

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED until midnight Tuesday, 16th August 2011

DO STUDENTS WHO HAVE GAINED A HIGH ATAR CARRY DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE?

The latest ratings released in the 2012 *Good Universities Guide* (which is now available for purchase) have uncovered some interesting trends and characteristics among Victorian universities. The *Guide* indicates that, while high-achieving high school graduates consistently gravitate towards a select few universities, institutions that enjoy continued patronage from the state's best and brightest (and command some of the toughest ATAR entry scores) are not always counted amongst the top performers in key areas such as 'Teaching Quality' and 'Overall Student Satisfaction'. The *Guide* spoke to two of Victoria's universities about whether ATAR scores and relative entry difficulty play any part in the student experience.

In the latest edition, Swinburne achieves 3 STARS for 'Student Demand' (indicating the number of high-scoring school leavers enrolling at universities around the country), which is comparable to RMIT and Deakin, but markedly lower than Monash and Melbourne (5 STARS). Whilst school leavers with ATARs strong enough to enrol at an institution of their choice appear to overlook Swinburne, its graduates consistently deliver outstanding ratings for 'Teaching Quality', 'Generic Skills' and 'Overall Satisfaction', rating 5 STARS in each respective category for all graduates.

Is it a case of high achievers all flocking to the same institutions without researching alternative options, or does an ATAR play a part in shaping student expectations? The *Guide* asked Professor Shirley Leitch, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at Swinburne, about whether she believes that ATARs and/or relative entry difficulty play any part in the student experience at university: *"At Swinburne we don't believe that an exceptionally high ATAR is necessary to have a fulfilling experience at university. In fact it is often students who don't fit the 'academic mould' who find their university experience to be the most transformational. University education can challenge their way of thinking and open their eyes to possibilities they had never imagined."*

While a high ATAR score may not be a prerequisite for a fulfilling university experience at Swinburne, the situation at Melbourne is different. Melbourne attracts among the largest numbers of high-ATAR-scoring students of any university in the country and consistently achieves 5 STARS for 'Student Demand' — students who can choose to study anywhere are enrolling at Melbourne. Nevertheless, when high-achieving students graduate from Melbourne, they are less satisfied with 'Teaching Quality' and 'Generic Skills' than their Swinburne counterparts (2 STARS and 1 STAR respectively). 'Overall Student Satisfaction' at Melbourne rated 1 STAR. The *Guide* spoke with Professor Pip Patterson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), for Melbourne's response on whether a high-achieving student cohort and/or relative entry difficulty may have contributed to graduates' assessment of their overall experience: *"One possible explanation for the disparity between career outcomes and student satisfaction is that the need for further skill development is very salient to high achieving students when they complete the Course Experience Questionnaire... As they (graduates) begin looking for and taking on work, the graduates themselves recognise that there is more to learn — hence the mismatch between employer confidence in graduates and graduates' self-assessment (and their satisfaction ratings)."*

Graduates seeking employment in the first three months after graduation undoubtedly review their skill-set relative to the requirements of the workplace. Melbourne graduates seeking first-time, full-time work post-graduation are employed in numbers comparable to the national averages for graduates from like fields of study (3 STARS for 'Getting a Full-Time Job'). Swinburne graduates fared better, rating 4 STARS for 'Getting a Full-Time Job'. Once in employment, however, Melbourne graduates are amongst the country's best paid (5 STARS), whilst Swinburne graduates generally achieve salaries comparable to or, in some fields, lower than the corresponding national average (1 STAR). As with every edition of the *Guide*, results in the latest 2012 edition suggest that undergraduates are well-advised to align their expectations with the right course, in the right field of study, at the university that best matches their ambitions.

Media enquiries: Davorin Vrdoljak, General Manager — Publishing, PH: 03 9627 4859

Ross White, Education Data Manager, PH: 03 9627 4839

Book orders: *The Good Universities Guide* 2012 will be available to the public through newsagents and online at www.isubscribe.com.au/hobsons or by contacting Hobsons on Freecall 1800 682 133.

