

A Guide for Students from a Refugee or Asylum Seeking Background

Information on how to access and
succeed in higher education in Australia



CREATE



Authors

Tayebeh Ahmadi
Ailsa Lamont
Karen Dunwoodie
Alex Newman

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Contributors

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Please note this Guide provides general information and is not intended to and does not constitute legal advice regarding access to education for those from a refugee or asylum-seeking background.

The law, particularly in relation to access to education and the legal status of refugees in Australia and overseas, is complex and subject to change based on government policy and legislation. The particular circumstances must be considered in every case, and for that reason legal advice should be sought.

The authors disclaim any and all liability arising from reliance on the contents of this report however caused.

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The purpose of this guide

Education is the best way to transform the lives of young people who have sought protection on Australia's shores. A growing number of Higher Education (HE) institutions across the country recognise the vital role they can play and have stepped up to offer scholarships and other support to people from a refugee and asylum-seeking background who want to gain an education qualification in Australia.

Accessing higher education can still be challenging however, especially if you are not familiar with the Australian education system, so this guide has been designed to meet the specific needs of students from a refugee background (SfRB).

It provides essential information and advice for prospective students on how to gain entry to education; how to find the best pathways, select the right course and navigate the complexities of the application process. It also offers guidance on how to find and apply for scholarships and where to go to seek further support and information.

The Guide defines key terminologies and covers essential topics, including course selection, visa entitlements, available scholarships and government funded courses, and how to apply as well as outlining some of the educational pathway options. It also provides information on the vital support services on offer at institutions, which help students to succeed once they have begun their course of study.

Throughout this Guide we highlight real examples of how people from a refugee or asylum-seeking background have been able to overcome any hurdles and go on to gain qualifications in their chosen field of study.

Education is the best way to change lives so we hope that this CREATE student guide will provide the necessary knowledge and support to help and encourage anyone from a refugee or asylum-seeking background who wishes to access higher education in Australia.

Glossary of terms

Asylum Seeker

A person who has left their country of origin, has applied for recognition as a refugee in another country and is awaiting a decision on their application.

Higher Education Institutions

A generic term to describe universities, VET and TAFE institutes.

Humanitarian Protection Visa

The onshore asylum/protection component offers protection to asylum seekers in Australia who are found to be refugees according to the United Nations Refugee Convention or who for other reasons are under complementary protection.

The offshore resettlement component offers resettlement to refugees and people from refugee backgrounds who are overseas.

Refugee

Any person who because of 'a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside their country of his [sic] nationality and is unable or owing to such fear is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who not having a nationality and being outside the country of his formal habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it' (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951).

TAFE

A TAFE is a government-run Technical and Further Education institution that provides education after high school in a wide range of vocational courses.

VET

VET stands for Vocational Education and Training. VET covers all vocational training in Australia, both public and private.

Useful definitions

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Students gain qualifications and skills for employment or further study. VET Courses include Certificates I – IV, Diplomas and Advanced Diploma Courses.

Free TAFE

Some State Governments have an initiative that pays tuition fees for eligible students to study at an institute of TAFE (Technical and Further Education). These may include non-apprenticeship and apprenticeship pathway courses. Free TAFE courses give students qualifications and skills for employment and are a pathway to further study. Please note these may be subject to visa restrictions.

Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

Refugees with an eligible permanent or temporary visa can access free English lessons under the Adult Migrant English Program.

Note: students with Humanitarian, Permanent Protection, TPV and SHEV visas can access either 510, 610 or 910 hours of free English language tuition depending on their visa subclass, as well as receiving access to free childcare.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

English classes which help students to improve their language skills and open up pathways to further study or employment.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit

You can apply for RPL or credit if you can demonstrate that you already have some of the skills or knowledge in certain units of your chosen degree thanks to previous work experience (RPL) or study (credit). Receiving RPL or credit can reduce the number of units you have to take, and in some cases may shorten the duration of study in your new program.

