OK, what do you need to know about applying for uni?

Well the easiest way is if you do Year 12.

*And* make sure you’ve completed the prerequisites that your course needs.

Some courses have other requirements such as attending an interview or filling in a special form - make sure you’ve done that.

And make sure you plan a “pathway” –that is a plan B- in case you don’t get in straight away.

And most importantly, make sure you have idea about the course you’ve applied for and that you’re pretty sure you’re going to like it.

The actual admissions process is organized by VTAC, the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre or if you are applying through the New South Wales system- UAC

Their websites has heaps of information on them.

So, that’s what you need to pay attention to when you apply, but how are the places given out? Well, it goes a little like this...”

First things first. The Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank – that’s ATAR.

Thanks for that. ...is exactly what its name says it is: It’s a ranking.

So, your ATAR isn’t the same as your VCE score, it’s how you’re positioned next to everyone else. It’s simply a tool universities use to give out places.

Your ATAR’s actually a percentile ranking.

So, for instance, if you get an ATAR of 50 it means you’re in the top 50% of all Year 12’s. If you get an ATAR of 70, it means you’re in the top 30%, and if you get an ATAR of 90 it means you’re in the top 10%.

OK, onto giving out places...

We’ll use Journalism as an example.

Let’s pretend there are only 10 places in the course, although there are actually heaps more. The person who makes selections works for the uni and is called a Selection Officer.

She or he gets a list from VTAC of all the people who’ve applied for the course. Provided they’ve completed the prerequisites, they’re ordered by ATAR.

The selection officer then goes down the list until she’s filled 80% of the places.

The ATAR of the last applicant to get a place is known as the “Clearly- In”. This means if you got that ATAR or above, you definitely have a place.

20% of the places are still available.

What happens next is that the selection officer

takes into consideration the Middle-band criteria for the course.

For example, Fred here (83.00) had a dreadful bout of glandular during his exams. He put in a SEAS application, explaining

how that stuffed things up for him, and the selection officer took this into consideration and re-ranked him.

And Sam did exceptionally well in his VCE English and Humanities subjects. Much better than Maree here, who got a higher ATAR. Because performance in these subjects

is a criterion for Middle Band re-ranking, Sam is now

ranked ahead of Marie.

After this re-ranking is completed the final 20% of places are handed out

Wait, wait – don’t give up yet.

This is where you need to think about your pathways

Luckily Maree had done some research.

She put media as her second preference because she knows it has the same subjects as journalism in the first year.

She worked ultra hard and got great grades and transferred straight into the second year of the Journalism degree.

Neve put Arts on her preferences list, so she could learn all about politics. She is thinking of becoming a political correspondent.

After finishing that course she decided that completing a graduate diploma of journalism would give her even more skills to take on Canberra.

Hugo is determined to get a journalism degree. It begins with a Tafe diploma and does so well he is accepted into the Arts degree the next year. He gets credit for some of his study and by keeping up his grades he transfers from arts to media and before he knows it he is in journalism.

Uni might not be the best choice for you right now.

I’m taking my Mum’s business global

The Amazing Race – Kuala Lumpur by midnight - gotta go!

You can think about uni later!

There’s always a pathway!