

The Good Universities Guide 2018

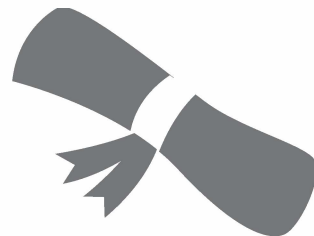
COMMUNICATIONS

This is a detailed profile of the communications field of study. It lists the range of specialisations available and compares degree-level courses. We examine the institutions that get the best ratings, based on real student experience and graduate outcome data, which will help you decide the right university for your educational journey.



HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR DEGREE

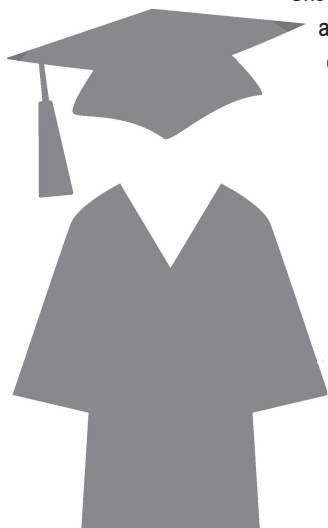
Every degree is a unique mix of many different ingredients — from the subjects covered to the career it leads to — and choosing the right course requires a lot of research. Once you have worked out the field in which you want to study, there are many factors to consider when you are weighing up courses and institutions.



- The first step to success is to ensure you will be studying subjects you are interested in and that lead to the career you want. Some courses require all students to complete the same 'core' subjects to meet industry requirements and don't allow a lot of room to choose electives or explore different subject areas. Others give you the freedom to choose a broad range of electives and graduate with a specialisation or major.
- Each course has a very different intellectual style, so make sure that it is suited to you. Some courses are mainly quantitative, while others are verbal or language-based. Some are conceptual and encourage you to express your own ideas through writing, while others require you to apply what you learn practically.
- A typical bachelor degree can be completed in around three years. Some degrees may require five or six years of full-time study plus an internship period to gain full accreditation. Double degrees and part-time programs will also take longer to complete.
- When choosing a course, you need to be sure that you will meet the entry requirements or investigate whether alternative entry is available. Some courses rely more heavily upon the submission of a portfolio, an interview or an audition.
- Some courses lock you into an occupation. Others are much broader in their scope. If you are sure about your future career, you might opt for a specialised vocational option that allows you to immerse yourself in your field. If you're not 100 per cent certain about what the future holds, you could enter a generalist degree that will give you room to explore.
- Different programs teach very different things — even courses in the same field may be taught differently at separate institutions. The university you choose should concentrate on topics you are interested in or that are professionally relevant.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR TERTIARY PROVIDER

Choosing where to study is about more than how close the campus is to your home and whether it offers a course you like. These are important factors, but you should also consider the following points as you conduct your research:



- Public institutions, which includes most Australian universities, are funded by the government. Private institutions are independent and usually rely on full tuition fees to subsidise student places. While universities offer a range of fields, private education providers often focus on a particular discipline or provide a specialised campus environment.
- Would you prefer an intimate regional environment or a buzzing metropolitan one? Every institution has a different atmosphere, so be sure to take the time to visit before applying. Institutions differ in terms of the range of services and facilities on offer, such as sporting options and academic support, often depend on the university's size and location.
- Are most students studying on or off campus? Are there more school leavers or mature-age students? Does the student body contain a lot of international students to add to the cultural diversity? You may find that each institution offers different study modes for your course, such as part-time or distance options, which will shape your university experience.

COMMUNICATIONS

WHAT YOU'RE IN FOR...

Practical learning is one of the highlights of studying communications and can boost your job prospects. The field offers a myriad of career paths and your classes will include future photo journalists, aspiring advertisers, filmmakers, and more.

MEDIAN GRADUATE SALARY

\$46,000
UNDERGRADUATE

\$61,000
POSTGRADUATE

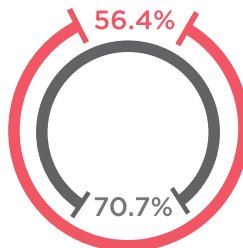


FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

undergraduate postgraduate



Proportion of students who have secured a full-time job within four months of graduating



WHAT CAN I DO?