Credit will only be granted if you can demonstrate or provide evidence that you have previously successfully covered the required content and learning outcomes of the unit/s for which you are seeking credit.

Abbreviations

BV – Bridging Visa

CREATE – Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education

RCOA – Refugee Council of Australia

RESIG – Refugee Education Special Interest Group

SfRB – Student from a Refugee Background

SHEV – Safe Heaven Enterprise Visa

TPV – Temporary Protection Visa

Which course and which higher education institution?

Choosing the right course to study can be difficult but there are resources available and people to talk to who can help you make that choice.

It is important to think carefully about what existing skills and knowledge you have that you might be able to build on and the long-term aspirations you have for your career, so you can choose a course that matches your skill level and employment goals. There may also be more than one possible study route that would lead to your desired career destination, so it is important to research what options are open to you and to keep an open mind.

Below are a number of online and face-to-face resources that you can use to help select the right course of study for you at TAFEs, colleges and universities across Australia:

- Find out about employment opportunities and what qualifications and experience are needed for different occupations at the MyFuture website: myfuture.edu.au
- Use the ComparED online tool compared.edu.au to explore and compare higher education institutions and study areas. The results are based on surveys of more than 2 million students and measure graduate employment outcomes and student and employer satisfaction.
- All institutions provide lists of their courses online (go to the institution's website and search for 'find a course') and most of these offer detailed information about what subjects are contained in each course and which careers they typically lead into. Another useful resource with information about universities and VET providers across Australia is the Good Universities Guide: gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/course-provider
- My Skills website is the national directory of vocational education and training (VET) organisations and courses: myskills.gov.au
- TAFE Directory Australia: tda.edu.au
- Universities Australia: universitiesaustralia.edu.au/our-universities/university-profiles
- Attending Open Days – all higher education institutions run events where they open the doors of their campuses to the public. These can be a great way to find out more information as well as a chance to talk to lecturers, teachers and current students about what it is like to study there. You can find information about university, TAFE and college open days all across Australia at openday.com.au
- As well as information days, you can contact staff directly at the institution you are interested in to talk through your options. Many institutions also have information centres where you can drop in or make an appointment to talk to course advisors even if you are not yet a student there.
- If you are a current student, you can talk to your teachers, lecturers or career counsellors about the different courses and various options that might be available to you there or at other institutions.

For instance, check the course descriptions to see if there are any differences in specialisations offered within the degree or diploma (as an example, a Bachelor of Business at one university might include a specialisation in digital marketing while a different business degree might offer a major in logistics management).

When thinking about your long-term career goals, it can be very valuable to choose a course which includes an internship or other form of professional, practical experience as an integrated part of the program as these can give you a real advantage once you graduate and are looking for work. Many courses and degrees offer some form of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) but you often have to plan ahead to make sure you can fit it into your schedule and meet the application deadlines, so start planning as early as possible in your studies.

Other important factors to consider include the duration of study and when the program starts; most higher education programs start once a year in February but some have mid-year entry or even multiple start dates. Other issues to think about include the physical location and how easy it will be for you to reach the campus where your preferred program is offered, and what scholarships or other financial support are on offer.

It is important to consider the academic entry requirements for your preferred course and how much credit the higher education institution might be prepared to offer for any previous study you have undertaken. If English is not your native language and you have not come through the Australian high school system you may also have to meet English language requirements and these vary between institutions and courses.

- As mentioned above, one of the best ways to find the information you need is to go to the open days offered at almost all higher education institutions. They are free to attend.
- Many higher education institutions' websites and social media pages allow you to read reviews by current students or past students (alumni) which is a great way to get other students' perspectives on what it is really like to study there.
- The centralised application authority in each state and territory has an online course and university search facility, for example, VTAC for courses in Victoria or UAC in NSW.

"In the end I had offers from several universities. One university put fewer conditions on the scholarship and offered me more credit than the others so I chose that one."

