UAC

Annual Report

2024–2025

Contents

UAC

About us

The Universities Admissions Centre (NSW & ACT) Pty Ltd provides admissions services to higher education providers in NSW and the ACT. It processes applications for entry to most undergraduate courses and coursework-based postgraduate courses.

UAC also works with universities to widen participation in higher education. It assesses and manages applications for equity programs that aim to help applicants overcome educational and financial challenges: the Educational Access Scheme and Equity Scholarships. UAC also administers the Schools Recommendation Scheme early offer program.

UAC supports school leavers transitioning to tertiary study and calculates the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank for NSW HSC students.

UAC is a not-for-profit organisation and has been a provider of admissions services for more than 55 years. More recently, it has evolved to become a developer of leading-edge technologies that support lifelong learning, including bespoke solutions for direct admissions to education institutions, course credit and credentials management.

UAC

Part 1: Overview

History of UAC

The history of UAC is one of adaptability and innovation.

UAC was founded in 1968 as an administrative clearing house for New South Wales' three metropolitan universities – the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales and Macquarie University.

The creation of a joint admissions office by these universities eliminated the duplication of work caused by potential students lodging multiple applications. This streamlined approach benefitted students by allowing them to submit a single application and helped universities more accurately forecast the number of offers needed to fill available places.

The higher education sector expanded in the 1970s with the growth in alternative tertiary education providers and the introduction of a no-fee policy. As a result, applications for higher education boomed and the demands on public funds increased. Attention turned to ways of continuing this expansion while reducing costs, and the three founding institutions were joined by 18 colleges and institutes.

In the 1980s, the NSW Government pushed higher education providers to broaden their admission procedures beyond the scaled aggregate. UAC played a leading role in coordinating a new system for its institutions and the Technical Committee on Scaling was established.

The 1990s was a decade of technological development, with the implementation of a centralised admissions system, including centralised assessment, and data management. As the focus shifted to ensuring equity in education, the creation of a centralised application scheme for educational access schemes was created.

In 1995, UAC became a not-for-profit company overseen by the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NSWVCC).

The early 2000s saw the launch of UAC's website and then the move to online applications. As the decade progressed, UAC's services expanded to include mid-year admissions, centralised postgraduate applications, fee-paying courses and an application gateway for overseas students studying local Year 12 programs. At this time UAC became a founding member of the International Association of Admissions Organisations.

As the sector became more competitive in its student recruitment, UAC diversified and, in 2012, welcomed private providers. UAC launched the Schools Recommendation Scheme (SRS) in 2014 to help institutions process early offers for Year 12 students.

As an innovation leader, UAC used blockchain technology to release digital ATAR notices in 2017.

In recent years, the nature of UAC's services has expanded from its historical single admissions platform to include UAC Connect: bespoke solutions for direct admissions to individual education institutions.

It has broadened its operations to become a provider of technological solutions – including credit and credentials management – and data-based platforms that support the higher education sector and facilitate the pursuit of lifelong learning for everyone.

Our vision and values

Our purpose

We provide high-quality and trusted tertiary admissions services that help institutions and students.

Our values

Our values guide our behaviour and provide the foundation of our culture so that we can achieve our purpose. UAC's values are:

We always strive to be the best we can be for institutions and students. We're known for the quality and security of our admissions services, and we value innovation and curiosity in helping us achieve excellence.

We're passionate about education and care deeply about our role in helping students access it. We approach what we do with energy and enthusiasm, and our people really enjoy working at UAC.

We're known as a trusted and objective source of advice to institutions and students and that's important to us. We're honest, ethical and fair. The principles of equity and sustainability are embedded in our culture.

We love working together and with others to achieve common goals. We actively engage with our stakeholders so we can understand their challenges and deliver the admissions services that will best help them meet those challenges.

Respect

We believe all people deserve to be treated with respect, kindness and compassion. We value the principles of diversity and inclusion and it's important to us to help find ways to support increased entry into tertiary education.

Our strategic priorities

Admissions

Providing excellence, efficiency and expertise in tertiary admissions has been the foundation of UAC's business for over 50 years, and it continues to be the bedrock of our success. Transforming our admissions system to achieve greater robustness, flexibility and security is the single most important element of our strategy.

Access

Increasing access to tertiary education, especially for students from equity groups, is a national priority. Our admissions systems will be broadened to facilitate a wider range of pathways and our services targeted to increase participation from a diverse range of students.

Advocacy

The tertiary education sector is being disrupted by rapidly advancing technology, rising student expectations, national skills shortages and funding pressures. We will engage with our stakeholders as they navigate these changes and use our data and expertise to help them solve the problems they face.

Our strategic enablers

The strategic enablers that will help us deliver on our strategic priorities; they reflect the areas that are critical important to our future success.

1. Focus on our customers
2. Develop our people
3. Innovate in process and technology

Products and services

UAC Centralised

UAC Centralised processes applications for university admission for more than 80,000 applicants annually.

