



**Southern Cross
University**

A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

2027



scu.edu.au

CRICOS Provider: 01241G
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Australian University

Helping you support the next generation of changemakers

Choosing a university can be a fun but challenging time. Exams, ATARs, entry ranks and course choices – there's a lot of information to digest. As the parent or caregiver of a future university student, you might be wondering how it all works.

We've compiled some information about applying to university to make it a bit easier for you – and the future uni student in your life – to navigate your way through.



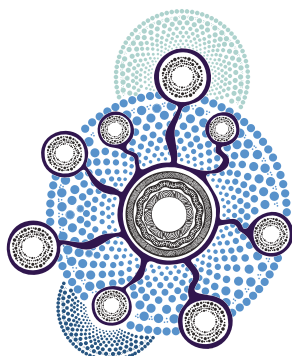
5-star Student Support in five study areas



Top 500 universities worldwide
World University Rankings 2026



83% of our graduates are employed full-time after completing their course
(QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey 2025)



Acknowledgement of Country

Southern Cross University acknowledges and pays respect to the ancestors, Elders and descendants of the Lands upon which we meet and study.

Acknowledgement of origins

We acknowledge Widjabal Country as the Country where Southern Cross University originated and grew, and from where it continues to grow. It seeded the growth of our Gumbaynggirr Campus in Coffs Harbour, our Yugambah Campus in Coolangatta and it planted the seeds to transform the Countries we are on.

Understanding our origins will make each step into the future a more purposeful one, leading all to transform tomorrow.

Artwork by Sheldon Harrington



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Applying for university

There are three main ways to apply for university.

1. Southern Cross University's Early Offer program.
2. Through a Tertiary Admission Centre (TAC).
3. Directly to the University.

How Tertiary Admission Centres work

Tertiary Admission Centres (TACs) receive and process applications for university courses. The system is state-based with a different TAC for each state.

As we have campuses in multiple states, your child can apply through UAC in New South Wales, QTAC in Queensland or VTAC in Victoria.

Applicants have the option to indicate preferences for different courses and universities through a TAC.

TACs release offers in rounds during the year. School leavers who are applying to start university the following year will generally find out just before Christmas (after ATARs are released) if they have been successful in their first choice. If they don't receive an offer for their first choice, they may receive an offer for their second or third choices.

The TACs don't make decisions about who gets into a course, rather they collate and advise applicants about their application.

There is a fee involved when applying through a TAC.

The process is simple and can be completed online. If the University requires additional information the TAC will contact the applicant directly. Your child can opt for you to act on their behalf through a TAC.



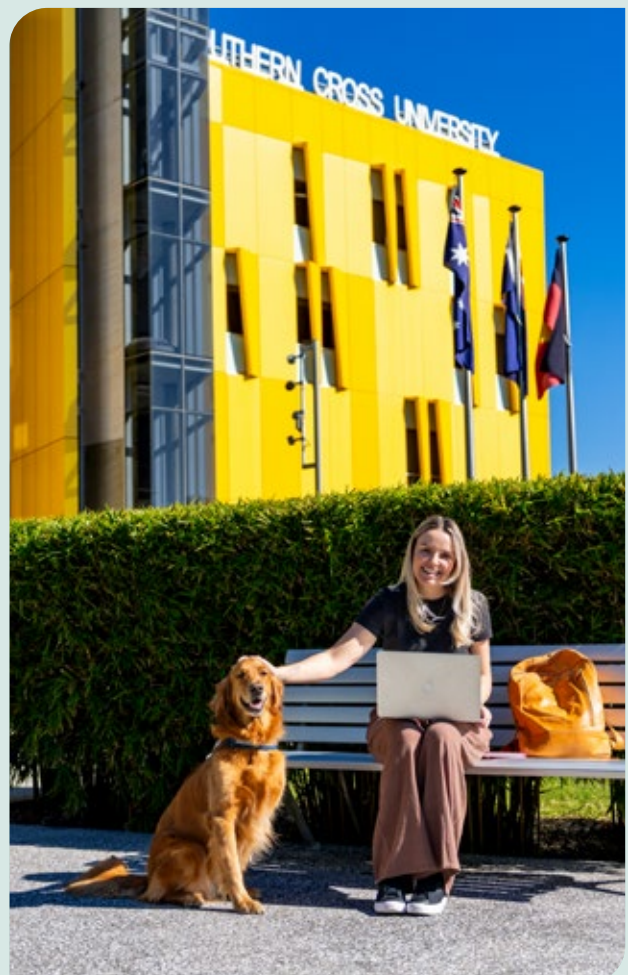
For NSW school leavers
uac.edu.au



For QLD school leavers
qtac.edu.au



For Victorian school leavers
vtac.edu.au



Early Offer

Year 12 is busy. Really busy.