Bachelor degree student, Victoria

Higher education options

Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses are offered by government-run colleges known as 'TAFEs' and by private colleges. VET courses are very practical and highly prized by many employers as they focus on developing skills and technical knowledge which can be used in the workplace and often include a placement in partnership with the relevant industry.

Unlike studying at school or university, VET programs are competency-based which means they are geared towards attaining skills to meet industry-defined standards. VET courses are often self-paced and flexible. This fact sheet from the Australian Government provides more background on competency-based training: myskills.gov.au/media/1776/back-to-basics-competency-based-training.pdf

If you are applying straight from high school in Australia you can apply for VET courses using the same system used for applying to university in your state or territory, such as VTAC in Victoria or UAC in NSW.

VTAC (Victoria)

delta.vtac.edu.au/CourseSearch/searchguide.htm

UAC (NSW and the ACT)

uac.edu.au/future-applicants/search-for-courses

QTAC (Queensland)

qtac.edu.au/courses-institutions

SATAC (South Australia and the Northern Territory)

satac.edu.au/undergraduate-course-search

TISC (Western Australia)

tisc.edu.au/static/home.tisc



"You are special. You have not been forgotten. We are here and working on your behalf to help you, so grasp this opportunity."

Alfred Mupenzi, Inclusion & Diversity Team,
Western Sydney University

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

VET as a pathway

Students often enrol in VET courses as an end in themselves but they can also be used as a stepping-stone or 'pathway' to enter university. This can be particularly important if you wish to study at university but have not finished 12 years of schooling or were not able to study or get a pass in a subject required for a particular degree (known as a 'prerequisite').

Many universities accept a Certificate IV (four) qualification as being equivalent to a Year 12 High School Certificate and therefore enough to enter a Bachelor degree. In some cases, universities might require this Certificate to be in a related field of study, for example, you might need to have a Certificate IV in Information Technology in order to enter a Bachelor of Information Technology.

"We understand that every student is an individual and that visa statuses and processes are complex and prone to change so we work with every student to find the best pathway for everyone."

**Kylie Reid, Vocational Pathways Officer,
Chisholm Institute**

How a TAFE pathway worked for me

I have always wanted to be a nurse as I want to help other people. I was 25 years old when I arrived in Australia after spending 8 years in refugee camps. I only thought about study at university as my family wanted me to do that, but found I couldn't go straight to university as I hadn't finished 12 years of high school. The careers advisor told me about two options for entry into nursing at university: I could do Year 12 in school or TAFE, or I could study the Diploma of Nursing at TAFE.

I chose to study nursing as I wanted to start my nursing study as soon as possible, and because this pathway would give me some credit to continue nursing study in university. I took a while to get used to studying in TAFE. I had studied English at TAFE, but it was very different being in a mainstream course with Australian students and with a lot of new vocabulary. The education advisor for refugee students made sure I knew about all the support services at TAFE and helped me settle into the study. She showed me how to structure my study time, plan my assessment tasks, and oriented me in using the online systems. It wasn't always easy, but I finished my diploma 18 months later and then applied for university.

I received help from the advisor from TAFE to apply for university and apply for scholarships, which would have been very difficult for me to do alone. She informed me about the support services at the university and sent an email to their support person to introduce me. It was so hard starting at university. It was very different to TAFE, so much bigger, and harder to find everything. Having received credit for all my first year subjects, I also missed the orientation offered to all first year students.

Additionally, I hadn't connected with the support services, because I didn't think I'd need to, since I'd been studying for a while by then. However, I realised that university can be a very lonely place and it was hard to reach out for help because I didn't know who to turn to. By the end of the first semester I felt more settled, but there was a lot of stress up until then.

Having a TAFE/VET Diploma or an Advanced Diploma qualification might give you some credit into a university Bachelor degree which would mean having to take fewer subjects or units to complete your university degree. Some TAFEs and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) have specific articulation arrangements with universities so you can see in advance exactly how much credit you will be eligible for, while other universities will accept a VET qualification from any provider.

