarship, how can they do that through VTAC?

00:06:29:23 - 00:06:48:19

Elise

Yeah, really good question. Yeah. So you can apply for scholarships through VTAC as part of your application as well. So one of the really important things to note about scholarships is they're not just for the 99.95 ATAR students. There's a huge, huge range of different scholarships for a huge range of different students and a huge range of different reasons that you may be eligible for.

00:06:48:21 - 00:07:04:04

Elise

And so these might be things like if you're from a rural or regional area, if you're the first one family to go to university, and a huge range of other conditions, you may be eligible for a scholarship. So these are access and equity based funds. So they're different to merit based which are ATAR based, scholarships.

00:07:04:04 - 00:07:23:08

Elise

So it's definitely worth putting your hat in the ring. So applying when you put your application in for your preferences is another section you can fill in, to be considered for scholarships as well. And again, someone's got to get the money. So it's always good to make sure you apply, even if, you know, you think that a scholarship is something that might be out of reach for you or you think that it wouldn't it be a possibility

00:07:23:10 - 00:07:47:11

Elise

Universities really want and, you know, institutions really want to make sure that the right students are getting, the funds and the scholarships that, are eligible. So it's really important to make sure you apply for everything that you are eligible for. In saying that, there are some scholarships to which, again, you can see this on the VTAC website that, you apply through the institution directly, just have a look on our website about ones that they might have that a separate application process, and that you might need to go directly as well.

00:07:47:13 - 00:08:08:10

Amanda

We talk to every student about applying for scholarships. We encourage every student to apply. The school I work at, it has a lot of fairly privileged students. But, we also have students who are on humanitarian scholarships, and they would be eligible for a whole range of, of scholarships as well. So the scholarship process is really easy.

00:08:08:10 - 00:08:27:12

Amanda

You do it as part of your VTAC application. So we really think that it's important that everyone puts their hat in that ring and just sees what's available for them. I mean, there's scholarships even to attract, you know, more diversity into particular study areas. Maybe if there's a lack of representation of women you can get scholarships for that.

00:08:27:12 - 00:08:38:09

Amanda

So you'd be amazed at what's available out there. And it is really worth just spending the extra ten minutes, which I think is really all it takes with your VTAC application. Yeah, I would just say

00:08:38:09 - 00:08:39:12

Sam

I mean people always say this is so easy.

00:08:39:15 - 00:08:40:06

Amanda

It is easy.

00:08:40:07 - 00:08:42:13

Sam

What what is it? What do you do?

00:08:42:13 - 00:08:45:00

Elise

So when you do your application, basically create your account.

00:08:45:00 - 00:09:01:13

Elise

You pop all of your preferences in and then the next stage is after that you can submit an application for SEAS and then you can submit an application for scholarships as well. So it's really easy. It's pretty much a matter of just making sure all of the information that you've put in your application is accurate, because VTAC will use that as the basis of your scholarship application.

00:09:01:13 - 00:09:19:12

Elise

So when you create your profile, you put things in, like your school and your, address and a little bit of other information about yourself. And VTAC uses that information as part of your scholarship application, so you don't have to fill in this huge, onerous document. It's pretty much just like a section to opt in and basically tick a box to say that you want to be considered for scholarships.

00:09:19:12 - 00:09:23:22

Sam

To all our listeners out there, no reason why you should not be applying for a scholarship.

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Elise

Definitely. Yeah.

00:09:24:17 - 00:09:39:16

Sam

Definitely. Amanda, in terms of applying for scholarships that, do require direct to institution, do you find that they do involve more, application time and process from students?

00:09:39:16 - 00:10:04:03

Amanda

Most of them are, I think, administered through VTAC but there's some amazing scholarships out there for, technology, particularly women in technology. I mean, a few years ago, Telstra had a scholarship where any student studying, a female student studying technology, any sort of technology course at university could apply for a, a very big sort of scholarship that way.

00:10:04:05 - 00:10:25:21

Amanda

There are websites that you can go on to where you can search for all different types of scholarships that are available, and there are lots out there. Maybe you're a student from a low SES background who's looking to get a scholarship for accommodation at a university campus. So, you know, there might be specific scholarships that you're looking for that you can search for.

00:10:25:23 - 00:10:35:09

Amanda

I would encourage you to apply for those, the other thing that, students don't think to do is apply for scholarships once they've started university.

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Sam

Yeah, okay.

00:10:35:22 - 00:10:52:23

Amanda

So a lot of the scholarships that are available in particular institutions are actually available for current students. So once you started at an institution, you should also then be looking for scholarships for current students and applying for those, say for your second year.

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Sam

Are you doing that Sam?

00:10:55:10 - 00:11:06:19

Samuel

100%. And just to add to that, a lot of those scholarships you can keep reapplying for, as the semester, finishes and starts again.