Between schoolwork, exams, milestones and big decisions about what comes next, it can feel like everything is happening at once.

That's exactly why Early Offer exists.

Southern Cross Uni Early Offer lets Year 12 apply to university before exams and results, so they can secure an option now and move forward with confidence.

No waiting, no second-guessing — just clarity and control of the future.

With a Southern Cross Uni Early Offer, you can:

- Apply online for free in just a few minutes
- Secure a university option early
- Gain access to extra support, events and scholarship consideration
- Take the pressure off and focus on finishing Year 12 strong.

Don't wait until exams are over to think about what's next.

Take the step that gives you certainty, confidence and breathing room — apply for Early Offer today.

Your child's future starts now.



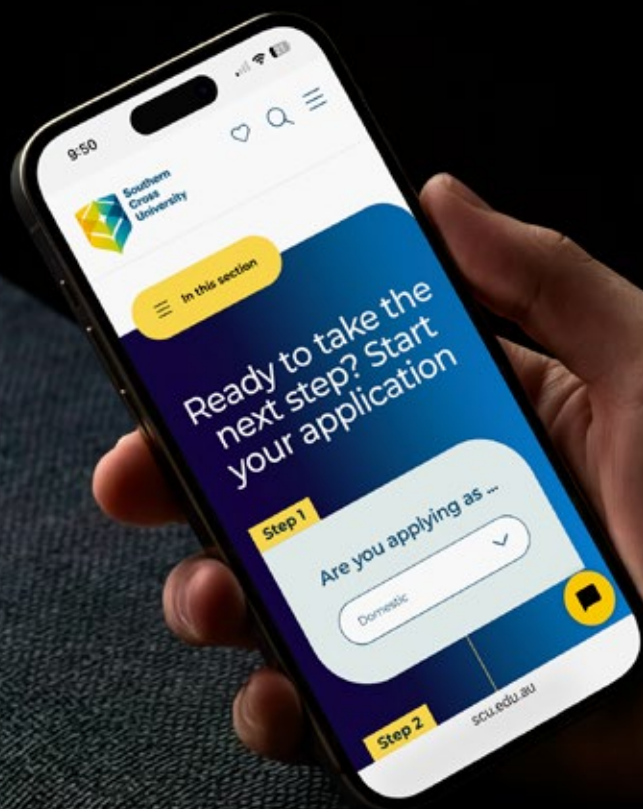
Apply today for an Early Offer
scu.edu.au/early-offer

How to apply directly to Southern Cross University

Applying directly is simple and can be completed online. Once you have chosen your preferred course, simply click on the Apply button on the course page. This will show a series of choices about where the course is offered and when it starts. Some courses offer two or three start dates a year, these are called 'intakes'.

Documents can be uploaded directly through the application portal, you'll be prompted at each relevant stage for these.

Applying is free.



For more information
scu.edu.au/apply



Pre-requisites and inherent requirements

Many courses at Southern Cross University have a practical component, especially health, education and veterinary science degrees that require you to complete practical experience in clinical or educational environments. These degrees may require you to be vaccinated or complete a police check before working with children.

Some courses have what are called 'inherent requirements'. These are characteristics that enable you to successfully complete a course, for example gross motor skills in a nursing degree.



Scan for details

How do ATARs and ranking work?

A student's ATAR – Australian Tertiary Admission Rank – is based on a combination of assessments during Year 12 and exam results at the end of Year 12. This varies from state to state. For example, in New South Wales the ATAR uses a scaled aggregate of a student's best two units of English and the best eight units from the remaining units. In Queensland, the ATAR is calculated based on an aggregate of the best five ATAR-eligible inputs.

Calculating an ATAR uses a complicated scaling algorithm to measure students against one another in any given cohort. Universities use the ATAR as a measure of academic performance in school leavers to make offers and determine cut-offs for a course. These change from year-to-year.

What if my child's ATAR is not enough?

Going straight from school to a degree is one way to start uni, but it's not the only way. If your child doesn't achieve the required ATAR to get into their course, the University may recommend they complete a pathway program first.

Southern Cross University has two excellent pathway programs suitable for school leavers. Both are fee-free and develop the academic skills and literacy that students will need at university to be successful. Undertaking a Diploma through SCU College is also an excellent way to commence university.

Transition to Uni

Six-week intensive program for school leavers starting in January. Successful completion of this program enables entry to most Southern Cross University Bachelor degrees*.