For more information about VET see:

asqa.gov.au/about/australias-vet-sector

For a list of TAFEs in each state see below:

gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/universities-tafes-colleges/tafes-in-australia

For more information about VET courses and qualifications see below:

studiesinaustralia.com/studying-in-australia/what-to-study-in-australia/types-of-education/vocational-education

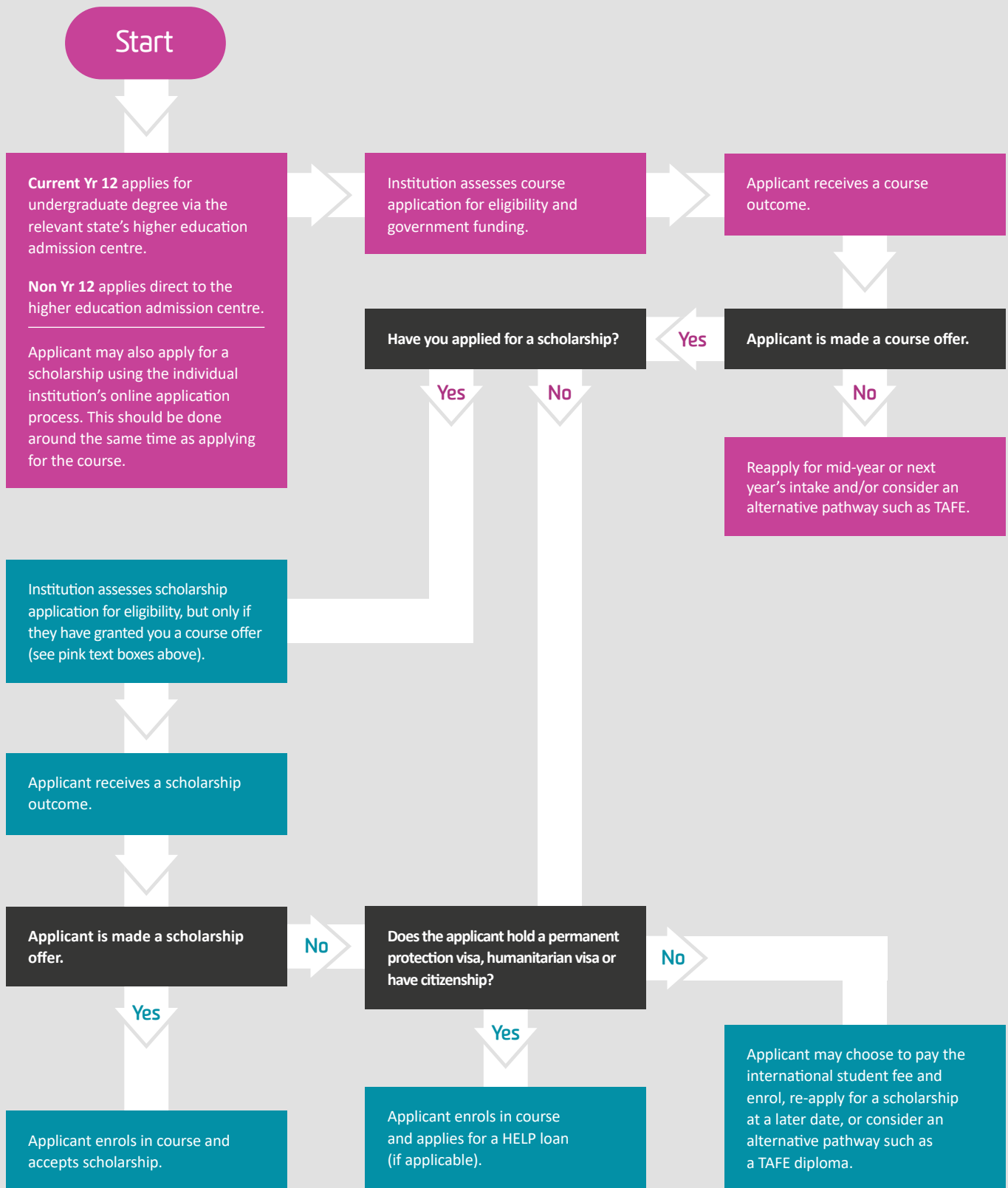
Tips

- Knowing your residency or visa status and whether or not you are registered with Centrelink will help determine which courses, fees and/or scholarships you are eligible for.
- Look for details on your Visa Grant Letter and/or do a VEVO check. A VEVO check will also need to be done or provided at the time of your enrolment.
- If you have a case worker, settlement worker or lawyer, ask them to confirm your visa or residency status.
- Helpful hint: Green Medicare card = permanent residency and blue Medicare card = temporary residency.

For Centrelink recipients

- If you are registered with Centrelink and have a Health Care Card, you should only be required to pay the lower concession fee rate.
- You can ask to talk to a Multicultural Service Officer at Centrelink to make sure you understand and are accessing the right support and services.

Pathways for students from a refugee background to access Australian higher education



Applying to a higher education institution

The admission and scholarship application process for SfRB varies considerably across higher education institutions. It will also depend on your visa status. Those on temporary visas are typically classified as international students and those on humanitarian or protection visas are classified as domestic students.

Important note:

Please check the exact application deadlines online as they vary for each higher education institution, for both admission and scholarships. You will also need to check individual institutions' websites on a regular basis for updates and changes.

How can we help?

We will do our best to keep abreast of current changes in policy and will keep you updated with our online version of this guide: deakincreate.org.au/resources

Alternatively, please check the Federal government's study assist webpage: studyassist.gov.au/help-loans/non-australian-citizens

Scholarships

Here are links to useful information about scholarships for people from a refugee background:

Deakin CREATE:

deakincreate.org.au