It provides complete online application services, including a centralised application and assessment process; management of the allocation process; and the provision of associated resources, information and services for applicants, potential applicants, other interested parties and the general public. UAC Centralised processes applications for:

■ domestic and international Year 12 students undertaking Australian qualifications and seeking admission to undergraduate courses
■ domestic post-school applicants seeking admission to undergraduate courses
■ domestic applicants seeking admission to postgraduate coursework programs.

The ATAR

Each year more than 55,000 school leavers apply through UAC for admission to courses offered by universities in NSW and the ACT. For most courses there are more applicants than places. Applicants must be ranked to allow selection to take place. This ranking is determined by the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

The ATAR is calculated solely for use by tertiary institutions, either on its own or in conjunction with other criteria.

In 2023, UAC piloted providing ATAR data to schools to help them to support their students. This builds on applicant preference and offer data already provided.

Calculation of the ATAR is the responsibility of the Technical Committee on Scaling on behalf of the NSWVCC. The Technical Committee on Scaling is responsible for translating policy decisions into processes, and for developing and maintaining programs that ensure the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the individual ATARs.

ATARs are calculated and distributed to NSW students by UAC, which also provides education and resources to support the ATAR, including online resources, information sessions for students and schools, and a dedicated ATAR Enquiry Centre following the release of the results.

UAC

Equity programs

UAC supports and promotes equity of access to tertiary education through various programs.

Educational Access Scheme

Most of UAC's participating institutions offer programs under the Educational Access Scheme (EAS) to help students who have encountered significant educational challenges gain admission to tertiary study.

UAC administers EAS applications on behalf of institutions, including the provision of centralised applications and assessment, the distribution of eligibility letters and the provision of associated resources, information and services.

Equity Scholarships

UAC administers Equity Scholarships (ES) on behalf of institutions to help university students who are financially in need with the costs associated with tertiary study. It provides centralised applications and assessment, offer processes and the provision of associated publications, information and services.

Schools Recommendation Scheme

The Schools Recommendation Scheme (SRS) is one way institutions make early offers to current Australian Year 12 students who have applied for undergraduate admission through UAC. SRS applications are assessed centrally at UAC using criteria other than (or in addition to) the ATAR, including school recommendations and senior secondary studies results.

Qualifications Assessment Service

UAC's Qualifications Assessment Service (QAS) enables prospective applicants to have their qualifications assessed before they apply for tertiary study.

UAC Connect

UAC Connect is a bespoke admissions solution that provides full or tailored coverage of the admissions process from application to offer generation within the customer's environment and brand. UAC provides various levels of admissions services to 12 institutions and processes more than 100,000 applications annually.

UAC Reach

Reach is a data-based marketing solution offering direct messaging and display advertising opportunities that connect to Year 12 students, UAC applicants, influencers and 1.5 million web visitors as they make important decisions about their tertiary education.

UAC Advance

UAC Advance is designed to streamline and simplify the process of awarding credit for previous study and recognition of prior learning or advanced standing. It integrates existing admissions, student management and enquiry tools to verify prior learning directly from national tertiary record databases. It provides consistent, reliable and fast credit outcomes for staff and applicants and enhances student recruitment and the student experience for universities.

CredNet

UAC's CredNet platform is an industry-leading credentialing platform that issues verifiable credentials using distributed ledger technology. It supports lifelong learners and provides assurance to those faced with the challenge of credential verification.

CredNet offers credential creation, verification and management via a self-service portal for credential issuers. CredNet also provides a tamper-proof digital wallet for credential holders to safely store, access and share their credentials.

Insights

UAC's Insights dashboard is a subscription service that provides institutions with high level views of application statistics, demographics, course preferences and offers, both current and historical. It highlights applicant trends to help with informed decision-making based on accurate business intelligence.

UAC at a glance

30
Participating institutions

8
Apply direct institutions

154
UAC staff

2,800
Undergraduate courses offered

900+
Postgraduate courses offered

74,593
Undergraduate applicants

5,076
Postgraduate applicants

49,836
Year 12 applicants

102,753
Undergraduate offers made

4,896
Postgraduate offers made

130,183
UAC Connect applications received

1,986
Quality Assessment Service applications received

9,018
Equity Scholarships applications received

25,545
Educational Access Scheme applications received

27,038
Schools Recommendation Scheme applications received

57,194
ATARs released

71.55
Median ATAR

51
Students who received the top ATAR of 99.95

UAC

Corporate governance

UAC's corporate governance framework enables the organisation to make strategic decisions, provide high level services to stakeholders and meet expectations of transparency, accountability and integrity. UAC's risk management framework focuses on risk identification, risk mitigation and integration into business planning and operations.

The UAC Board is UAC's prime decision-making body. The Board determines UAC's strategies for operations and future development, and oversees risks, internal controls and regulatory activities. It reports to the NSWVCC on overall organisational performance.

