Australian University Admissions Policies and their Impact on Schools
How do universities select?

- Selection is generally based on a ranking derived from senior secondary certificate results (that is ATAR) and course or discipline-specific pre-requisites.
- Common pre-requisites include maths, chemistry, physics and English.
- Normally, the highest-ranked, eligible applicants for undergraduate courses are offered places into their first preference courses - subject to satisfaction of quotas, after which other applicants are considered.
- Admissions policies may establish alternative access for disadvantaged applicants, e.g. health, disability, family circumstance, military service, English language learning difficulty, financial hardship, disadvantaged rural, isolated or metropolitan schools, Indigenous Australians; applicants from low socio economic status background, etc.
Why do universities select this way?

- Prior academic achievement is a predictor of academic success, particularly for high achieving applicants - less reliable for middle achieving applicants
- Need to ensure fairness and transparency in student selection – merit-based and equitable
- Need to identify the potential for student success in higher education – universities want the best students
- Need to improve equity of participation and equality of opportunity
The problems with this?

- Over reliance on senior secondary certificate results and rankings may lead to lack of diversity of learner types, SES, culture, etc
- May exclude potentially successful applicants
- May work against promotion of diversity of student groups
The problems with admission policies?

- They are the archetypal university “gatekeeper” policy as they govern selection into university
- They are historically linked to the curriculum of the secondary schools
- They have influenced, shaped and controlled the secondary school curriculum
- They have influenced, shaped and controlled methods of assessment in schools
Impact on the curriculum

- Focus on canonical, traditional disciplines
- Marginalisation of vocational curriculum
- Marginalisation of applied learning pedagogies
- Emphasis on assessment methods that can be used for scored assessment
Impact on inclusion and engagement
Destinations of Year 12 completers
Victoria, 2011

- University, 52
- VET Cert IV+, 13.4
- VET Cert I-III, 4.1
- Apprenticeship, 4.9
- Traineeship, 3.1
- F/T Work, 6.9
- P/T Work, 10.6
- Looking for work, 4.1
- NILFET, 0.9
Main destinations of Year 12 completers, by sex, Victoria, 2011
### Main destinations by Indigenous status, Queensland, 2009

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Non-Indigenous</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
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<tr>
<td>University (degree)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not studying/not in labour force</td>
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Main destinations by achievement
Victoria
Main destinations by SES, Victoria
Hours worked by Year 12 completers not in education or training, by sex, Victoria

Department of Education & Training Victoria 2007
Main occupations of Year 12 completers not in education or training, by sex, Queensland, 2009

- Sales Assistants: 28.7% (Males), 43.6% (Females)
- Food Handlers: 19.7% (Males), 9.4% (Females)
- Clerks, Receptionists & Secretaries: 16.7% (Males), 13.3% (Females)
- Labourers: 14.5% (Males), 3.0% (Females)
- Waiters: 9.4% (Males), 5.7% (Females)
- Gardeners, Farmers & Animal Workers: 5.7% (Males), 4.7% (Females)
- Child Care & Education-related Workers: 4.7% (Males), 4.7% (Females)
- Health, Fitness, Hair & Beauty Workers: 3.0% (Males), 2.2% (Females)
- Storepersons: 4.7% (Males), 2.2% (Females)
- Government & Defence: 2.4% (Males), 2.3% (Females)
- Building & Construction Skilled Workers: 3.1% (Males), 3.1% (Females)
- Factory & Machine Workers: 2.1% (Males), 2.0% (Females)
- Marketing & Sales Representatives: 1.0% (Males), 1.0% (Females)
- Electrical & Electronics Trades: 0.8% (Males), 0.8% (Females)
- Automotive Workers: 0.9% (Males), 0.0% (Females)
- Metal & Engineering Trades: 0.4% (Males), 0.0% (Females)
- Other: 5.5% (Males), 2.2% (Females)

- Males
- Females
**Longitudinal** – 2003 Year 12 completers in education, training or full-time work in 2007, by initial 2004 destination

- Apprentice: 97.3%
- Deferred: 93.3%
- University: 88.3%
- Working full-time: 86.8%
- Trainee: 86.4%
- VET Cert4+: 81.6%
- Entry-level VET: 79.7%
- Working part-time: 77.6%
- Unemployed: 70.9%
Longitudinal Survey - year 12 completers unemployed or in part-time straight out of school

Main destination 2004

- Part-time work 19.2%
- Unemployed 2.2%
- Not in the Labour Force 1.1%

Main destination 2007

- Part-time work 20.2%
- Unemployed 6.3%
- Not in the Labour Force 2.7%
National patterns - summary

- Metropolitan school completers more likely to enter university and VET
- Low achievers more likely to enter labour market with no further education/training
- Low SES students less likely to enter university
- Indigenous students less likely to enter university
Australian tracking – online reports

- Queensland Next Step reports

- Victorian On Track reports

- NSW school leaver reports