When students are looking into university study, they often come across words or terms they are unfamiliar with. So, here are a few of the more commonly used terms to help students understand what is being talked about!

Associated Degree – an associate degree is generally a two-year qualification that is made up of two-thirds of a bachelor degree, and may be offered by both TAFEs and universities. Students often use this as a stepping stone to the full Bachelor Degree.

Assumed knowledge – refers to subjects the university recommends or prefers a student to have studied at school before starting the course

ATAR – Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank – the figure used by UAC and VTAC to calculate the entrance ranking for a university course

Bachelor Degree – the award/qualification a student gains when they have completed studies in an undergraduate course, which takes between 3 or 4 years of full-time study. This is the traditional starting point of a university qualification.

Bridging Course – an introductory course to help students achieve the preferred entry level to a degree, e.g. a bridging maths course for students who do not have the preferred maths but need it to access a course

Census Date – the last day a student can withdraw from their university course and not owe fees

Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) – a student’s enrolment in a university degree for which the Commonwealth government makes a contribution towards the cost of that student’s education (formerly known as a HECS place)

Credit – if a student has previously studied – perhaps at TAFE – and has Recognised Prior Learning (RPL), the student may be able to receive credit for a subject or subjects in their course. Also often referred to as Advanced Standing.

Double degree – a student can choose to complete a double degree – this integrates studies in two degrees resulting in an award of two degrees, usually after a minimum of 4 years of study. Often also referred to as Combined Degrees.

Defer – a student may choose to delay starting their course. Deferring an offer of a place might mean delaying for 6, 12, 18 or 24 months. Deferment ensures the student is guaranteed their place in their selected course.

Elective – a subject that is not core to the degree and is often from another faculty, e.g. a commerce student might choose psychology (from the Arts Faculty) as an elective Faculty – a department within a university devoted to a particular area of study – so, Faculty of Arts or Faculty of Science
FEE-HELP – a loan scheme for CSP students used to pay all or part of an eligible student’s tuition fees for university courses, but cannot be used for additional study costs such as accommodation or text books. A 20% loan fee applies.

HECS-HELP – a loan scheme that assists students with a CSP place to pay their contribution. Students may choose to pay their fees upfront and receive a 10% discount, or choose to defer payment via the HECS-HELP loan scheme.

Honours – many Bachelor degrees offer a fourth year – called an Honours year. The Honours year allows students to further focus on a particular area of interest. The Honours year can either be integrated into a 4-year Bachelor degree or be offered as a separate year after completion of a 3-year Bachelor degree.

Lecture – a period of teaching given by a lecturer to a large group of students in a lecture theatre; can often be as many as 300 students in a lecture.

Major study – an area within a course that allows in-depth study in a particular field. More than one major may be allowed in some courses.

Minor study – a grouping of subjects allowing a broader understanding of a few subjects, with less emphasis on in-depth study.

Prerequisite – a set of conditions – usually a completion of a subject – that must be met before enrollment in a subject or course is allowed.

SA-HELP – SA-HELP is a loan scheme that assists eligible students to pay for all or part of their student services and amenities fees – so, non-academic fees.

Transcript – this is the university academic record each student receives, like a school report.

Tutorial – a period of teaching given to a small group of students – involving discussion and participation.

Undergraduate – a student studying at university for a first level degree, e.g. a Bachelor degree.

VET-FEE HELP – a loan scheme for CSP students used to pay all or part of an eligible student’s tuition fees for TAFE courses, but cannot be used for additional study costs such as accommodation or text books. A 20% loan fee applies.

Workplace learning – practical training in a workplace, such as internships or practical work experience. This is a hands-on experience – some universities call it Industry Based Learning or Work Integrated Learning.