Schools Network Access Program (SNAP)

A guide for staff in schools /

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Contents/

Section 1/
Introduction

RMIT's Schools Network Access Program (SNAP) is one of the ways we ensure a diverse and inclusive student population. SNAP works in partnership with over 200 secondary schools that have high concentrations of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

SNAP students with their school's endorsement receive priority access to RMIT's degree and diploma courses.

SNAP students can receive priority access through:

– a bonus of up to 20 ATAR points

– equivalent extra consideration towards selection tasks such as a creative folio or interview.

This guide provides information about SNAP processes and requirements, as well as some suggestions for implementing SNAP within your school. All mandatory requirements (Section 3 of this guide) are clearly identified. The examples of school-based endorsement process (Section 4) are suggestions only, and not requirements imposed by VTAC or RMIT. SNAP will be most effective if implementation is consistent with your school's culture, values and processes.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for staff in SNAP schools working with students who wish to apply for RMIT courses through VTAC and access the SNAP scheme.

If you have been involved with SNAP for many years, you will already be familiar with much of the information in this guide. We hope the inclusion of detailed troubleshooting information (Section 5) will further assist you to support your students during the application and Change of Preference periods.

We also hope that this guide will help you inform your colleagues about SNAP. You are welcome to photocopy this guide in whole or part to distribute throughout your school community.

If you and/or your school are new to SNAP, this guide will tell you everything you need to know about SNAP and how to support your students' applications to RMIT.

Section 2/
What is SNAP?

History

The SNAP partnership began as an innovative opportunity for a small number of secondary schools that have close relationships with RMIT. SNAP has grown from an initial intake of 27 students to a large program with more than 5,000 student enrolments.

In 2012, the SNAP selection mechanism was revised. This allowed us to simplify administration processes for SNAP schools. The renewed approach had immediate results, with a 39 per cent increase in endorsed students in 2013. In one year, the number of offers increased by 58 per cent.

How does SNAP work?

SNAP demonstrates RMIT's deep commitment to equity and access by considering students' ATAR achievements alongside a school-based assessment of a student's potential for academic success.

Students apply for SNAP through VTAC's Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS), and must be endorsed by their school to be eligible. The SNAP application process is outlined in Section 3 of this guide.

Key SNAP statistics in 2015

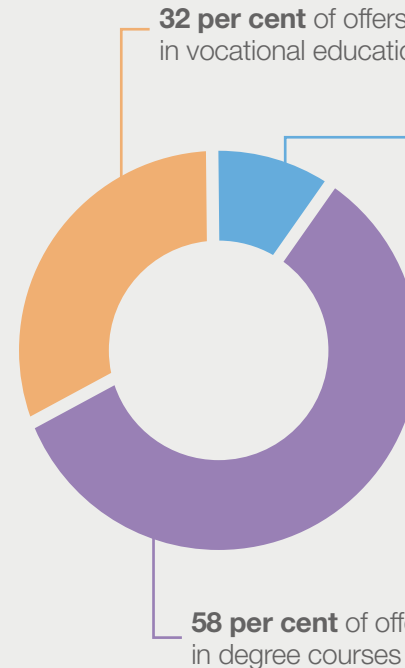SNAP applicants, offers and enrolments (2012-2015)

42%
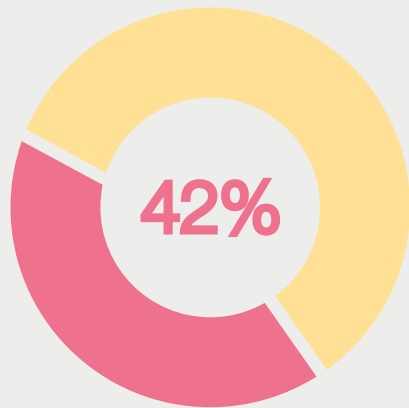
42 per cent of the SNAP students enrolled in Higher Education were identified as being from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds, compared to 14 per cent of the total VTAC domestic student enrolments (postcode measure)