Preparing for Success Program

Three-month course offered on all main campuses or online. Can be completed full-time in three months or part-time over one year. Successful completion of this program enables entry to most Southern Cross University Bachelor degrees*.

Diplomas

Diplomas do not require a high ATAR (45) and take one year to complete full-time. Successful completion of a Diploma enables entry with credit towards a linked Bachelor degree.

Students of SCU College pathway programs get extra support to develop their academic skills.

Pathways to university

Secondary School



Scholars Program

Study a university unit while you're still at school.



ATAR

Direct entry to course based on ATAR.



Unistart for Schools

University preparation course delivered at school.



Transition to Uni

Fee-free intensive pathway course for recent school leavers



Early Offer

Streamlined application process to university for Year 12 students

Southern
Cross
University
Diplomas
and
Degrees

Non-school leaver or TAFE/VET



Preparing for Success Program

Fee-free academic preparation course offered on campus and online



Previous Study or experience



Testing and Assessment Program

Alternative entry scheme for Indigenous Australians



For more information
scu.edu.au/early-offer

*Please note some courses have additional entry requirements. See the web page for details.



Supporting your success

The Southern Cross Model – a better way to learn

Our academic model is designed with student success in mind. Six-week terms and immersive learning experiences create confidence and momentum with flexibility in your study schedule.

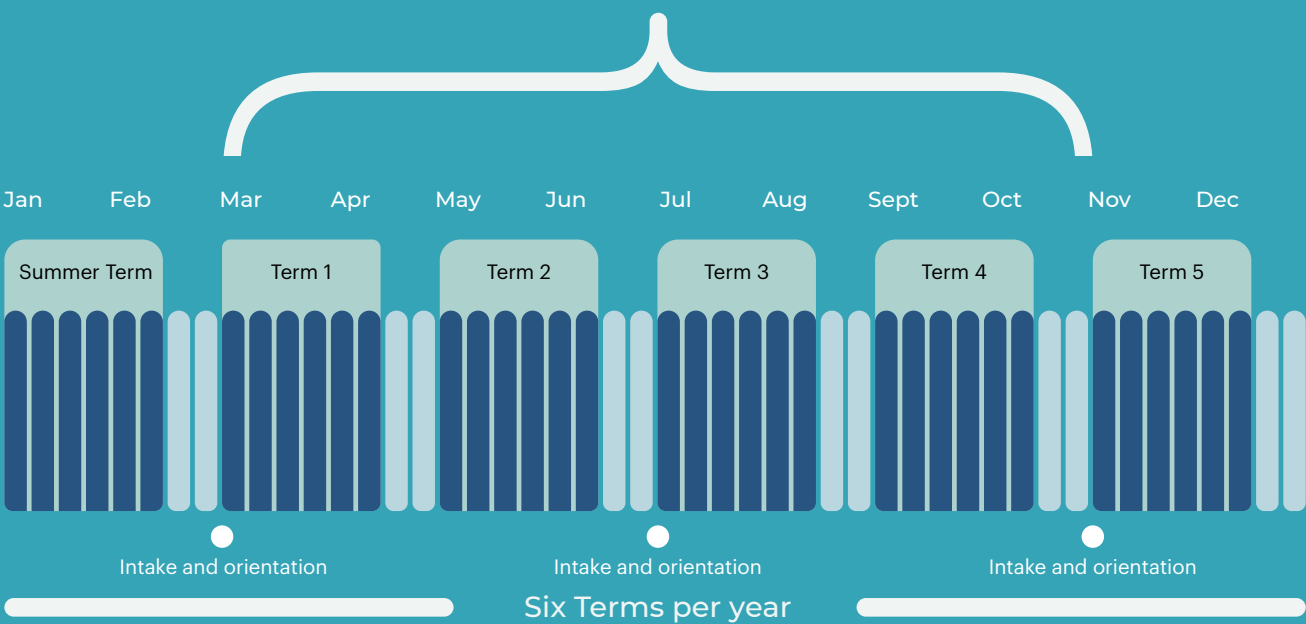


Learn more
scu.edu.au/southern-cross-model

{ 91% }

Student success rate
2025 unit success rates

Typical full-time enrolment



Student support services



Meet your academic personal trainer

Every new student receives 1:1 support

Starting university is super exciting but it can be a little daunting too. That's why, as a new undergraduate student, you'll be assigned a First Year Adviser. Your adviser is your go-to person for the first eight units of your course, which is your first year if you are studying full-time.

Think of your First Year Adviser as a kind of academic personal trainer. They can connect you with support

services at the University, help you navigate University systems and provide you with guidance and extra support should you need it in your studies, or in other aspects of student life.

They are specialists in your discipline and are there to help you succeed.