The Board receives advice from:

- the Executive team, which monitors the management and performance of UAC and provides advice on corporate and strategic issues as needed
- the Audit and Risk Committee, which provides independent assurance to the UAC Board on the adequacy of UAC's governance processes, financial reporting, risk management, control frameworks and external reporting obligations
- the Nomination and Remuneration Committee, which assists the UAC Board in discharging its responsibilities in relation to the selection, appointment, remuneration and performance evaluation of the Managing Director, UAC Board and Board committees

UAC's external auditor is the Auditor-General of NSW. The Auditor-General provides an independent opinion on whether UAC's financial statements are true and fair and comply with applicable Australian Accounting Standards.

UAC's main operational groups are the Executive team and the Users Committee. The Users Committee comprises representatives from each participating institution and provides advice to the Managing Director.

UAC

Our Board

Chair

Professor Denise Kirkpatrick
President, Nan Tien Institute
Appointed July 2020

Other directors

Professor Tyrone Carlin
Vice-Chancellor and President
Southern Cross University
Appointed January 2017

Mr Rob Chard
Sales Director, Fujitsu
Appointed January 2017

Dr David Christie
Managing Director, Universities Admissions Centre
Appointed March 2015 to September 2024

Mr Vincent Creighton
Managing Director, Universities Admissions Centre
Appointed April 2025

Ms Nicole Grainger-Marsh
Chief Executive Officer, Asuria Australia
Appointed January 2016

Professor Eric Knight
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Operations),
Macquarie University
Appointed April 2022

Ms Cathy Kovacs
Company Director and Board Adviser
Appointed July 2020

Mr Scott Nichols
Director, Management Consulting, KPMG Australia
Appointed September 2014

Kim Paino
Interim Managing Director
Universities Admissions Centre
Appointed October 2024 to April 2025

Professor Grady Venville
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic),
Australian National University
Appointed January 2019

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Management

Managing Director,
Vincent Creighton

Vincent Creighton joined UAC in April 2025, bringing executive experience from some of Australia's largest online private education companies and, more recently, an innovative edtech start-up. Vincent is also a current student at UTS Connected Intelligence Centre, completing an Entrepreneurial Future PhD in GenAI for Learning.

Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer
and Interim Managing Director
(to April 2025),
Kim Paino

Kim Paino leads the Strategy and Engagement team and is responsible for company strategy development, external engagement and government relations, stakeholder management and corporate communications. Kim is also UAC's media spokesperson. Kim led UAC as Interim Managing Director from September 2024 to April 2025.

Chief Operations
and Products Officer,
Nerida Bewick

Nerida Bewick oversees the Operations and Products team, responsible for developing policies and procedures for admissions, assessing all applications and schemes processed by UAC, responding to applicant queries and using the data UAC generates to drive analytical decision-making and business planning. The team also manages the continued improvement of UAC's products and services.

Chief Information Officer,
Dudley Collinson

Dudley Collinson oversees the Information Technology team. The team provides infrastructure management, system support, application development, service management and project delivery to UAC's clients and customers.

UAC

Chief People Officer,
Jennie Edwards

Jennie Edwards leads the People and Culture team. The team provides advice and guidance to the organisation on a range of key matters including recruitment, engagement, training and development, industrial relations, compliance and payroll.

Chief Customer
and Commercial Officer,
James Kevin

James Kevin leads the Customer and Commercial team in the areas of business development, marketing, student engagement and account management. The team focuses on customer experience for learners and partners, as well as being responsible for driving UAC's commercial growth and promoting the company's products and services.

Interim Chief Financial Officer,
Satinder Singh

Satinder joined UAC in October 2024 as Head of Finance, bringing years of experience leading finance teams in end-to-end customer care management solutions. He oversees financial management, statutory reporting, budgeting and forecasting, client billing, vendor management and procurement, treasury, taxes and compliance.

UAC

Workplace profile

UAC has 154 employees with over 70 per cent employed on a permanent, ongoing basis.

Staff service

Years	Count
5-9 years	33
10-14 years	23
15-19 years	7
20-24 years	7
25+ years	4
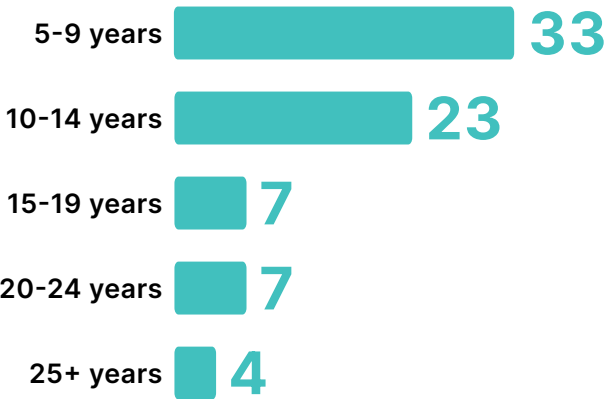
Diversity