78%
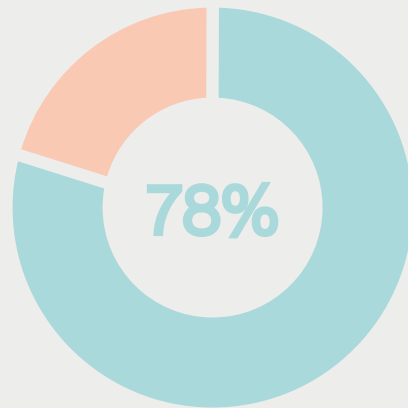
78 per cent of students who received offers enrolled, indicating a strong acceptance rate (at census)

1,745

SNAP offers were made – an increase of 7 per cent on 2014
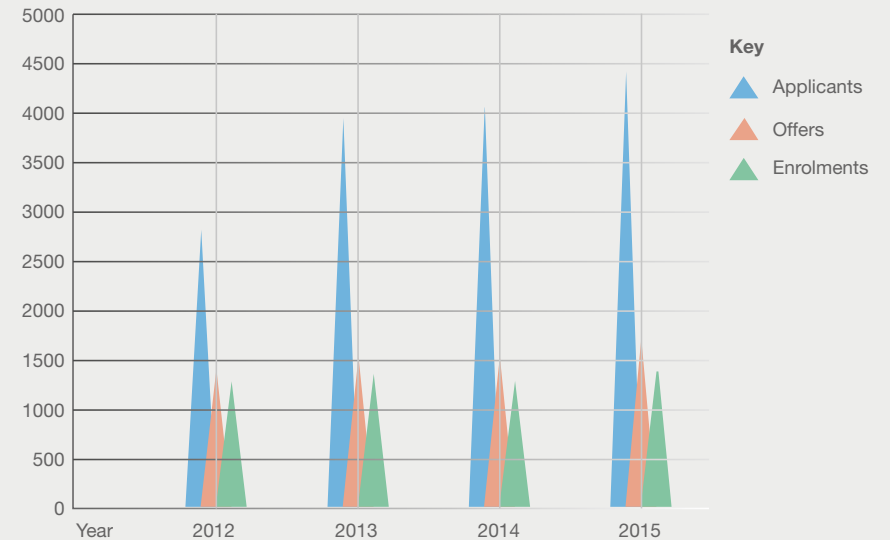
32 per cent of offers in vocational education

10 per cent of offers in associate degrees

58 per cent of offers in degree courses

4,440

students were endorsed by their school for SNAP – an increase of 7 per cent on 2014

SNAP students are successful

Students entering RMIT through SNAP consistently demonstrate the same patterns of achievement as their non-SNAP peers. In 2014, the SNAP Higher Education cohort overall had a pass rate of 85 per cent and a retention rate of 83 per cent, both of which are comparable to RMIT's broader domestic student population.

