

bonus points programs

The proliferation of bonus points programs is the latest development in the NSW/ACT undergraduate market. They are part of the competitive dynamics of the market, reflecting a concern to entice the best students, to increase entry scores vis a vis competitors, or to fill quotas which are difficult to fill.

By enabling them to enrol students with UAIs under the published UAI entry score, universities can publish a higher entry score than they would otherwise be able to – and thereby increase their credibility and/or prestige in the market. (At the other end of the spectrum, bonus points may help universities to fill their quotas by enrolling students who would otherwise be unable to reach the minimum entry requirements.)

Typically, bonus points are awarded for performance in English and Mathematics, with Chemistry, Physics and languages for specific courses. Generally there is a maximum of 5 bonus points, 6 in some cases, and at UWS a maximum of 10 bonus points is possible.

The scenarios vary so much from one university to another and within each university that it is difficult to say exactly what bonus points you might expect to receive. However, bonus points are most commonly awarded for *English Advanced*, *Mathematics*, *English Ext 1*, *English Ext 2*, *Mathematics Ext 1*, *Mathematics Ext 2*.

the downside

The great downside is that there is now far less clarity and consistency in the market, compounded by the lack of information about how the process actually works at a number of institutions.

The sort of statements that “recent school leavers with very good results in relevant subjects may be awarded up to five bonus points in consideration for admission to this program” without any accompanying detail or “strong performance in Year 12 subjects relevant to the course of study” for another university and no details anywhere of any courses that this may apply to, don’t help. Who knows what actually happens behind the scenes when no details are disclosed.

Programs supporting educational access for students who may be disadvantaged are a traditional and important part of the selection process. However, the bonus points initiatives of recent years are another thing altogether.

There is something to be said for the transparency of courses which don’t award bonus points and whose entry scores are the genuine article, uninflated by bonus points or too much back door entry. But it is now very difficult for any university to stand apart from the pressure to offer bonus points while their competitors make the most of their massaged UAI entry levels.

The days of a clear, unambiguous measure (UAI) may well be gone.

ACU.

Disadvantaged schools – automatic adjustment of UAIs.

ANU.

Bonus points for many programs for performance in relevant Year 12 subjects. Up to 5 bonus points for good results are offered, for instance, by: Commerce, Business Administration – for Mathematics and English (not ESL); Engineering – for Mathematics and Physics; Science, Medical Science etc – for Mathematics, Physics or Chemistry; and so on.

Charles Sturt University.

5 bonus points under regional bonus scheme. And what a region! Anywhere except Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

Macquarie.

Macquarie University is introducing for 2009 entry an Academic Advantage program with a maximum of 5 bonus points for all undergraduate courses except law, actuarial studies, ancient history honours and international studies.

Southern Cross.

Bonus points for students from the University's feeder regions. Plus Year 12 applicants may receive an offer even though they have a UAI below published cut-off for strong performance in Year 12 subjects related to the area of study. Nothing specified in UAC Guide or easy to find on the web.

University of Canberra.

5 bonus points to school leavers from regional NSW.

UNSW.

Bonus points for performance in relevant Year 12 subjects for all programs except Combined Law, Commerce (International), Medicine/Surgery, Optometry/Science, Psychology, ADFA Chief of Defence Force Special Programs (CDFSP). www.unsw.edu.au/futureStudents/undergrad/ced/HSCPlus.html

University of Newcastle.

A maximum of 4 bonus points for performance in relevant HSC subjects, particularly English Advanced, languages, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics. See www.newcastle.edu.au/students/future. Up to 4 bonus points under the University's Regional and Rural Bonus Scheme.

University of Sydney.

Flexible entry available for current HSC applicants whose UAI may fall up to five points below the normal cut-off. Available for entry into courses in Agriculture, Architecture, Arts, Design computing, Engineering and information technologies, Health sciences, Nursing and Science. Faculties take into account performance in relevant subjects, and in some cases a separate application: www.usyd.edu.au/flexibleentry.

UTS.

The UTS HSC Bonus Scheme will award up to 5 bonus points (6 for Engineering) based on performance in selected HSC subjects for a wide range of UTS courses. <http://datasearch.uts.edu.au/study/hscbonus.cfm>

UWS.

Students from Greater Western Sydney region receive an automatic 5 point bonus for a UWS course via the Universities Admission Centre.

Bonus points may also be awarded on the basis of achieving band 5 or 6 results in HSC or IB subjects relevant to a UWS course. <http://future.uws.edu.au/tripleadvantage>

University of Wollongong.

A maximum of 3 bonus points are awarded for performance in HSC subjects that are relevant to the specific UOW undergraduate programs.

Students may also gain 3 bonus points under UOW's Local and Regional Bonus Scheme if they are within the University's drawing area or from rural and remote areas throughout NSW. www.uow.edu.au/prospective/year12