00:11:06:21 - 00:11:11:11

Sam

What about in terms of getting a scholarship, are you limited to one or can you apply for multiple?

00:11:11:13 - 00:11:22:04

Samuel

You can apply for multiple. You just have to read the terms and conditions of each scholarship, because a lot of times the scholarships are provided by different, bodies.

00:11:22:06 - 00:11:51:20

Samuel

Whether it's through the university itself or third party organization or the government. I know one of the big ones that a lot of people will try to apply for each year is the New Colombo Plan, scholarship. And that's a, I think is it six months to a year? That's, allows a student to go overseas, to, study abroad, do an internship, and, learn a new language.

00:11:51:20 - 00:11:54:15

Samuel

And that's all provided by the scholarship.

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Sam

Do they take mature age applicants?

00:11:56:18 - 00:11:58:05

Amanda

Or career practitioners?

00:11:58:05 - 00:12:01:24

Sam

Yes. I'm happy to put my hat in the ring for that.

00:12:02:01 - 00:12:11:19

Amanda

You know, if you do want a scholarship, I would recommend you get online and start looking and putting in your search criteria, looking, going via the institutions that you're applying for.

00:12:11:19 - 00:12:19:00

Amanda

They all have scholarship portals where you can put information in and search for particular scholarships, and then have a look at how you apply.

00:12:19:00 - 00:12:29:09

Sam

Yeah, and I think that's pretty common across the board. Like I know the one at Swinburne's really good. You can kind of put in your current circumstances and it will actually shortlist all the scholarships that you're potentially eligible for.

00:12:29:15 - 00:12:51:11

Sam

We'll leave a link for that in the show notes as well for our listeners. So Elise I have a question around early entry programs and the relationship with VTAC so in terms of getting an early offer, quite often students will apply early to the institution directly, but they still need to put that preference or early offer through VTAC. Can you explain what some important considerations might be with that?

00:12:51:12 - 00:13:09:00

Elise

Yeah, definitely. So yeah, when you, apply for an early entry program at an institution, that's with that university or the institution directly. So you put that application with them. And then, you know, they process that all their own. But you do always still need to submit an application through VTAC as well with that. Ideally with that preference on your list.

00:13:09:00 - 00:13:27:21

Elise

But in saying that if you receive an early entry offer for any of the institutions, it doesn't have to be your first preference ever. You should still put your preferences in wish list order. It can fall anywhere on that list and the institution won't know where that is and it. But yeah, it's important to note that you can still, I guess, for lack of a better term, use those early entry offers as pathways.

00:13:27:21 - 00:13:47:20

Elise

If it's not at your chosen institution. But it's important to note that you still put all of those preferences in your wish list offer. The other thing to keep in mind, too, is for some institutions. If you've gotten an early entry offer, it will be a different course code on VTAC. So you just need to make sure that if your offer is with an institution and that you follow all the instructions you need to make sure you can access that early offer.

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Elise

But again, in saying that, still making sure your preference, as always in your wish list, order and that you're making sure, yeah, that you're doing it as per what you want to study. Not, you know, being, I guess, swayed by feeling like you need to put your early entry offer first. You should still put it where you feel it is suitable in your preference list.

00:14:03:19 - 00:14:11:13

Sam

Yeah, I often say like, even if you are super confident you're going to get your ATAR still put in an early entry application. Do you give similar advice? Amanda?

00:14:11:13 - 00:14:24:14

Amanda

Yeah, absolutely. Why wouldn't you? I mean, those schemes are there really to recognize whether you've got a school recommendation, whether you're doing things outside of school that add to your success beyond school?

00:14:24:16 - 00:14:32:06

Amanda

There's lots of different criteria. And if there's an early entry program at a university that you want to go to, you should absolutely apply for it.

00:14:32:10 - 00:14:41:17

Sam

Yeah. 100%. I always make a joke too, like, you never know what's going to happen on exam day. You could be walking along and roll your ankle and then you can't sit your final exam and your results are skewed.

00:14:41:17 - 00:14:46:15

Sam

So it is definitely worth having, you know, a bit of peace of mind or a back up option ready to go for sure.

00:14:46:15 - 00:14:47:09

Elise

Yeah, definitely.

00:14:47:10 - 00:14:57:18

Sam

Thanks Elise, Amanda and Sam, I think there's a lot of really useful tips here for year 12s embarking on their VTAC applications. Hopefully you, the listeners at home have taken this great advice on board.

00:14:57:20 - 00:15:16:02

Sam

As always, if you have any questions, please do reach out to our student advisors at Swinburne. They'll happily answer any burning queries that you have and join us for the next episode of Swinburne VTAC podcast What I Wish I Knew to discuss Change of Preference and what you need to look out for during that period. Thanks and see you next time.

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