Key
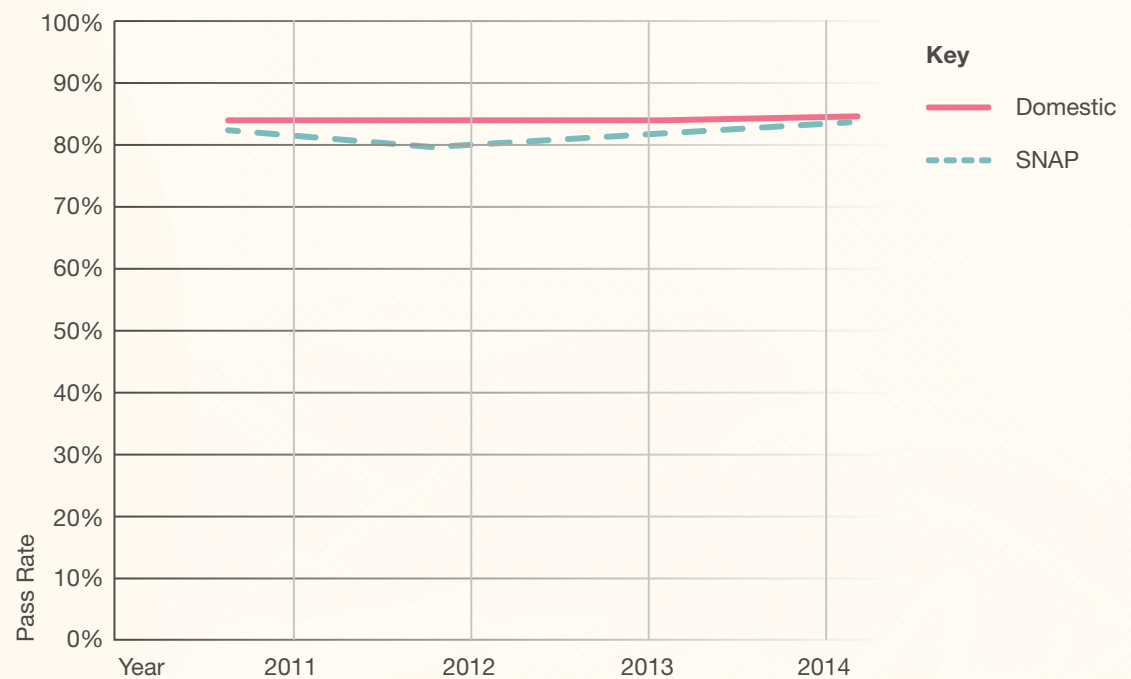
— Domestic

- - - SNAP

Commencing SNAP and domestic pass rate 2011-2014

Section 3/
Applying for SNAP

Who can apply

The SNAP scheme is open to Year 12 students attending SNAP schools. However, SNAP does not guarantee students an offer from RMIT. Students must be endorsed by their school to be considered for SNAP, which means that your school must make decisions about which students to endorse for the scheme. This will require you to evaluate students' potential and capacity to succeed at tertiary level.

The SNAP application process

SNAP is administered through the VTAC Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) application process. The scheme is part of Category 1 – Personal information and location.

To apply for SNAP, students will need to:

– log into VTAC and apply for courses

– make a VTAC SEAS application under Category 1 – Personal information and location, and answer yes to Question 1

– speak to their school's nominated SNAP contact about their application so the school can consider endorsing them.

Prerequisites and selection requirements

Applicants must successfully complete any RMIT course prerequisites and extra requirements listed in the VTAC website to be considered for SNAP.

Prerequisites

When students make a SNAP application, they must ensure that they are studying all the necessary prerequisites listed for the courses they are applying for. They can do this by checking the current VTAC guide or website. If there is a minimum study score for a subject they are studying, they will also need to achieve this score.

SNAP minimum English study scores

SNAP applicants are required to meet an alternative minimum English study score.

For entry to bachelor degree courses, the minimum English study score for SNAP applicants is five points lower than the published English study score.

This means that for bachelor degree courses that have published a minimum English study score of 25 in any English (except EAL) or 30 in English (EAL), SNAP applicants must achieve a minimum study score of 20 in any English (except EAL) or 25 in English (EAL).

For courses that set higher minimum English requirements for example, a study score of at least 35 in English (any), SNAP applicants must achieve a minimum study score of five points lower (eg. 30).

Selection requirements

Selection requirements allow selection officers to learn more about students' talents and ability to study at RMIT. Examples of selection requirements include:

– passing a test

– participating in an interview

– presenting a folio

– completing additional information forms.

Frequently asked questions

Can I predict the number of bonus ATAR points a SNAP student might receive?

No. While the SNAP re-rank may be up to 20 ATAR points, the precise figure depends on a number of factors. These include a course's clearly-in ATAR and the number of SNAP applicants who are competing for a place.

Section 4/ Endorsing students for SNAP

SNAP is a selective process and students are not always endorsed. Selecting students for endorsement can be one of the most challenging aspects of SNAP. We recommend your school endorse students who have a good chance of succeeding at university.

