

The logo for the University Academic Council (UAC) is located in the top left corner. It consists of the letters 'UAC' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a dark blue square background. A green diagonal line runs from the bottom left corner of the square towards the center.

**UAC**



# **NSW VET Review**

**Response to Discussion Paper**

**November 2023**

## Background

The Universities Admissions Centre (NSW & ACT) Pty Ltd (UAC) was established in 1995 and is the largest tertiary admissions centre in Australia. Owned by universities in NSW and the ACT, our mission is to provide excellence in admissions services and promote equity of access to tertiary education. Central to that mission is a strong culture of servicing the needs of all our stakeholders, in particular students and our institutions.

UAC has a trusted and valuable position in the education sector. We value our role in connecting students with further opportunities in education.

Applicants, in particular Year 12 students, turn to UAC for unbiased and authoritative information about university admissions and courses and for an easy interface with which to apply. Institutions rely upon UAC services to handle the bulk of the admissions process, allowing them to focus on their core capabilities of learning and teaching, research, and community engagement. Parents, schools, the media, and the public know UAC as their first point of reference for university admissions in NSW and the ACT.

In recent years UAC has also developed a credit management system and a suite of products using verifiable credentials technology. We have worked with the Australian Government to establish the Course Seeker website, the National Credentials Platform and the microcredentials marketplace MicroCred Seeker.

We are very interested in broadening our services to encompass a wider array of courses and providers and support a more seamless tertiary education sector that works for students and delivers the knowledge and skills to drive future prosperity.

As a registered charity working in the broad interests of the education sector, UAC is well-placed to provide objective and neutral advice and support to education stakeholders.

UAC is therefore pleased to provide a response to the NSW VET Review Discussion Paper, with a particular focus on the following question:

*How can students be supported to transition to or from VET and higher education learning to achieve their aspirations?*

## UAC response

UAC currently provides admissions services for 32 higher education institutions, both public and private, and offering a range of courses at Diploma level and above. In the 2022-23 financial year UAC processed more than 200,000 applications from a mix of secondary and post-secondary students.

While some steps have been taken towards unifying pathways to higher and vocational education (including the abolition of HSC course categorisation in the ATAR calculation), there continues to be a binary experience for students. Those aspiring to enter university seek out UAC and those pursuing vocational study approach TAFE or other providers directly. Every year UAC advises a significant number of students who haven't secured a university offer to now pursue a vocational study option. Those students then have to start the application process again.

The UAC system could be used to streamline tertiary admissions for students by expanding to include TAFE and other VET providers offering a wider array of AQF courses. In recent years UAC has adapted to encompass both ATAR and non-ATAR admissions and is continuing to look at ways in which students can be assessed on non-academic criteria. This includes the use of competency profile models and selection methods suitable for use at scale and premised on the matching of profiles of students to courses.

Further opportunities could leverage UAC's credit management system to better articulate for students the wide array of pathways into and between higher and vocational education.