



Access Melbourne Program 2007 Booklet

1. Introduction

The Victorian College of the Arts and the University of Melbourne are committed to providing students who have experienced ongoing difficulties during their school years with the opportunity to undertake tertiary education.

To further this aim, the Access Melbourne program has been introduced as a combined special entry and scholarship scheme (SEAS). The scheme provides prospective students with the opportunity to explain the ongoing circumstances that affected their chance of gaining a place at the Victorian College of the Arts and the University of Melbourne.

To be eligible for Access Melbourne you must:

- be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or Australian permanent resident or holder of a permanent Humanitarian Visa; and
- have not been awarded results in any subject in a degree course at a tertiary institution in Australia (this does not include the University's Community Access Program (CAP), bridging schemes or extension studies undertaken as part of a Year 12 program); and
- have demonstrated the capacity to successfully undertake the course of your choice

You may apply under any of the following categories for which the description matches your circumstances. You may apply under more than one criterion.

- **Recognition as an Indigenous Australian**
- **Difficult family circumstances**
- **Disadvantaged socio-economic background**
- **Disability or long-term medical condition**
- **Non-English speaking background**
- **Under-represented school**
- **Rural or isolated**

Benefits of Access Melbourne

Applying for Access Melbourne will enable you to be considered for a **Melbourne Access Scholarship** provided you indicate you are interested in being considered on the application form.

Access Melbourne Scholarships

The benefits of a Melbourne Access Scholarship are a \$4000 annual contribution towards your HECS fees and a \$2000 annual allowance for up to four years. This upfront contribution will attract the 20% discount and so effectively reduce your HECS bill in the course for which you hold the scholarship, provided that you remain enrolled as a full-time student.

Terms and Conditions for Access Melbourne Scholarships

Recipients of Access Melbourne Scholarships are obliged to abide by the Terms and Condition, which are also on the Victorian College of the Arts website. However, in brief, these scholarships are awarded subject to:

- Your being offered, enrolling in and commencing in the semester specified, the course specified in your letter of offer
- You being a full-time student
- Ongoing satisfactory academic progress

2. Further Information on Eligibility Criteria for Access Melbourne Program

1. Non-English speaking background

You are eligible to apply if you:

- were born outside Australia in a non-English speaking country; and
- arrived in Australia less than three years ago; and
- speak a language other than English at home.

As well as describing how your non-English speaking background has affected your study, you will have to provide copies of your:

- entry visa
- the front page of your passport, including the photograph, with your application.

2. Recognition as an Indigenous Australian

You are eligible to apply if you are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. You must also identify as a person of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage and be accepted as such by the community in which you have been or are associated.

Evidence Required

You must supply a completed:

- Proof of Aboriginality Form OR
- Letter of Support from an Indigenous Australian community organization

3. Difficult Family Circumstances

You are eligible to apply if you have been disadvantaged by your family circumstances.

Difficult family circumstances apply to applicants who have been prevented from reaching their educational performance potential because of family circumstances. The circumstances considered for the Special Entry and Scholarship Scheme (Access and Equity) under this category must be long-term and severe.

Please note: If your circumstances relate to Year 12 only, you are not eligible for Access Melbourne and should discuss other options with your school.

Examples of difficult family circumstances may include:

- Severe family disruption including dealing with alcoholism or drug addiction
- Long term illness of a family member: illnesses which would be considered are serious and long term such as cancer, psychiatric illness, alcoholism and other substance abuse
- Abusive living environment: physical, psychological and emotional abuse over an extended period by a person or persons close to the applicant
- Disruption of education due to constant relocation: Relocating to a number of different schools throughout secondary schooling
- Divorce/separation of parents: difficult separation or divorce of parents including financial hardship and changed living conditions. Requirement to change schools and social group
- Homelessness: you do not have a fixed address and you do not live with your family or family members
- Excessive family responsibility: family is dependent on you for financial, emotional or physical support during your secondary education
- Death of an immediate family member or friend.

This is in no way an exhaustive or prescriptive list. It is provided only as a guide to the kinds of circumstances institutions may consider under this category.

Evidence Required

As well as describing how your circumstances have affected your study, a responsible person such as a school careers adviser, school principal, religious or community leader, doctor or other health professional will have to provide a *Statement of Support* with your application. Please see the Statement of Support form on the VCA website.

4. Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Background

This category applies to applicants who have been prevented from reaching their educational performance potential because of a disadvantaged socio-economic background. The circumstances considered for the Special Entry and Scholarship (Access and Equity) Scheme under this category must be long-term and severe.

Examples of circumstances considered under this category may include but are not limited to:

- Individual or family poverty
- Excessive relocation or changes of school due to poverty
- Refugee status
- Economic hardship

You are eligible to apply if you have been in receipt of a means-tested Commonwealth income support payment (such as Austudy, ABSTUDY, Youth Allowance etc) or if your parents are in receipt of Family Tax Benefit A.

Evidence Required

As well as describing how your circumstances have affected your study, a responsible person such as a school careers adviser, school principal, religious or community leader, doctor or other health professional will have to provide a *Statement of Support* with your application. Please see the Statement of Support form on the VCA website.

You will also have to provide notification of your Centrelink benefit (which must be no more than three months old) or, if applicable, of Family Tax Benefit A.

5. Rural or Isolated

You are eligible to apply if you:

- Will be required to move from a location outside a State or Territory capital city in order to undertake your chosen course at the University of Melbourne; AND

If you are a non-school leaver:

- Have lived in the rural or regional area for three of the last four years;

or, if you are a school-leaver:

- Have completed the final two years of schooling in a rural or regional secondary school.

A list of postcodes to which this category applies is available to check on the VCA website. The VCA uses the Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Areas classification produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. All postcodes other than those defined as a 'Major City of Australia' are eligible for this category. School-leaver applicants must meet this classification for both home and school location.

Evidence Required

You are required to describe how your home and school location has affected your study. If you are a non-school leaver, you must also submit proof of residency such as:

- A utility bill in your name, or rates notice or
- A statutory declaration from someone who is not a relative to verify the residency claim. If you are a current Year 12 student, you do not need to provide any additional documentation.

A responsible person such as a school careers adviser, school principal, religious or community leader, doctor or other health professional will have to provide a *Statement of Support* with your application. Please see the Statement of Support form on the VCA website. It is recommended that, where possible, current Year 12 students have a staff member from their school complete the Statement of Support Form.

6. Under-represented school

You are eligible to apply if you have undertaken Year 12 in 2006 at a Victorian school defined by the University of Melbourne as under-represented in the tertiary sector and at the University of Melbourne.

The University of Melbourne: Under-represented schools list can be found at:
<http://www.futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/aust/aug/accessmelb/underrep.html>

Evidence Required

You are not required to supply additional supporting evidence.

7. Disability or Long Term Medical Condition

You are eligible to apply if you have a disability, impairment or long-term medical condition that has affected your studies.

Please note: If your circumstances relate to Year 12 only, you are not eligible for Access Melbourne and should discuss other options with your school.

Evidence Required

As well as describing how your condition/disability has affected your study, a relevant health professional involved in the care/maintenance of your condition will have to provide a *Statement of Support* with your application.

The statement of support should be written by the relevant health care professional involved in the care and/or maintenance of the condition. Applicants who suffer a long-term or recurrent medical condition/illness, learning, physical, sensory, psychiatric or other disability must provide details of the condition and the period in which the condition was experienced. Additionally information about absences from school and how the condition adversely affected academic performance should be provided.