Staff come from 31 different cultural backgrounds

31

Generations

44%
Millennials

37%
Gen X

Gender balance

55%
Female

67% Executives

48% Managers

56% Other

UAC
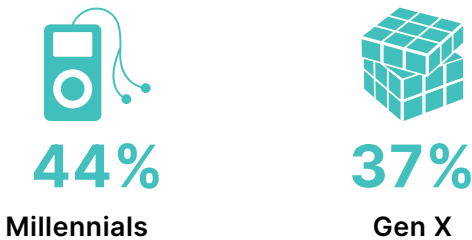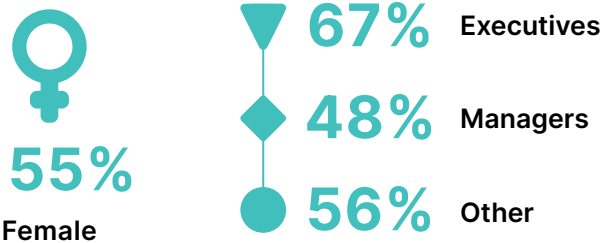
Organisational structure

NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee

UAC Board

UAC Managing Director
Vincent Creighton

People and Culture

- Remuneration and payroll
- Recruitment
- Staff relations, wellbeing, and safety
- Performance management
- Talent management
- Learning and development
- Employee engagement
- Strategic workforce planning

Information Technology

- Technology and data strategy
- Digital products design and development
- New product development
- Research and development
- Project Management Office
- Service Management Office
- Systems and infrastructure management
- Cybersecurity

Finance and Corporate Governance

- Compliance and risk management
- Business continuity planning
- Corporate governance
- Legal
- Financial modelling and management reporting
- Budgeting and forecasting
- General administration

Operations and Products

- Business operations
- Assessment services
- Non-technical development and maintenance of systems
- Customer service
- Business analytics
- Dashboards and reporting
- ATAR
- Established product management

Customer and Commercial

- New market and customer identification
- Sales and business development
- Campaign management
- Marketing and brand marketing
- Customer communications and experience
- Account management
- Future students
- Business case commercialisation

Strategy and Engagement

- Strategy development
- Industry market research, environment scanning, emerging trends
- External engagement
- Corporate communications
- Internal communications
- Stakeholder management
- Media liaison
- Government and external relations
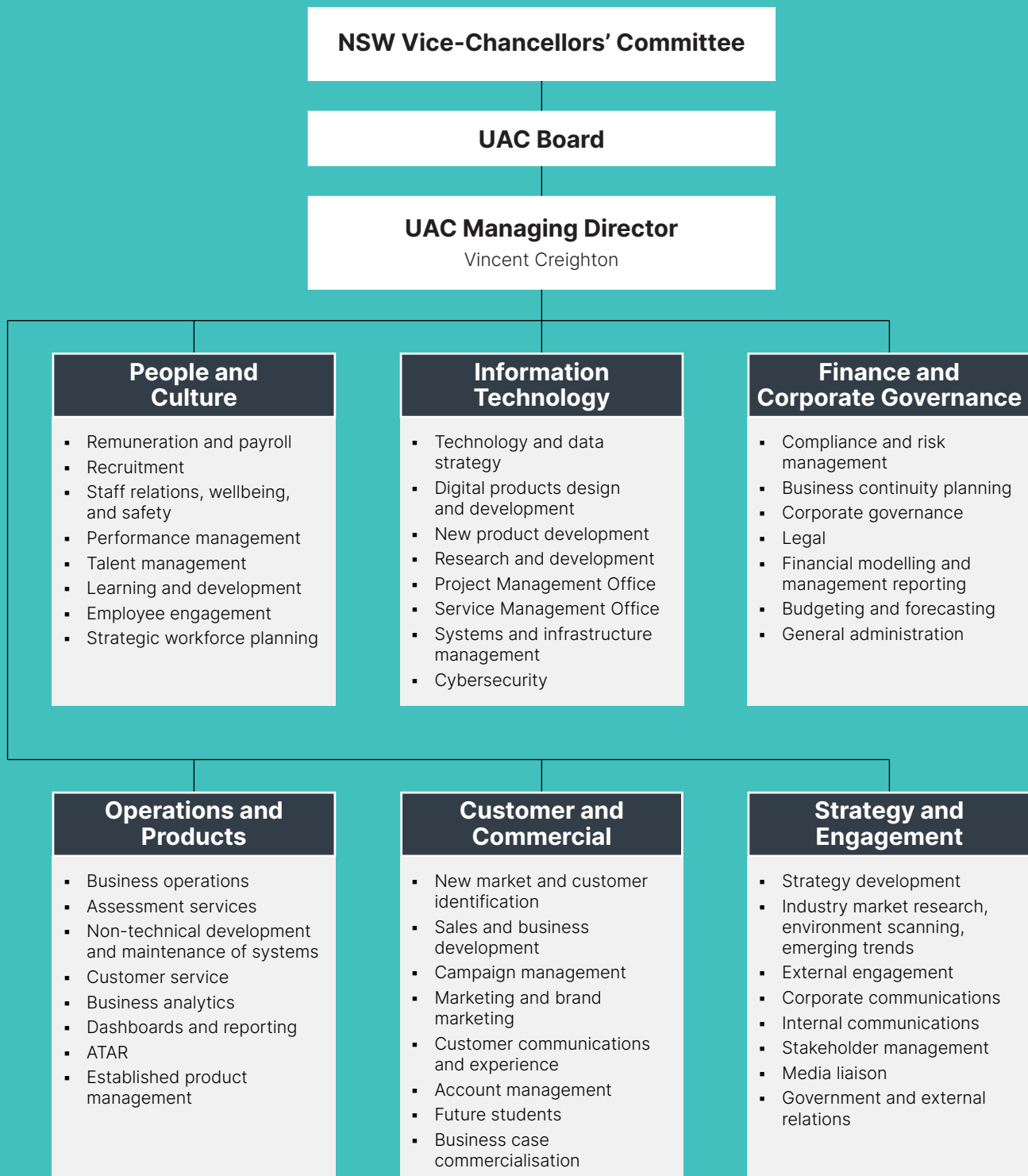
UAC