Careers and
employability
service



Equity and
inclusion services



Mentor
programs



Academic
skills help



Counselling
services



Student
advocacy



Indigenous
student support



Wifi and
tech services



For details visit
scu.edu.au/fya

Employability



Our students are set up to succeed. With careers and employability services, alumni mentor programs and internships facilitated through our expansive industry networks, you can hit the ground running upon graduation.

Students can access career coaching appointments, workshops, sample resumes and online modules to learn valuable networking and career management skills to kick-start their career.

{ 93% }

of our graduates find employment within four months of graduating - more than the national average.

(Graduate Outcomes Survey 2025)



From marketing assistant to brand manager in five years, Southern Cross Business graduate Carmel Smithers' career has progressed in leaps and bounds.

It all started with a conversation with the careers and employability team at Southern Cross University.

"I was considering where to apply for an internship while I was studying and made an appointment with a careers adviser at the University to talk about my options," Carmel said.

"I told them my goal after graduation was to work for a cosmetics company, so they put me in touch with the Sales and Marketing Director at ChemPro Chemist who had previously worked at Napoleon Perdis, the make-up brand. So, I got in touch with her and they set up a marketing internship for me which contributed towards my degree."

Carmel Smithers

Bachelor of Business graduate

Online Brand Manager, A Bit Hippy and Dr Zoo

Tuition Fees

Commonwealth -Supported Places

Tuition fees for most undergraduate degrees are subsidised by the Government. This is called a Commonwealth-Supported Place (CSP). A student pays part of the tuition and the Government pays the rest. Tuition fees are calculated per unit, not per course, and the fee structure for units is determined by the federal government. Eligible students can defer the payment of their part of the fees through the HECS-HELP scheme. This is a loan that a student repays only when their income reaches the repayment threshold. It's paid back a little at a time through the tax system.



For more information
scu.edu.au/fees/sca

Full Fee-Paying Place

A fee-paying student includes any domestic student who is paying the full (unsubsidised) tuition fee for a unit of study. Eligible students can defer the payment of their tuition fees through the FEE-HELP scheme.



For more information
studyassist.gov.au

Other study costs

Your costs could also include computer equipment and software, books, stationery, field trips, uniforms or other course-specific expenses such as travel for practicums, internships or industry experience.

Student Services and Amenities Fee

Also known as SSAF, the Student Services and Amenities Fee is a compulsory fee used to provide important services and amenities to students both on and off campus. It's charged per unit, based on the unit's credit point value. Eligible students have the option of deferring this fee through the SA-HELP loan scheme.

Important

All students will require a Unique Student Identifier (USI) number and those accessing a HELP Loan will also require a Tax File Number (TFN). Visit usi.gov.au/students for information on locating or applying for a USI and ato.gov.au to apply for a TFN. Note this can take up to 28 days – don't leave it until the last minute!



Scholarships



At Southern Cross University, we believe in fostering the next generation of brilliant minds and bold leaders to reach their full potential.

Scholarships can change your university experience. They offer additional financial support to make studying more accessible but, even more than that, scholarships are an

endorsement. A scholarship has been funded either by the University or a private donor because they believe in your potential to succeed.

Applying is easy – one simple form is all it takes.



Academic merit and high achievers



Sporting or athletic excellence



Community service or leadership



Indigenous students



Regional or remote students



Student advocacy



Discipline-specific



Hardship and Inclusion



Bachelor of Engineering student Brigid Richardson received an International Women's Day Scholarship to support her passion for civil engineering and designing inclusive public infrastructure.



"This scholarship gives me a wonderful opportunity to network with other women in our community, especially those who are involved in providing better conditions in our surroundings. My focus on human-centred design pinpoints my belief that every person should be able to independently access and travel through our built environments."

Don't miss these scholarships

Vice-Chancellor Scholarships

\$50,000

Commencing enrolled students with an ATAR of 95 and above are eligible for one of ten \$50,000 scholarships. This award recognises ongoing high academic achievement.

Resilience Merit Scholarships

\$36,000

For high achieving students overcoming financial or educational barriers, there are fifteen \$36,000 scholarships available.

Vice-Chancellor Regional Leadership Scholarships

\$50,000

For students from one of the local schools near our Gold Coast, Northern Rivers or Coffs Harbour campuses with an ATAR of 90 and above, there are ten \$50,000 scholarships available.

Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Excellence Scholarships

\$24,000

For high achieving Indigenous Australian students there are ten \$24,000 scholarships available.

Southern Cross University Merit Scholarships

\$36,000

For students from one of the local schools near our Gold Coast, Northern Rivers or Coffs Harbour campuses with an ATAR of 80 and above, there are fifteen \$36,000 scholarships available.