Advertising



Public Relations



Journalism



Corporate Communications



Publishing

COMPARE



Decide the categories most important to your university search and compare field of study ratings over the page to choose the right institution.



DISCOVER

Find out more about career paths and potential jobs by picking up a copy of *The Good Careers Guide 2017* or visiting the website www.goodcareersguide.com.au

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

UG = Undergraduate
PG = Postgraduate
UGI = Undergraduate international

31,574
UG

4,857
PG

5,149
UGI



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EDUCATION
GROUP**

Good Education Group is Australia's leading independent provider of high-quality education and career information.

MORE ABOUT COMMUNICATIONS

The following are just some of the majors you can study in this field:

- Advertising
- Creative writing
- Digital media
- Editing and publishing
- Film
- Journalism
- Media studies
- Professional writing
- Public relations
- Radio

Studying communications can appear glamorous, especially if you can see yourself door-stopping the Prime Minister or presenting a national current affairs show. While some graduates do make it there, the fact is that many communications jobs are not in journalism at all. After all, not everyone wants to be in front of the camera. Many roles are behind the scenes — producing the show, writing the press releases or even monitoring the news reporting.

Work can be hard to find, but this doesn't make the courses any less popular. Practical learning is one of the highlights of studying communications and can boost your job prospects. In communications faculties, you can find photo journalists exhibiting their work next to aspiring advertisers drawing up campaign proposals, filmmakers screening their latest creations and campus reporters broadcasting live back to the studio.

For more information, visit:

- Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance — www.meaa.org
- Australian Publishers Association — www.publishers.asn.au
- Communications Council — www.communicationscouncil.org.au
- Public Relations Institute of Australia — www.pria.com.au

Other fields of study likely to appeal to someone interested in communications include humanities, social sciences and creative arts. Depending on your field of interest, you might also consider specialisations within business and management (marketing, for instance). If working in events is of interest, certain tourism and hospitality specialisations may also be relevant.

Courses and specialisations

With so many specialisations on offer, it's hard to come up with any hard and fast rule about how you should choose a course in this field. If you're struggling to pick a specialisation, you might want to choose a more general course.

As a rough guide, courses with general titles — like arts, communications and media — are more likely to offer a broad liberal education in areas such as history, literature and political science alongside the study of the media and other forms of human communication. They are often more focused on the theory of communication rather than media practice, while still allowing you to try out a few of the different communications specialisations. On the other hand, courses with a specific title or tag (in brackets after the degree title) — like advertising,

journalism and public relations — offer more practical preparation for one role or another. Remember, these are generalisations and there is a good deal of variation between courses of all titles and types.

Where to study

If you really have your heart set on working in the communications field, having one degree title or another might be less important than other factors when it comes to distinguishing yourself in a competitive industry. Finding work experience and getting involved in the industry are very important, both during your course and while you are looking for work. Contacts are everything, and once you have a foot in the door (through voluntary work or internships) you will be in a better position to find full-time employment.

Of course, some institutions and faculties might have (or claim to have) better connections in the industry than others, so it's best to scope this out when looking at courses. The main thing is to ensure that, wherever you choose to study, the facilities, equipment and learning opportunities are available and up to scratch. The rest will be up to you.

There's a lot of variation in entry difficulty, from the tough to the very easy. Some of the most popular courses have high cut-off scores or require a portfolio. There may be no formal prerequisites for some courses, but you can count on needing good marks in subjects such as English and media.

What the data tells us

Communications has reasonably low median salaries in comparison to other fields of study, with a large proportion hovering around \$45,000 and a top wage of \$55,400 for students from UWA. This is easily outstripped by the likes of engineering, architecture and building, law and paralegal, and fields of study that perhaps offer a more defined career path.

CSU is the clear standout when it comes to employment outcomes, with 75.4 per cent of graduates finding work within four months of finishing their studies. The gap between CSU and the next best is significant, with Sydney coming in at second place with 68 per cent. CSU has a high proportion of mature-age, part-time or distance education students and this may be why their results are far above the rest of the pack.

Notre Dame was a standout with five-star ratings across six of the eight measures, topping the table in teaching quality and overall educational experience. However, they had the second lowest starting salary for recent graduates. This points to the importance of looking at a university's result as a whole to help you decide what is important for your education experience.