The admissions year in review

April 2024

Domestic undergraduate applications opened on 3 April for semester 2, 2024 courses and for 2025 courses. Applications for international Year 12 students opened on Wednesday 17 April.

May 2024

UAC launched a self-service payment voucher facility for centralised undergraduate applications. This system has enabled institutions to subsidise UAC's application processing charge for prospective applicants, assisting in the removal of financial barriers and encouraging applications from underrepresented or financially disadvantaged cohorts.

June 2024

UAC's fourth Student Lifestyle and Learning Report was released, the biggest survey of school leavers we have done. It featured insights from nearly 17,000 Year 12 students from across Australia as they transition from school to their next steps. The report voiced the thoughts and feelings of school leavers as they prepared to enter university or the workforce, exploring their views on a range of topics, from course and uni selection to cost of living, personal finances, artificial intelligence and mental health.

UAC's Strategic Plan 2024–2027 was launched. The Plan will guide and measure the performance of UAC's strategic priorities in the coming years.

July 2024

The busiest month for UAC's Community Engagement team with the commencement of school visits. In the first half of 2024 they attended 151 in-person events and delivered 63 online presentations. Community Engagement also held the first of many UAC Digital live webinars on the Schools Recommendation Scheme.

UAC's AI Ethics Committee was formed to develop procedures and guidelines for adopting AI tools.

UAC received an Energy Efficiency Grant from the Commonwealth Government to improve its sustainability footprint.

August 2024

Postgraduate applications closed, with UAC receiving more than 5,000 applications for postgraduate study in 2024.

The new School Access portal was extended to allow schools to upload documents to support students' Educational Access Scheme applications. The portal was proven successful with 785 documents uploaded, saving more than 1,200 uploads and thousands of email exchanges.

UAC

September 2024

UAC's Schools Recommendation Scheme closed on Monday 16 September with a record number of applications. More than 27,000 students had applied for SRS – an 18.95 per cent increase on 2023 and the largest cohort yet. SRS is the largest early offer scheme in Australia, with nearly half of Year 12s in NSW and the ACT applying to gain admission to university using criteria other than, or in addition to, the ATAR. 15,194 offers were made to applicants through SRS.

Postgraduate applications for 2025 opened.

Community Engagement hosted a professional development day for new careers advisers. The free, in-person day at UAC's offices covers information and insights about the ATAR and UAC processes.

UAC hosted the International Association of Admissions Organisations (IAAO) Conference. We welcomed colleagues from centralised higher education admissions services around the world. Against the backdrop of our beautiful city of Sydney, it was a unique opportunity for information exchange, networking, and establishing valuable relationships with other admissions organisations.

UAC held the inaugural CareerMoves, an event aimed at non-school leavers. Its goal was to encourage this cohort to consider further study as part of their career advancement or a career change. Hundreds of attendees came along to hear from UAC, Teach NSW and 15 participating universities about study opportunities.

October 2024

UAC welcomed Bond University as a client of Advance. Advance is designed to streamline and simplify the process of awarding credit for previous study and recognition of prior learning or advanced standing.

UAC welcomed SP Jain School of Global Management to its Centralised admissions service.

December 2024

ATARs were released on Wednesday 18 December. 57,194 students were eligible for an ATAR, with the median ATAR being 71.55.

International Baccalaureate results, normally released in January, were released earlier this year, giving IB students the opportunity to receive offers in the main Year 12 offer round.

First Year 12 offers made with more than 40,000 undergraduate applicants receiving an offer to study at university in 2025.

January 2025

UAC released a further 13,700 offers to university applicants giving Year 12 students a second chance to get into their dream course. This January 1 offer round includes the first offers for highly sought-after courses such as medicine. More than 17,900 applicants changed their preferences for this round, hoping to secure an offer to their preferred course.

February 2025

Applications for semester 1, 2025 closed.

March 2025

Final domestic undergraduate offers for semester 1, 2025 were released on Thursday 6 March. UAC received 74,593 domestic applications for undergraduate study in the 2024–25 admissions year, 2,149 (3.0%) more than the same time the previous year. A total of 102,753 offers were made to these applicants.

UAC's 2024 to 2027 Enterprise Agreement came into effect with new leave provisions recognising gender affirmation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, menopause and menstruation and an increase in domestic and family violence leave.