For SNAP to work effectively, the process of selecting which students to endorse needs to be consistent with your school's culture, values and processes.

This section provides some suggestions on how to manage the SNAP endorsement process. It is important to stress that these are suggestions and not requirements imposed by RMIT. We recommend that you consider the following factors when developing your endorsement process:

1. How will you prepare and support your students to apply for SNAP?

2. Which criteria will you use when deciding which students to endorse for SNAP?

3. How will you manage SNAP nominations and endorsements within your school?

Preparing and supporting students to apply for SNAP

Providing information to students about the scheme at the earliest opportunity will help build awareness about SNAP and ensure there is a common understanding of the purpose of endorsement. It will also help you to manage student expectations about being endorsed.

If you have students who meet your school's criteria for SNAP endorsement, but do not have any RMIT courses in their preferences at the time of application, we recommend that you endorse them for SNAP regardless. This ensures that students will receive SNAP consideration should they decide to add any RMIT courses during Change of Preference.

Establishing clear criteria for deciding which students to endorse

The endorsement process requires you to make a broad judgement about students' potential and ability to succeed at university.

SNAP is for students who have:

– a genuine interest in the course(s) they want to apply for

– completed, or are completing, any VCE studies that are prerequisites for the RMIT course(s) they are applying for

– a demonstrated capacity to succeed in the RMIT course(s) they are applying for.

Other examples of student qualities and attributes to consider may include:

Attributes	Demonstrated
Academic aptitude	– Ability to comprehend and complete tasks – Academic perseverance
Study skills	– Academic preparedness – Good study habits – Commitment to learning
Self-management	– Self-motivation in both study and recreation/ social activities – Independent learner
Aptitude for course and related careers	– Selected tertiary courses reflect student's interests and capabilities – Strong interest in tertiary study and one or more career paths

Note: It is important that students know whether or not they will be endorsed for SNAP so that they can make informed decisions during Change of Preference.

Section 4/ Endorsing students for SNAP

Establishing a clear process for nominating students

SNAP schools generally choose one of three broad approaches to nominating students to be considered for SNAP endorsement:

1. The student self-nominates and a selection panel makes a decision about whether or not to endorse them.
2. The student self-nominates and requests two teachers to endorse them.
3. Teaching staff are invited to nominate students for endorsement.

Example 1: The student self-nominates and a selection panel makes a decision about whether or not to endorse them.

Step 1	The school prepares and supports the student to apply by providing information and discussing: – SNAP eligibility – SNAP application process and deadlines – school's endorsement criteria – RMIT course choices – Vocational Education (TAFE) pathways.
Step 2	The student registers their interest by completing a SNAP nomination form (see Appendix 1 for a sample template).
Step 3	A selection panel (comprised of year level coordinators and careers coordinator) considers each application and assesses the student's capabilities and likelihood for future academic success by referencing school's agreed endorsement criteria.
Step 4	Careers coordinator (or delegate) notifies students about the panel's endorsement decision.
Step 5	Endorsed students apply for SNAP through VTAC SEAS by selecting 'yes' for Category 1 before the closing date.
Step 6	Careers coordinator (or delegate) endorses students in VTAC Courselink before the closing date.

Example 2: The student self-nominates and requests two teachers to endorse them.

Step 1	The school prepares and supports students to apply by providing information and/or discussing: – SNAP eligibility – SNAP application process and deadlines – school's endorsement criteria – RMIT course choices – Vocational Education (TAFE) pathways.
Step 2	The student registers their interest by completing a SNAP nomination form, and requests two Year 12 teachers to provide signed endorsement.
Step 3	Teachers assess the student's capacity to succeed at university using the school's agreed endorsement criteria. Students who meet the school's criteria should be endorsed. The signed endorsement form is returned to the student for submission to the careers coordinator (or delegate) before the closing date. Students who do not meet the school's criteria should be notified that they have been unsuccessful.
Step 4	Endorsed students apply for SNAP through VTAC SEAS by selecting 'yes' for Category 1 by the closing date.
Step 5	The careers coordinator (or delegate) endorses students in VTAC Courselink by the closing date.

