

Saturday, 2 July 2022

University's new entry system improving access and academic success

The latest round of the University of Tasmania's Schools Recommendation Program opens today, with results from previous years showing that it is both creating access for more students and improving academic success rates.

From today students can apply to study at the University of Tasmania through the Program, rather than waiting for exam results and their ATAR score. The Program recognises that Year 11 and 12 teachers are uniquely placed to recommend students for university.

Entering its third year, the Program is now the preferred avenue to university in Tasmania for Year 12 students. More than 92% of last year's Year 12 students who applied for the University of Tasmania used the Program, which is improving access for students and supporting academic success.

The Director of the University's Peter Underwood Centre and Chair of Academic Senate, Professor Natalie Brown, joined the Premier Jeremy Rockliff and Minister for Education Roger Jaensch to launch this year's Program at the School Leaver Expo in Launceston.

Professor Brown led the work to design the Schools Recommendation formula. She said entry through the Program provided surety and eased the pressure on Year 12 students by providing them with their offer before they sat their final exams, which is still a requirement.

"We have found that the certainty they have about their immediate future means they are less anxious, which assists with their academic performance," Professor Brown said.

"Access to university for Tasmanian school leavers is of utmost importance and, with two years of this system behind us, we are very pleased to see the increase in the diversity of students who are applying."

For example, the number of Tasmanian Year 12s commencing with a disclosed disability in 2022 is 30 percent higher than the number before the Program was introduced, and the number of students commencing at university with a low or no ATAR is 23 percent higher. Open to all Australian Year 12 students, the Program is also helping to attract record numbers from the mainland, up 10 percent in 2022.

"We're seeing the impact of removing barriers to education, and we are also seeing stronger academic results," Professor Brown said. "The first cohort of students who came to university through the Program has completed their first year and their academic progress is better than prior cohorts who came in largely through the ATAR system."

Bachelor of Fine Arts student Eva Lawrence applied through the Program in 2021 on the recommendation of her college.

"I thought this option was a great way to alleviate some of the pressure of exams knowing they cause me a lot of stress and that I would receive an offer before my final exams and my ATAR," Eva said.

“Receiving the early university offer completely changed the way I felt about finishing Year 12. It made my final year of college much more enjoyable and meant I was able to balance a much healthier school, work and social lifestyle.”

Eva encouraged all Year 12 students to use the program. She said the process was incredibly simple and there was plenty of support to help those who needed it.

Professor Brown said the university is improving the application process each year with a new streamlined application and assessment portal for students and schools now in place.

This year the highly popular Nursing course will be included in the SRP, meaning that all undergraduate courses except Medicine, Paramedicine and Medical Radiation, are available under the SRP.

Applications from Year 12s are open from now until 7 October. While all eligible students will receive their offer ahead of sitting their TCE exams in November, they must still complete Year 12.

For more information and to apply: utas.edu.au/srp

About the School Leaver Expos

Our School Leaver Expos are an opportunity for students in Year 11 or 12, or recently finished Year 12, to find out everything they need to know about their future study at the University of Tasmania. **The Hobart School Leaver Expo will be held tomorrow from 10am – 2pm at the Podium Building, 42 Melville Street.** University staff will be on hand to help school leavers navigate the application and admission processes, identify possible scholarships and discuss accommodation options.

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