UAC

Part 2: Strategic achievements

Operational highlights

Database upgrade

The Database Upgrade project marked a crucial first step in UAC's digital transformation journey. As part of this initiative, the UAC admissions system was successfully migrated to PostgreSQL across all environments. This significant achievement involved the transition of more than 20 databases and the modification and testing of over 100 web applications, programs and scripts to ensure full compatibility with PostgreSQL.

Course Hub launched

UAC's new Course Hub was successfully rolled out to institutions in early 2025 ahead of the 2026 admissions cycle. Course Hub is a centralised course data management tool that streamlines the collection and distribution of course information. It enables institutions to independently maintain their course data 24/7, improving efficiency and control.

The system integrates seamlessly with UAC's Admissions platform and its various publishing channels – Centralised Apply, Connect and UAC website – ensuring smooth and consistent data propagation. Standardised data structures and robust validation rules safeguard data integrity, significantly enhancing overall information quality.

Access application improvements

UAC introduced significant enhancements to its Access systems for the 2025 cycle. A key development was the launch of the new School Portal, which enables school users to securely submit Schools Recommendation Scheme (SRS) student ratings, plus upload Educational Impact Statement documents for Educational Access Scheme (EAS) applicants.

Additionally, the SRS application process was streamlined and integrated directly into UAC's existing undergraduate application portal, Apply, creating a more seamless and intuitive experience for applicants. On the backend, related wUAS system upgrades improved operational efficiency and strengthened privacy safeguards for both the SRS and EAS processes.

Website enhancements

UAC undertook a website upgrade as part of its strategy to modernise and integrate its digital systems. Following a CMS upgrade, enhancements to the website's search functionality were implemented. These improvements significantly enriched the user experience by addressing common input errors and enabling more comprehensive and accurate search results on the UAC website.

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Content enhancements to help applicants find high-traffic information more easily included emphasising online study options and expanding course search filters. The visibility of information on pathways for non-school leavers and applicants was improved. In parallel, work began on simplifying website navigation to reduce user friction.

Customer service transition

In October 2024, UAC upgraded its telephony system to the Genesys platform, enhancing support for the Customer Service team. The new system introduced several operational improvements, including streamlined management of administrative tasks such as schedule changes, emergency closures and staff coordination. Additionally, enhancements to the wrap-up feature and the introduction of auto-status updates simplified after-call workflows, significantly reducing the time staff spend on post-call activities.

The team received an average NPS (Net Promoter Score) of 0.82.

Security systems reinforced

UAC successfully achieved recertification to the updated ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standard, reaffirming its commitment to maintaining robust and adaptive information security practices. The transition involved strengthening controls to address emerging risks, including supply chain security, data privacy and cloud service management.

In parallel, UAC established a Security Operations Centre (SOC) with integrated Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) capabilities. This implementation has significantly enhanced UAC's ability to monitor, detect and respond to security threats in real time.

Application support

UAC launched a self-service payment voucher facility for centralised undergraduate applications, enabling institutions to subsidise application fees for prospective students. This initiative is part of UAC's broader commitment to reducing financial barriers and encouraging applications from underrepresented and financially disadvantaged groups, supporting greater equity in access to tertiary education.

CredNet certified

UAC's innovative verifiable credentials technology, CredNet, was certified by IMS Global as an Open Badge 2.0 and 3.0 issuer – the only Australian-based platform (and only the third in the Asia-Oceania region) – to receive this certification.

Embracing AI

UAC established an AI Ethics Committee to ensure the responsible, transparent and ethical use of AI technologies across the organisation. The Committee developed a comprehensive ethical framework to guide the use of AI in alignment with UAC's values and strategic objectives. In addition, it created detailed guidelines and policy to govern the implementation and oversight of AI technologies at UAC.

Engagement

Government

As a member the Australasian Conference of Tertiary Admissions Centres (ACTAC), UAC contributed to several joint submissions supporting the Australian Government's development of the Universities Accord.

This included a response to the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) Consultation Paper advocating for close collaboration between ACTAC and ATEC. It also included a submission in response to the Government's Post-Budget Implementation Consultation Papers highlighting ACTAC's unique capability in being able to provide expert advice on a range of admissions matters to both the Department and ATEC. Another submission detailed feedback on the scope of the Universities Accord (National Student Ombudsman) Bill 2024.

UAC independently submitted advice to the University Admissions Framework Project offering objective guidance to the Commonwealth Government and the Australian Council for Educational Research on matters related to early offers.

We also welcomed Sally Sitou, the Federal Member for Reid, whose electorate covers Rhodes, to UAC's offices to see the results of the receipt of a Commonwealth Government's Energy Efficiency Grant. Ms Sitou was able to see the results of the upgrade firsthand and hear about UAC's strategies for reducing its environmental impact.

Our institution partners

UAC engages regularly with its partner institutions, whether it is consulting on industry changes, government programs or enhancements to our systems and processes. This engagement was supported through a range of forums, information sessions and training events.