Diploma Pathway Scholarships

For students commencing a diploma at Southern Cross University with intention to continue into a degree, a \$2,500 scholarship is available.

380

Scholarships on offer

Scholarships range from

\$600 to \$50,000



During his undergraduate Environmental Science degree, Dr Cooper Schouten received a New Colombo Plan scholarship, to work in rural Timor-Leste. He began to recognise the state of the environment as inextricably linked to community welfare, and how his love of bees could be used to help both the environment and people.



After completing his Bachelor of Science with first class honours at Southern Cross and working with honey hunting communities across Indonesia, Cooper went on to do a PhD looking at the reasons why international aid and agricultural interventions work, and also why they don't.

"A lot of the time organisations seeking to help poor people can have the best intentions, but the outcomes for rural farmers aren't always successful," he said. "I wanted to change that."



For details and how to apply
scu.edu.au/scholarships



For equity scholarships visit
scu.edu.au/equity

Our campuses



Gold Coast

Our Gold Coast campus is located at Coolangatta, just 400 metres from North Kirra Beach. The campus has innovative learning spaces, health science laboratories, computer labs, student lounges and on-campus Health Clinic.



Coffs Harbour

The Coffs Harbour campus is located at the heart of an education and innovation hub. The campus boasts a multi-million-dollar Health Sciences Building, fitness centre, on-campus accommodation and sporting fields. The University's world-renowned National Marine Science Centre is located nearby at Charlesworth Bay.



Northern Rivers

Our foundation campus is located at Lismore in the heart of the Northern Rivers. The campus is home to purpose-built veterinary science facilities, engineering labs, specialist health labs, a Learning Centre and library complex, heated pool and gym, on-campus accommodation and a Health Clinic.



Metro

Study in the heart of Australia's most vibrant cities with Southern Cross University's metropolitan campuses in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth. Conveniently located in each CBD, these campuses combine career-focused study with the lifestyle, networking and opportunities that come from living in major centres.

Online

Geography is no longer a barrier to an excellent university education. Online learning in the Southern Cross Model is a dynamic and interactive environment, where you can access multimedia course content and interact with your peers and tutors, getting feedback as you go.

As an online student you have access to all campus facilities including libraries and study spaces as well as campus activities and clubs. It's a quality Southern Cross University education with the convenience of studying where, and when, it suits you best.

Explore your future at Open Day

Open Day is the perfect opportunity to find the course, campus and pathway that feels right for you.

Attend a panel session, take a campus tour, and get hands-on with interactive experiences. Chat with our friendly advisors, who can guide you through your options, answer your questions, and help you take the next step towards your dream course.

Coffs Harbour – Sunday 9 August 2026

National Marine Science Centre – Sunday 9 August 2026

Northern Rivers (Lismore) – Sunday 16 August 2026

Gold Coast – Sunday 23 August 2026



Register for Open Day
scu.edu.au/open-day



Campus tours

Our campus tours allow you to experience university life from labs to equipment, gym, cafes, lecture halls and on-campus accommodation.

Join us in-person to check out our state-of-the-art facilities and how our students use them.

During your visit, you'll hear from study experts and current students about popular pathways into university, our distinctive 6-week teaching terms, courses and student support, and how to apply, accept your offer and enrol.

Choose from our beautiful campuses: Gold Coast, Lismore, or Coffs Harbour, and experience our world-class facilities firsthand. Our team will guide you through our free, simple application process.

Can't make it to campus?

Not a problem. In fact, you can start your campus tour right now with our virtual tours.



**Register for a campus tour
or take a virtual tour**
scu.edu.au/experience/campus-tours

Interested in marine science?

Contact our Future Students team to arrange a visit to the National Marine Science Centre in Coffs Harbour. Email futurestudent@scu.edu.au.



Explore our courses

Accounting

Biomedical Science

Business

Conveyancing

Counselling

Education

Engineering

Exercise Science

Hotel and Tourism Management

Indigenous Knowledge

Information Technology

Law

Medical Laboratory Science

Midwifery

Marine Science

Naturopathic Medicine

Nursing

Occupational Therapy

Osteopathy

Pathway courses

Physiotherapy

Psychological Science

Science and Environment

Social Work and Community Welfare

Speech Pathology

Veterinary Technology

Veterinary Medicine

Register for
Open Day 2026



Coffs Harbour
Northern Rivers
Gold Coast

Sunday, 9 August 2026
Sunday, 16 August 2026
Sunday, 23 August 2026



Got questions?



scu.edu.au

1800 626 481 | futurestudent@scu.edu.au
scu.edu.au/futurestudents



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