Section 4/ Endorsing students for SNAP

Example 3: Teaching staff are invited to nominate students for endorsement.

Step 1	Teaching staff and/or the careers coordinator approaches the student and discusses their potential for university study, encouraging them to apply for SNAP.
Step 2	The student registers their interest by completing a SNAP nomination form and has this endorsed (using the agreed school process).
Step 3	Student applies for SNAP through VTAC SEAS by selecting 'yes' for Category 1 by the closing date.
Step 4	Careers teacher (or delegate) endorses student in VTAC Courselink by the closing date.

Note: Ensure your selection process and endorsement criteria are fair, transparent, clearly stated and widely understood by the school community. This can help support conversations with students, parents and guardians.

Official endorsement of students through VTAC Courselink

Once your school's endorsement criteria has been established and implemented, your school will need to decide who should be responsible for endorsing eligible students. This person will need to apply to VTAC for access to the Courselink system if they do not already have access.

Endorsing students through VTAC's Courselink system is an easy process:

1. Log in to the Courselink system.
2. Go to the Student Data module.
3. Select the student/s you wish to endorse.
4. Click the check box for the question 'Would you endorse this applicant for SNAP?'.

Change of Preference

From 2015 onwards, negotiated offers will no longer exist for course applications; instead, Change of Preference will reopen between each offer round. This will allow students to adjust their preferences after each offer round, whether or not they have received an offer.

This does not affect the SNAP process.

Eligible SNAP applicants will receive extra consideration for any new RMIT programs they add during the Change of Preference windows.
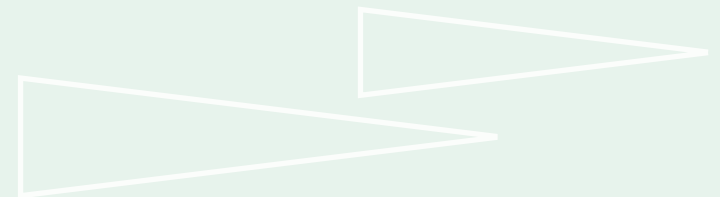
Section 4/ Endorsing students for SNAP

Frequently asked questions

SEAS applications have closed, and I'm not sure if I endorsed a student. Can I endorse them now?

No. The VTAC system will not let you endorse SNAP applicants beyond the VTAC SEAS closing date.

If a student adds any new RMIT courses during Change of Preference, will these courses still be considered under SNAP?

Yes. Students will receive SNAP consideration for any new RMIT courses they add to their preferences as long as they have applied for SNAP through Category 1 of SEAS, and have been endorsed by their school before the SEAS closing date.

Applicants who change their preferences still need to meet the prerequisites and other selection requirements for any new courses added during Change of Preference. Please note that if dates for submitting these selection requirements have passed, applications will not be accepted.

Can students check to see if they have been endorsed for SNAP?

No. The VTAC application system does not display the outcome of the school endorsement. It is highly recommended that your school's endorsement process includes a step to inform and advise unsuccessful students before the VTAC closing date.

Students who are not aware of their SNAP endorsement outcome will be unfairly disadvantaged, as they will not be able to make informed course preference choices.

When will students find out if they have received a SNAP offer?

Students who receive an offer for a course at RMIT will be notified as part of VTAC's general release of offers. The offer letter will also include instructions for students to accept their offer and complete their RMIT enrolment.

Students offered a place at RMIT will also receive a letter from the SNAP team inviting them to attend a special welcome event during Orientation (see Section 6 for more information).

When will the school receive outcomes of students' SNAP applications?

RMIT is unable to disclose the names of students who are offered a place at RMIT. However, following the release of Round 2 offers, you are welcome to contact the SNAP team for a report on the number of SNAP offers made to your students, and the courses in which your students received RMIT offers.

Who can tell students about SNAP outcomes?

Your school is responsible for discussing SNAP outcomes with students and responding to their enquiries.