While regular Users Committee meetings are held throughout the year, in June 2024 an in-person session was held. UAC hosted member institutions in a day of workshops, demonstrations and a panel discussion. Special guests Sandra Milligan from Melbourne Assessment and Annette Cairnduff from Learning Creates discussed new ways of assessing the skills and competencies of students.

In July, the Account Management team organised in-person SAS Data Warehouse and Insights training at UAC. More than 30 participants learned about datasets, SQL queries and running reports to obtain the best use of UAC's system reports.

The Access team hosted an Equity Scholarship (ES) information session for institutions and UAC staff. More than 70 attendees found out about the ES assessment process, deadlines and institution requirements, reports and verification.

UAC

School leadership

UAC has a close relationship with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) through knowledge and data sharing. UAC liaises with NESA staff regularly throughout the year and especially in preparation for key milestones such as HSC and ATAR release. We also met with staff from the NSW Department of Education (including as part of our involvement in the Joint Committee on School to University Transitions), the Association of Independent Schools NSW and Catholic Schools NSW to gather feedback, share updates and foster further transparency and trust.

Higher education students

For the sixth year in a row, UAC participated in the University of Sydney's Industry and Community Project unit. The partnership offers third- and fourth-year students the chance to work in interdisciplinary groups with industry leaders to investigate, analyse, devise and then present solutions to real-world challenges. UAC's project brief each year asks the students to reimagine university admissions to widen access to higher education.

Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer Kim Paino spoke at HE FEST in Adelaide on the topic of new insights into the life and preferences of Year 12s, based on information gathered for UAC's Student Lifestyle and Learning Report 2024.

Applicants

UAC's Community Engagement team travels the country to educate and advise students, careers advisers and school staff on the transition to higher education and promote and explain UAC's products and services.

In 2024, the team attended 288 online or in-person events, reaching an audience of over 300,000 in all states and territories in Australia. They also had online touchpoints with careers advisers in New Zealand, Fiji, India, the United Kingdom, the United States and Singapore. The team gave 346 presentations on the ATAR, applying through UAC and subject selection. The main queries they received were about early offers, preferencing courses and entry to medicine.

The Digital Marketing team launched an influencer strategy in 2024 to expand UAC's social channels and drive applications. Influencers Elizabeth David, a UNSW medicine student, and Kaela Goldsmith, a University of Sydney architecture student, produced several videos on topics including pathways to their courses, applying for EAS, explaining SRS, early bird fee closing and choosing preferences. The videos received more than 65,000 views.

UAC's Customer Service team is the key point of contact for applicants. The team took more than 35,000 phone calls, responded to more than 18,000 emails and answered more than 380 social media queries. In addition, UAC's ATAR Enquiry Centre took hundreds of phone calls over the four days of its operation in December 2024, when ATARs were released.

UAC

Media

UAC regularly issues media releases as part of its media engagement program.

A key highlight in this period was the coverage of UAC's fifth Student Lifestyle and Learning Report, which focused on students' growing concerns about cost-of-living pressures. This story received national exposure across ABC platforms, including ABC TV News Breakfast, Weekend Breakfast and ABC News Radio. Additional coverage appeared in the higher education publication Future Campus.

Significant media attention was also generated during the release of early university offers in November. Outlets such as The Guardian, ABC Radio and The Conversation covered the news extensively. A separate release ranking the most popular fields of study also attracted coverage on Channel Ten.

Media interest peaks in December when school results, the ATAR and university offers are released. On 18 December, ATAR release day was covered by all major media outlets and formats, resulting in over 560 mentions and a combined reach of more than 305 million viewers.

Further coverage was received during the release of ATAR-based offers at the end of December, with over 80 media mentions reaching more than 30 million readers during that week.

Another spike in media engagement occurred in January 2025 with the release of information about the top 10 most popular university courses. This included live interviews on ABC and 2GB radio.

UAC

Part 3: Inclusivity and sustainability

Our people

Training and development

UAC is committed to the ongoing professional and personal development of its staff through a combination of internal and external training initiatives. Throughout the year, UAC's employee assistance provider, TELUS Health, delivered a series of in-house webinars, complemented by several key face-to-face workshops aimed at equipping staff with essential skills.

In April and May, all staff participated in Mental Health Crisis training workshops facilitated by St John's Ambulance. These sessions provided critical knowledge and practical tools to help staff identify and respond to situations where individuals may be in imminent mental health crisis.

In June and July, the Australian Human Rights Commission delivered company-wide workshops titled Appropriate Workplace Behaviour. These sessions focused on preventing discrimination, bullying and harassment, fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace culture.

Further demonstrating its commitment to equity and leadership development, UAC also sponsored the ATEM Symposium on Women in Higher Education Leadership. The symposium explored gender disparities in the sector and promoted evidence-based strategies to advance gender equality under the theme: Advance Gender Equality: Use the Evidence.

Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing is a cornerstone of how UAC operates. The 2024 Culture, Wellbeing and Happiness survey showed that staff are motivated by:

- what they do
- their remuneration
- their ability to give back.

It also showed that our strengths are:

- enthusiasm for what we do
- the people we employ
- the opportunity for work–life balance
- innovation.