Refugee Education Special Interest Group (RESIG)

refugee-education.org

Refugee Council of Australia

refugeecouncil.org.au/scholarships-people-seeking-asylum-refugees

For a list of scholarships provided by different higher education institutions in each state visit

deakincreate.org.au/scholarships

We recommend that you also check with individual higher education institutions as the process and scholarship details differ from institution to institution and can change over time.

In addition to fee waiver scholarships, some universities also offer additional funds to students from a refugee background to assist with study and living costs. These generally range between \$500–\$7,000 per annum depending on the university.

A number of universities also provide financial support in the form of vouchers, grants and emergency loans and advice.

"I didn't get into University the first time I applied. I had three rejections. But I was persistent. I strengthened my personal statement to show how I was resilient and what a difference study would make to my life. Although the next year my circumstances hadn't changed, I got accepted to the course I wanted and I got a scholarship."

Undergraduate student, Melbourne



English language requirements

If English is not your native language but you have completed high school or a higher education qualification such as a Diploma in Australia then you should meet the English language requirements for entry to a wide range of courses of study. If not, then you may need to provide evidence of your English proficiency. This is usually done by sitting one of the tests mentioned below:

- IELTS academic (International English Language Testing System)
- TOEFL iBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language: internet-based)
- PTE academic (Pearson Test of English)
- Cambridge English C1 Advanced (formerly CAE) and Cambridge English C2 Proficiency (formerly CPE).

Please keep in mind that the minimum score required in these tests depends on the institution and course you wish to enter. As a general guide however, most TAFE courses require an overall IELTS score of 5.5 with no less than 5.0 in each band (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and most universities require an IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum score of 6.0 in each band. Some programs such as education, psychology and many of the allied health and medical professions have a higher English language requirement.