There can be a very fine line between making the top 20 per cent and just missing out. University of Sunshine Coast is considered a five-star university in learning resources with 90.6 per cent,

however CSU is close behind with 90.3 percent. Elsewhere, La Trobe scored 74.7 per cent and five stars in learner engagement, with USQ just falling short on 74.3 per cent. This suggests that because a university misses out on five stars in a category doesn't mean it has achieved poor results and may speak to the competitiveness between universities in this field of study.

National average rate of retention

ATAR range	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100	Non-ATAR criteria
ACU	17%	20%				
ADELAIDE	86%	68%	83%	80%	87%	100%
BOND						94%
CANBERRA	64%	74%	76%	88%	89%	100%
CQUni		63%	70%	17%		59%
CSU						90%
CURTIN			71%	88%	67%	87%
DEAKIN	67%	79%	75%	67%	67%	72%
ECU	75%	74%	83%	92%	86%	71%
FEDERATION						20%
FLINDERS			20%			82%
GRIFFITH		65%	69%	70%	88%	72%
JCU		17%		100%		
LA TROBE	100%	76%	82%	92%	100%	77%
National average rate of retention by ATAR range	60%	70%	70%	80%	85%	75%

National average rate of retention (continued)

ATAR range	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100	Non-ATAR criteria
MACQUARIE				100%	88%	84%
MELBOURNE			100%		100%	79%
MONASH			86%	71%	57%	93%
NEWCASTLE			88%	100%	67%	87%
NOTRE DAME						80%
QUEENSLAND			31%	68%	84%	74%
QUT			79%	73%	80%	87%
RMIT	86%	84%	78%	72%	79%	75%
SOUTHERN CROSS						66%
SUNSHINE COAST		66%	69%	68%	100%	
SWINBURNE	45%	79%	76%	100%		72%
SYDNEY					90%	100%
UniSA	46%	55%	74%	85%	82%	74%
UNSW				82%	87%	84%
USQ		73%	67%		17%	
UTS			84%	91%	92%	84%
VU	17%	100%				
WESTERN SYDNEY		79%	79%			67%
WOLLONGONG		78%	89%	89%	96%	85%
National average rate of retention by ATAR range	60%	70%	70%	80%	85%	75%

Non-ATAR criteria may include entry via direct application, audition and/or portfolio submission, or via an academic pathway.

STUDENT PROFILE

Rebecca — Bachelor of Communication (Professional Communication)



Why did you choose to study communications?

I always had a passion for communications, even as a child. I loved to plan things, whether it was a party or a way to raise money for the school fundraiser.

Communications is a field that exists in every industry, so when I was choosing a course it was good knowing that I'd have a wide variety of future career choices with a degree in communications.

What was the best thing about your course?

The university gave us a lot of hands-on experience, whether it was producing our own live TV show or writing case studies about real-world events. Getting our hands dirty prepared us for the workplace more than any exam could have.

What was the worst thing about your course?

There wasn't a lot of social interaction outside of class unless you actively pursued it. That's part of going to uni in the middle of a big city, but if you're a lazy socialite (me) then that extra effort feels like a lot of work.

Have you found work in your field?

My first job after uni was with Emma and Tom's Juices. I landed this after participating in a panel event featuring

entrepreneurs, which I was a part of implementing in my third year. They offered me a chance to set up a five-year strategic marketing plan for them, which was a great experience. Now I work for a financial technology company as a Digital Community Assistant and I love it!

What advice would you give to students considering studying communications?

Keep your mind open. At uni, this will help you see other people's viewpoints and to take classes that you might have otherwise passed over. After uni, it will help you find work! When I was looking for full-time work it was difficult to weed through all the openings to find positions I was qualified for or interested in. I wasn't looking for anything with the title 'Digital Community' anything in it, and just happened to click on the job listing to see what it was. It turned out to be a perfect fit.

Have you completed further study?

I haven't ruled it out, but I don't have any plans to complete any more study. In communications I can't see much value in going beyond a bachelor degree unless you want to teach. If I do go back to study, it would likely be to pick up extra skills like photography or graphic design, rather than a full degree.