Characteristics

Institution	Non-Govt earnings	Student demand	Research Grants	Research Intensity
ACU	★	★★★★	★	★
BALLARAT	★★★★	★	★	★★
CQUni	★★★★	★★	★	★
DEAKIN	★★★★	★★	★★	★★
LA TROBE	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★
MELBOURNE	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
MONASH	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
RMIT	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★
SWINBURNE	★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★
VU	★★	★	★★	★★

Access and Equity

Who's There

Institution	Access by Equity group	Gender balance	Indigenous Participation	Entry flexibility	Proportion TAFE credit	Proportion of school leavers	Number of Higher Ed Students	Proportion over 25 years	Number of students from abroad	Proportion Part-time	Proportion External	Cultural diversity
ACU	★★★	★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	BIG	HIGH	AVERAGE	LOW	LOW	★★★★
AAD	★		★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	VERY SMALL	VERY LOW	VERY SMALL	VERY LOW		
ACAP	★★★		★★★★	★	★	★	SMALL	VERY HIGH	VERY SMALL	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	★
AGME	★			★★	★★★★	★	VERY SMALL	HIGH		HIGH	VERY HIGH	
BALLARAT	★★★★	★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	LOW	VERY LOW	★★★
CARRICK				★			VERY SMALL	HIGH	SMALL	VERY HIGH		
CQUni	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	BIG	VERY HIGH	BIG	HIGH	VERY HIGH	★★★★
DEAKIN	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★		VERY BIG	AVERAGE	VERY BIG	AVERAGE	HIGH	★★★★
ECNH	★★★		★★★	★★★★			SMALL	VERY HIGH	SMALL	VERY HIGH		★
HOLMES	★			★★★	★★★★	★★★	SMALL	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	VERY LOW		
JMC	★		★	★	★	★★★★	VERY SMALL	LOW	SMALL	VERY LOW		
LA TROBE	★★★★	★★	★★	★★	★★★★	★★★	VERY BIG	AVERAGE	BIG	AVERAGE	LOW	★★★★
MELBOURNE	★★★	★★★★	★	★	★	★★★★	VERY BIG	VERY LOW	VERY BIG	VERY LOW	VERY LOW	★★★★
MIT				★		★★★★	VERY SMALL	VERY LOW	SMALL	VERY LOW		
MOC				★		★★★★	VERY SMALL	LOW		HIGH	HIGH	
MONASH	★★★	★★★	★	★★	★★★	★★★	VERY BIG	VERY LOW	VERY BIG	LOW	AVERAGE	★★★★
NCPS	★			★	★	★	VERY SMALL	VERY LOW		VERY LOW		
OCEANIA	★★			★★★★			VERY SMALL	AVERAGE		AVERAGE		★★★
RMIT	★★★	★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	VERY BIG	AVERAGE	VERY BIG	AVERAGE	LOW	★★★★
SAE	★		★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	VERY SMALL	HIGH	SMALL	VERY HIGH		★★
SSNT	★★		★	★★★★			VERY SMALL	VERY HIGH	VERY SMALL	VERY HIGH		
SWINBURNE	★★	★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	BIG	LOW	VERY BIG	LOW		★★★★
TABOR	★★★★		★★	★★★★	★	★	VERY SMALL	VERY HIGH	VERY SMALL	VERY HIGH	HIGH	★
VU	★★★	★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★	BIG	AVERAGE	VERY BIG	AVERAGE	VERY LOW	★★★★

The Educational Experience

Graduate Outcomes

Institution	Staff-student ratio	Staff qualifications	All Graduates: Teaching Quality	All Graduates: Generic Skills	All Graduates: Overall Satisfaction	Domestic Graduates: Teaching Quality	Domestic Graduates: Generic Skills	Domestic Graduates: Overall satisfaction	Graduate Starting Salary	Getting a Full-Time Job	Positive Graduate Outcomes
ACU	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
BALLARAT	★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★
CQUni		★	★★★★	★★★	★★★				★★★★	★★★	★★
DEAKIN	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★	★
LA TROBE	★★★	★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★	★★★★	★★	★	★★	★★★
MELBOURNE	★★★★	★★	★★	★	★	★★	★	★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★
MONASH	★★★★	★★★★				★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★		
RMIT	★★★	★★★	★	★	★★	★★	★★	★★	★	★★	★★
SWINBURNE	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★
VU	★★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★★	★★★	★★★★