Another possible option is to study a pathway or foundation program. These are programs designed to offer an alternative route to university by offering an intensive academic preparatory program plus English language tuition if needed. The entry requirements to these programs are often lower than for standard undergraduate (Bachelor degree) entry while offering a provisional place in a university program on the condition that you successfully complete the pathway course. Please see the link below for further details: studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/australian-education/education-pathways



Support once you're at university, VET or TAFE

Student support services are your starting point for advice and information. If they can't assist you directly, they will help show you how to access a wide range of other services.

They might be known by different names at different institutions, for instance, Student Central, the Student Hub or Student Connect, but whatever the service is called they will have specialist staff whose job it is to support you with everything from course advice and enrolment to student cards, fees and financial assistance, lost property, making payments, scholarships and many other services.

Higher education institutions also provide a range of health and wellbeing services to students including medical services, counselling and support with disabilities.

Help is also at hand for academic issues through the teaching and learning service which you can often access via the library. They have dedicated staff who can help with questions about academic writing or grammar, exams or studies in general. They also offer a range of events and activities, such as peer assisted study sessions.

As well as the formal university support services there are of course lots of social clubs and activities where you can make friends and connect with your peers.

"Remember you are not alone – others go through similar problems and it can be hard. But it does get better.

Be active, be open, find friends and use all the help that is offered."

Ali (a current student)

"We expect you to work hard and meet academic standards. It will be tough... but we welcome you here and we are here to help you succeed"

John Tran, Widening Participation Unit, Macquarie University



What if...?

I have a tertiary or university degree from my home country

- Contact the Overseas Qualification Unit (OQU) in your state to ask for your credentials to be assessed for equivalence to Australian qualifications.
- If you have a professional qualification, contact the accrediting body for your industry to enquire about their requirements for professional recognition. Examples include CPA Australia for finance, accounting or business fields, ACS for IT and computing, and the AMC for medicine.
- Speak to a course advisor.
- Speak to a career counsellor.

I don't get into the course I applied for

- Speak to a course advisor.
- See deakincreate.org.au or studyinaustralia.gov.au/English/Australian-Education/Education-pathways to find out about different pathways.
- Check out VET or TAFE for a course you can take as a pathway to your future degree and employment.

I am from the LGBTQIA+ community

- Look for LGBTQIA+ student organisations and clubs at your institution for support and advice.
- Contact the 'equity and diversity' unit at your institution to find out about programs and support available.
- Check out the 'health and wellbeing' unit at your institution for counselling services and emergency mental health contact numbers.
- Also see the following websites:
tinadixson.com.au/tag/queer-sisterhood-project
au.reachout.com/articles/lgbtqi-support-services
manycolouredsky.org/rainbow-to-refuge-for-queer-asylum-seekers-and-refugees

I have a disability

- Check out the 'disability support' section at your institution to find out more about what support is available.
- Contact the 'equity and diversity' unit at your institution to find out about what programs and support are available.

I need help with my visa

- Seek advice from a registered (MARA) migration agent. See the link below to find officially registered agents.
mara.gov.au/using-an-agent/using-a-registered-migration-agent/getting-help-with-your-visa-application
- Check out 'legal services' at your institution.
- Contact any of the free legal services in your state, for example refugeelegal.org.au

I fail a subject

- Contact your faculty to discuss the issue with your course coordinator.
- Check your institution's policy.
- Explore your institution's support services to get help with any academic or personal issues.

I am sick and cannot sit an exam

- Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to apply for 'special consideration' or a 'deferred exam'.

Note: Make sure you submit the application as soon as possible after the missed exam, you may also need to provide a doctor's certificate.

If you have a temporary or permanent medical issue, make sure you contact the 'diversity and inclusion' unit at least two weeks before the exam or the assignment due date.

I run out of money

- Check out the 'financial assistance' or 'welfare' section at your institution and look for financial support services, student loans and emergency grants.
- Look for part-time job opportunities available at your institution.

Note: If you do not know where to look for a job at your institution, you can always ask the staff at the Student Hub or the Careers Centre for help.