Enquiries about RMIT courses or Change of Preference should be directed to RMIT's Info Corner 03 9925 2260 or RMIT's Change of Preference hotline 1800 117 648.

Complex queries or concerns may be directed to the Equity and Diversity Unit on (03) 9925 3181 or email: snap@rmit.edu.au

Will RMIT teachers or students know that a student has entered RMIT via SNAP?

No. Students who come to RMIT through the SNAP scheme are not identified or distinguishable as SNAP students to either teaching staff or fellow students.

Will RMIT contact SNAP students after they begin university?

RMIT is very proud of the SNAP partnership with your school, and we may be in touch to invite students to participate in unique academic or employment opportunities that arise.

Section 5/ SNAP troubleshooting
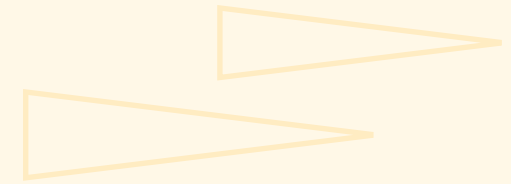
This section provides information to help you successfully implement SNAP in your school.

Preferences matter

Students have the option to list up to 8 course preferences in their VTAC application. The SNAP re-rank will apply to all RMIT course preferences that the student has included in their application. This re-rank includes any additional courses added during Change of Preference.

VTAC will offer students the highest preference for which they are eligible, so the way students order their preferences is really important. Students should list the course they would most like to study first, then the course they would next prefer to study, and so on.

Example preferences and SNAP outcomes

The following examples outline how SNAP re-ranking works, and the importance of students' preferences.

Example 1

VTAC Preference	Description	Student ATAR	Published Clearly In	Offer Status
2	Bachelor of Engineering (Civil and Infrastructure) (Honours)	57.20	90	
3	Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical Engineering) (Honours)	57.20	75.1	**Offer**
4	Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical Engineering) (Honours)	57.20	86.05	
7	Bachelor of Engineering (Computer and Network Engineering) (Honours)	57.20	75.45	
8	Bachelor of Computer Science	57.20	80.15	

In Example 1, the student achieved an ATAR of 57.20 and has five RMIT course preferences out of the 8 preferences available.

For each of the five courses, RMIT assessed whether the applicant's ATAR was within the acceptable range. This assessment is to ensure that they have a reasonable likelihood of succeeding in the course.

In this example, the student received an offer for their third preference. By allocating 17.9 bonus ATAR points, the student's competitiveness within the ranked pool increased and resulted in an offer.

Section 5/ SNAP troubleshooting

Example 2

VTAC Preference	Description	Student ATAR	Published Clearly In	Offer Status
1	Bachelor of Business (Information Systems) (Applied)	35.15	76.1	
2	Bachelor of Business (Information Systems)	35.15	68.2	
3	Associate Degree in Information Technology	35.15	50.15	**Offer**
4	Diploma of Information Technology	35.15	n/a	
5	Bachelor of Information Technology	35.15	70.5	

In Example 2, the student achieved an ATAR of 35.15 and has five RMIT course preferences. The student received an offer for their third preference.

By allocating 15 bonus ATAR points, the student's competitiveness within the ranked pool increased and resulted in an offer.

Example 3

VTAC Preference	Description	Student ATAR	Published Clearly In	Offer Status
3	Bachelor of Communication (Media)	57.9	81.8	No
4	Bachelor of Communication (Public Relations)	57.9	83.25	No
6	Diploma of Business (Public Relations)	57.9	(n/a)	No
7	Bachelor of Communication (Advertising)	57.9	RC	No
8	Certificate IV in Advertising	57.9	(n/a)	No

In Example 3, the student achieved an ATAR of 57.9 and has five RMIT course preferences. This student was not within an acceptable range to be made an offer for their two highest RMIT preferences.