FIVE-STAR UNIVERSITIES COMMUNICATIONS

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

NOTRE DAME	97.7%
TASMANIA	96.5%
MELBOURNE	94.6%
ACU	91.9%
BOND	89.0%
USQ	88.7%
FLINDERS	88.4%

**NATIONAL
AVERAGE = 81.0%**

GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

CSU	75.4%
SYDNEY	68.0%
WESTERN SYDNEY	66.7%
UTS	66.1%
NOTRE DAME	65.0%
MACQUARIE	63.0%
CURTIN	62.6%

**NATIONAL
AVERAGE = 56.4%**

LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

MELBOURNE	91.9%
CSU	88.1%
NOTRE DAME	87.1%
BOND	82.9%
RMIT	75.8%
ACU	75.7%
LA TROBE	74.7%

**NATIONAL
AVERAGE = 70.0%**

LEARNING RESOURCES

ACU	100%
UNE	96.4%
BOND	95.7%
USQ	93.3%
DEAKIN	91.6%
NEWCASTLE	91.2%
WOLLONGONG	90.9%
SUNSHINE COAST	90.6%

**NATIONAL
AVERAGE = 86.3%**

MEDIAN GRAD STARTING SALARY

UWA	\$55,400
GRIFFITH	\$54,000
CANBERRA	\$49,500
CURTIN	\$48,000
QUT	\$48,000
QUEENSLAND	\$47,500

**NATIONAL
AVERAGE = \$46,000**

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

MELBOURNE	95.8%
BOND	95.0%
ACU	91.9%
NOTRE DAME	91.2%
WOLLONGONG	87.8%
CSU	87.4%
ECU	87.4%

**NATIONAL
AVERAGE = 82.9%**

STUDENT SUPPORT

TASMANIA	89.3%
NOTRE DAME	86.8%
UNE	85.0%
BOND	83.2%
SUNSHINE COAST	82.5%
WOLLONGONG	81.0%
ACU	80.6%

**NATIONAL
AVERAGE = 71.6%**

TEACHING QUALITY

NOTRE DAME	96.9%
TASMANIA	96.5%
BOND	93.2%
ACU	91.9%
MELBOURNE	91.5%
ECU	90.4%
FLINDERS	90.1%
SUNSHINE COAST	89.6%

**NATIONAL
AVERAGE = 83.0%**

WHAT DO THESE NUMBERS MEAN?

The ratings above represent the top 20 per cent of results for each measure in this particular field of study. For overall institution results, see the Ratings section at the front of the Guide.



HOW TO USE THIS PDF

The graphs compare institutions in the communications field of study. If you are interested in this field of study you can see all the institutions that offer courses and how they compare.

Universities compared

The “Five-Star Universities” graphs show the institutions whose results place them in the top 20 per cent of universities in communications.

Student experience measures

These ratings compare the performance of universities across six student experience categories. For each category, the percentage of students who were satisfied with the university’s performance in the area is noted. For example, if a university achieves 75 per cent for Teaching Quality, this indicates that 75 per cent of students at the university were satisfied with the quality of teaching they experienced.

Data has been sourced from the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) and is based on the results of the Student Experience Survey. Please note that the QILT website provides confidence intervals that reflect the accuracy of these estimated values, which have not been included in this guide.

Graduate outcomes

Starting salary

This rating compares the median salary of graduates from different universities. Universities are awarded five stars if they fall within the top 20 per cent of all universities.

Full-time employment

This rating compares the employment rates of graduates from different universities. It looks at the proportion of graduates who were employed full time four months after completing their course. Universities are awarded five stars if they fall within the top 20 per cent of all universities.

Data has been sourced from the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) and is based on the results of the Graduate Destination Survey. Please note that the QILT website provides confidence intervals that reflect the accuracy of these estimated values, which have not been included in this guide.

National average rate of retention

These tables show the rate of student retention at each university. The ability of students to complete their first year of study and progress to a second year may be affected by the tertiary entrance score they achieved in their final year of school. Often, students with high scores have higher rates of retention than students with low scores. These tables identify the rate at which students who achieved a tertiary entrance score within a specific band are retained through to a second year of study.

Non-ATAR criteria may include entry via direct application, audition and/or portfolio submission, or via an academic pathway.

Data published in these tables refers to the number of students who commenced studies in 2014 and were still enrolled at the same institution in 2015, as a proportion of all students who commenced in 2014 in communications. This data refers specifically to students who commenced a bachelor degree in 2014 on the basis of a tertiary entrance score and who came directly from secondary school.

Remember that rankings and ratings are indicators only. They help but do not present a full picture. Research your choices carefully!