- Look for work off-campus. Ask friends who have a part-time job if they know of any employment opportunities at their workplace. Also check out your local area or online job search websites.

I need help with my resume, cover letter or interview skills

- See deakincreate.org.au
- Ask your institution's career advisor for any workshops or other support available.



I don't have a place to live

- You can ask refugee support services to help you find emergency accommodation.
- If you have a support person at your institution dedicated to looking after SfrB please inform them as soon as possible.
- You can ask the 'equity and diversity' unit at your institution for advice and help.

I want to study part-time

- In most higher education institutions, if you are enrolled in 1 or 2 units, you will be considered a part-time student.
- If you are classed as a domestic student you can choose how many units you want to study each semester however, you should keep in mind that each course has to be finished within a set time.
- Check your institution's website to add or discontinue a subject.
- There is an official 'census date' in every term or semester before which it is usually possible to make changes to your enrolment. It is very important to make sure you submit your application to study part-time before the census date to avoid any extra charges.
- Talk to the course coordinator within your faculty to seek advice and help.

I have experienced family or domestic violence

- Check out your institution's website to seek support, advice and more information on domestic violence.
- You can receive free counselling sessions at [lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/domestic-family-violence](https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/domestic-family-violence) and ask more about the financial and legal support available.

I need a medical certificate

- Most higher education institutions have free medical services where you can visit a doctor and get a medical certificate when needed.
- Visit your GP.

I get asked to provide a passport

- Use your ImmiCard.

I get asked for a form of ID

- Use your driver's licence.
- Use your ImmiCard.
- Use your passport if you have one.

I need to defer university for a certain amount of time

- If you want to defer an offer from a university to start later, you will need to complete a deferral form and notify the institution before their deadline.

Note: Keep in mind that depending on your university and the course, you may or may not be able to defer your offer.

- If you are already at university and need to take leave, you may apply for 'intermission' or 'study leave'.
- Make sure you talk to the institution first about the maximum time you can take leave for, whether it will impact your scholarship and what supporting documents you will need to provide.

I need career advice

- See [deakincreate.org.au](https://www.deakincreate.org.au)
- See [careerseekers.org.au](https://www.careerseekers.org.au)
- Talk to the career advisors at your institution.
- Talk to your tutors.
- Attend any career workshops or events held by your institution.

I just need to talk to someone

- Contact the counselling service at your institution and book an appointment.
- If you are in a crisis or having suicidal thoughts, call Lifeline on 13 11 14. They are open 24 hours a day and you can talk to them privately and completely confidentially.
- See [lifeline.org.au beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support](https://www.lifeline.org.au/beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support)
- You can call [headspace.org.au/eheadspace](https://www.headspace.org.au/eheadspace)



Current case studies

Selecting the right institution and degree

My name is Rahmat. I am a 27 years old Hazara male born and raised in Pakistan. I came to Australia in 2017. I am studying Bachelor of Law. I have previously studied a law degree for 2 years in my own country, however due to safety issues I could not complete my degree; therefore, I was keen to restart this degree in Australia.

I attended an information session at a refugee support agency co-ordinated by the Refugee Council of Australia. Most of the universities from this state were present. It gave me an opportunity to speak with the representatives from each university where I gained a greater understanding of what course they had on offer, the various locations of the university campuses, an understanding of the entrance requirements and what scholarships were on available.

I also got a clear understanding of the application process and who could potentially support or assist me in completing the online forms. To explain further, most (but not all) have people available to assist with the application process, it's worth checking out the individual websites (under the specific scholarship pages) and making contact with the persons responsible.

I applied for the scholarships at different universities. I received offers from 3 universities where I had to make a decision on which one, I wanted to accept. I considered different issues such as the courses available for me to study, the course requirements and the location of university campuses.

Omar Al Kassab: a lesson in perseverance

I come from the city of Homs in Syria where I completed my year 12 and 2 years of my mechanical engineering at university before I had to leave due to the Syrian war.