The student's ATAR was within range for their sixth preference, but the student received an offer for a higher preference at another institution.
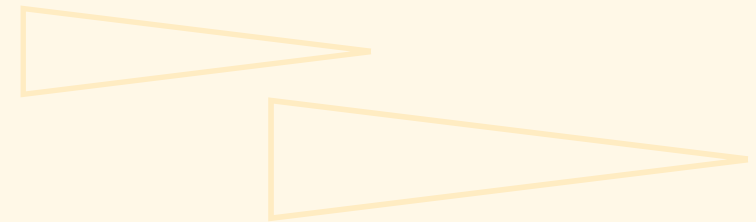
Section 5/ SNAP troubleshooting

Considering pathway options

In addition to thinking about how to order their preferences, students may wish to consider courses that have more flexible entry options or can act as pathways to their first choice. RMIT has a wide range of pathway courses that can help applicants reach their career goals.

Selection tasks

Students may need to complete a selection task, such as a pre-selection kit or supplementary form as part of their course application. If a course requires students to complete a selection task, this will be detailed under 'selection requirements' on the VTAC website or 'entry requirements' on the RMIT course page.

Selection tasks must be completed for students to be eligible for selection. Students applying for more than one course that has a selection task will need to submit a selection task for each course.

SNAP-endorsed students receive consideration on their performance in selection tasks. To receive this consideration, students submitting an RMIT pre-selection kit or supplementary information form need to identify as a SNAP student by answering 'yes' to the question:

'Have you applied for Schools Network Access Program (SNAP) consideration as part of the VTAC Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS)?'

They will also need to type their school name in the box provided.

Frequently asked questions

Should a student specify that they are a SNAP student even if they have not yet applied for SNAP?

As many courses with selection tasks require applicants to submit pre-selection kits or supplementary information forms before the SEAS/SNAP deadline, we recommend students indicate their intention to apply for SNAP consideration in their selection task. Students should apply for SNAP and seek endorsement from their school at the earliest opportunity.

Section 6/ Successful tertiary transitions

RMIT is eager to ensure SNAP students have the best possible start to university. We offer a range of events and on-campus services to introduce students to university life, help them improve their academic performance, and encourage them get the most out of their RMIT experience.

SNAP student and parent welcomes

SNAP students who receive an offer to study at RMIT will be invited to attend a special welcome event during Orientation Week. These events, held at the City and Bundoora campuses, ensure SNAP students are aware of the range of opportunities and support services available to them as they study.

SNAP student welcomes are facilitated by current RMIT students, and introduce first-year students to the opportunities and services available to them on campus. Commencing students will have the chance to network and learn tips and tricks that will help them succeed in their first year of tertiary study.

The SNAP team also runs welcome events for parents and families of commencing SNAP students. These events cover: important university administrative processes such as invoicing, fees, important dates, student records and information; services available to students; and how parents and carers can best support students in their studies. Parent welcomes are held in February at the City and Bundoora campuses.

Study and Learning Centre

The Study and Learning Centre (SLC) works with RMIT students to promote academic success.

SLC staff have specialist expertise, and offer support and development services in areas including academic writing, maths, physics and English language development.

Resources available to SNAP students include:

– Learning Lab: engaging and interactive online resources for students of all disciplines

– English Ready Centre: free language and communication skills workshops and activities

– Study KnowHow workshops: helping students improve their academic skills

– Drop-in service: one-to-one assistance without an appointment

– supplementary maths, physics and chemistry learning materials.

Connect for Success

Connect for Success tracks the academic progress of specific cohorts of RMIT students, including SNAP students, to increase student success, retention rates and pass rates.

Student Connect Assistants contact students at risk of disengaging or failing one of more of their subjects. They provide students with:

– information about available academic, social, and personal support resources

– strategies to address and overcome barriers to engagement and learning

– a personalised action plan, including a summary of steps students can take to address their difficulties.

Scholarships

The Coursework Scholarships Office awards more than 2000 scholarships annually worth millions of dollars. A significant number of RMIT's scholarships are equity-based, and many SNAP students are awarded scholarships each year.

Students and secondary teachers can visit RMIT's Scholarships webpage to learn more about the range of scholarships on offer, and how to apply.