In 2024–25, a wide range of initiatives – both mental and practical – were introduced to support and enhance the holistic wellbeing of employees.

To foster open conversations around mental health, the Access team hosted an inaugural Mental Health Morning Tea. Staff were invited to take a break, enjoy baked treats and share their personal perspectives on mental health. The open and respectful dialogue helped to challenge stigma and encouraged greater awareness and empathy across the organisation.

UAC

In June and July, ergonomics and workplace safety workshops were delivered, focusing on both office and home office setups. A representative from Better Work Health conducted one-on-one consultations, helping staff make personal modifications to improve their workspace comfort and safety.

UAC also enhanced the Wellness Room, creating a dedicated space for staff to access first aid, pray, reflect, meditate, or nurse in a calm and private environment.

The Culture, Wellbeing and Happiness Committee worked alongside the People and Culture team to champion a positive workplace culture and support the wellbeing and happiness of all staff.

In recognition of the people who exemplify UAC's core values, the inaugural UAC Values Awards were introduced in 2024. Staff were encouraged to nominate colleagues who demonstrated excellence and lived the organisation's values. Award recipients were celebrated at the annual end-of-year party.

A new Walking Group launched in July, encouraging staff to step away from their desks, connect with colleagues, and enjoy a stroll along the Parramatta River or on self-chosen routes. This initiative promoted both physical wellbeing and social connection.

In November, the Committee hosted a Stache & Snack Afternoon Tea as part of Movember, raising awareness and funds for men's health issues such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and suicide prevention. Staff enjoyed a relaxed afternoon of conversation and connection, all for a meaningful cause.

Community

UAC remains committed to supporting the local community and fostering a culture of giving. In May 2024, the organisation held a winter donation drive for the Parramatta Women's Shelter, encouraging staff to contribute essential items such as sheets, blankets and pillows in preparation for the colder months. Staff were also invited to make financial donations to either the shelter or Domestic Violence Service Management (DVSM) – organisations that provide vital services including safe accommodation, education, employment support, and legal assistance for women in crisis.

A key new initiative in 2024 was the launch of U and Community, which provides every employee with a paid day of leave annually to volunteer with a charity of their choice. This program was embraced enthusiastically by individuals and teams alike, with staff supporting a range of causes – from local schools to food relief services.

One of the major community activities involved multiple UAC teams volunteering at Hands & Feet, a Kings Park-based charity that provides food and groceries to people in need. Volunteers sorted tonnes of donated fresh produce from supermarkets and packed food crates for distribution to the homeless and local churches. This hands-on experience gave employees the opportunity to directly contribute to a cause that receives no government funding and relies entirely on community donations.

These initiatives reflect UAC's strong commitment to creating a positive social impact and empowering staff to make a meaningful difference in the community.

UAC

Accessibility

Equity is a core value embedded in UAC's strategic vision, particularly within our systems and technology development. Recognising that one in five of UAC's applicants faces some form of accessibility challenge, we are committed to ensuring that all members of our community can access information and use our products and services – regardless of their ability.

In 2024, UAC's website achieved over 90 per cent compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards, marking a significant milestone in digital accessibility. In parallel, developers continued to roll out accessibility enhancements across UAC's digital applications to improve usability and inclusivity.

To support equity in digital communication, all UAC social media posts now include scripts and closed captioning, ensuring content is accessible to a broader audience, including those from applicant equity cohorts.

In recognition of Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) on 16 May, UAC hosted a series of targeted accessibility seminars. Thirty staff in customer-facing roles participated in these workshops, which focused on enhancing online content and improving engagement for applicants. The training covered essential areas such as accessible PDF and Word document creation, web design and content standards, accessibility testing, and inclusive product development.

These initiatives reinforce UAC's ongoing commitment to digital inclusion and ensure our platforms continue to meet evolving accessibility standards while serving all users equitably.

Environment and sustainability

UAC is committed to embedding sustainability into its operations and culture. In 2024–25, the Sustainability Committee – also known as the Green Team – led several key initiatives aimed at reducing environmental impact and fostering sustainable workplace practices.

In October, the UAC Gardening Club was launched. Staff contributed plants to enhance the balcony space, creating a green and inviting area where employees can enjoy fresh air and take mindful breaks. Research shows that tending to plants can help reduce stress, promote relaxation and improve overall wellbeing.

UAC also joined the Return and Earn recycling program in 2024. Dedicated recycling bins were introduced in the kitchen area for staff to responsibly dispose of plastic bottles. All funds raised through the program were donated to Foodbank Australia, supporting their mission to provide essential food relief to Australians in need.

Additionally, UAC was awarded an Energy Efficient Grant from the Commonwealth Government. This enabled a complete upgrade of all fluorescent lighting to energy-efficient LEDs. The transition resulted in a 70 per cent reduction in lighting energy consumption, lower maintenance costs, improved light quality, and a significant decrease in excess heat generation within the office.

These initiatives reflect UAC's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, energy efficiency, and creating a greener, more sustainable workplace.

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ACCESS YOUR POTENTIAL.