Arriving in Australia in 2014, I was motivated to get back on my higher education path. I attended English classes to develop and improve my language comprehension. After a couple of months when I felt ready, I decided to put in my university application through the Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre. I submitted an English translated version of my Syrian year 12 Certificate, a personal statement and 2 years of engineering transcripts and all the required information. I applied for multiple courses including Commerce and Business, Engineering and Pharmacology across all Victorian universities, and despite my high grades, I was rejected. I was so frustrated because nobody could explain to me the rationale behind the rejection, and with every conversation I had at each university I realised that the education system in Australia is designed to serve two groups of students:

- domestic students who finished year 12 certificate in Australia and are eligible for HECS Support
- international students who apply through international channels.

But I was in the middle, a domestic student with an international certificate, eligible for HECS support. Back then I would see the confusion on the staff faces every time they would look at my case and papers. To solve this obstacle, I decided to have a conversation with staff members in every university to learn about each university or program application's needs. The major milestone was learning from an RMIT staff member about an organisation called The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority which provides equivalency of international certificates to the Australian standards. I received from them a statement quoting that "my Syrian year 12 certificate is equivalent to Australian year 12 certificate". By this time, it was almost the middle of the year and I learnt some universities in Australia offer a mid-year intake, so I put a direct application to a couple of universities and accepted an offer to study Bachelor of Business at RMIT.

I have had a few challenges during the first year managing and navigating a new higher education system that is quite different to the one in my home country, and perhaps a lack of networks within the university at the time as well, resulted in a couple of assignments, educational and administrative tasks being submitted late. A year later, I progressed in my study, developed networks within the university, got involved in professional and student level activities and inclusion initiatives and RMIT has become more like home. I have also helped support many new arrival students enrol back at university.

I've graduated from RMIT university in 2018 and currently work as a strategy consultant and serve as an adviser to the board of the Bennelong Foundation where I have initiated the idea of this guide to provide solutions to this problem.

I am hoping this guide can be an "all you need to know" for incoming students in similar situations and where they can benefit from the collective experiences of those featured in this guide. Access to higher education should be a happy and major life milestone, not a process you have to navigate and obstacles that push you to the edge of giving up.

Omar Al Kassab

- Bachelor of Business, RMIT
- Board Adviser, The Bennelong Foundation
- Strategy Consultant, Monitor Deloitte
- Speaker, TEDx Canberra, 'At last, free'
- Recipient, Global Messenger of Peace Award
- Ambassador, Save the Children Australia
- Instigator of this Guide



Omar Al Kassab

Transition from education to employment

Below are a number of organisations who offer support to help you make the transition from education to employment

- Deakin CREATE
- University career services
- External refugee support services:
 - AMES Australia – VIC, NSW
 - ASRC (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre) – VIC, NSW, QLD
 - Brotherhood of St Laurence – VIC
 - Career Seekers – VIC, NSW
 - Mercy care – WA
 - Refugee Talent – QLD
 - SSI (Settlement Services International) – NSW, VIC.

Where to go to get further information and support

Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education (Deakin CREATE)
deakincreate.org.au

Prof Alex Newman a.newman@deakin.edu.au

Dr Karen Dunwoodie k.dunwoodie@deakin.edu.au

Refugee Council of Australia refugeecouncil.org.au

RESIG (Refugee Education Special Interest Group) refugee-education.org

Hope Co-op SfrRB consulting service hopecoop.org.au

Australian Department of Home Affairs Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO)
immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online

My Skills website is the national directory of vocational education and training (VET) organisations and courses myskills.gov.au

TAFE Directory Australia tda.edu.au

Universities Australia universitiesaustralia.edu.au/our-universities/university-profiles

For a list of scholarships available for SfrRB please refer to the following websites:
refugeecouncil.org.au

refugee-education.org

deakincreate.org.au