Further on-campus services and opportunities for students include:

– programs in sport and recreation and arts and culture, including the City Fitness gym

– free wellbeing services including counselling, legal advice and accommodation

– multi-faith chaplaincy services and venues including on-campus prayer rooms, pastoral resources and personal and spiritual guidance

– the Ngarara Willim Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, offering support to students throughout their time at RMIT

– careers and employment services, supporting students and recent graduates to build their employability, manage their careers and find work.

Frequently asked questions
Are the SNAP and Parent Welcome events compulsory?

No. These events are not compulsory, although 92 per cent of students who attended the welcome event in 2014 said it helped them feel more connected to RMIT.

Section 7/ Resources and Support

The SNAP team runs information sessions twice a year, aligning with RMIT's Career Advisers Seminar in March and VTAC's briefings in July. These sessions help refresh your knowledge of SNAP, and give you the opportunity to ask questions and discuss strategies for managing the scheme within your school.

We also produce a quarterly SNAP Update. This digital publication notifies you of key SNAP dates and keeps you informed about any changes or updates to the scheme.

The SNAP team produces additional collateral, including SNAP posters, to help raise the visibility of SNAP for your students. We also provide a student-friendly PowerPoint presentation that your school can show students and host on your intranet/careers webpages. The posters and PowerPoint presentation were distributed to all SNAP schools in 2015, and we can provide further copies on request.

We are available at any time to discuss the application and endorsement process, and to answer any questions you may have about the scheme and how to best administrate it within your school.

Frequently asked questions

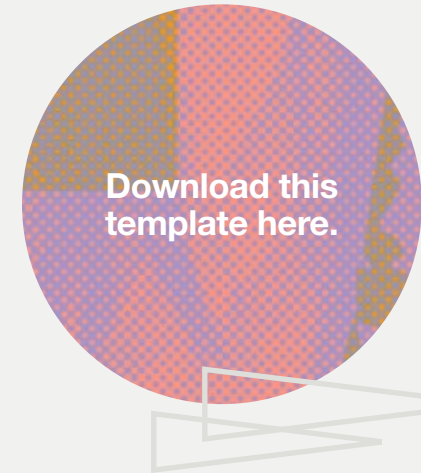### Can a member of the SNAP team come out and talk to our students about SNAP?

Unfortunately, with more than 200 partner schools, we do not have the resources to deliver in-school presentations. We have created a student-friendly SNAP presentation that SNAP schools can deliver and make available to students.

Our Student Recruitment team also delivers in-school and on-campus presentations about RMIT, the courses we offer and life as a university student. Our Student Recruitment officers can also talk students through the SNAP application process. To make an enquiry about an in-school presentation, please contact the Student Recruitment team.

Appendix A.
SNAP nomination form template

[SCHOOL NAME]

replace with
LOGO

This template is a suggestion only and can be used internally by schools nominating students for SNAP. It should not be submitted to VTAC or RMIT.

Nomination for SNAP endorsement

Step 1: Student Information

Due date:

Name (last, first, middle name) | Student number

Step 2. Please list the courses (at RMIT and any other institutions) that you intend to apply for through VTAC in order of preference.

Course name	VTAC course code	Preference
		1
		2
		3
		4
		5
		6
		7
		8
		9
		10
		11
		12

Step 3. Program prerequisites and selection requirements (please tick)

I have checked that I am studying all the necessary program prerequisites for the RMIT programs listed above.   Yes ☐   No ☐

Step 4. Nominate the teacher to endorse your application (only required for example two process).

Please provide the name of two teachers (do not ask them) that can consider your endorsement.

Teacher's full name	Which subject do they teach you

OFFICE USE ONLY

Administration office (only required for example two process)

Teacher's full name	Endorsement (please circle)
	Yes No
Teacher's full name	
	Yes No

OFFICE USE ONLY

Administration office (only required for example one process)

Selection panel endorsement decision

Endorsement (please circle)
Yes   No

Date:

Download this template here.