

MEDIA RELEASE

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Four universities take part in national student aptitude test trial

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has been contracted to conduct stage two of the Federal Government's pilot National Student Aptitude Test for Tertiary Admission (SATTA). ACER will supply uniTEST for 2009 and 2010 entry.

Four universities are using uniTEST in 2009. Flinders University conducts its test session today with The Australian National University to conduct its test session on Monday. Macquarie University and the University of Ballarat recently held test sessions. Enquiries have been received from a number of other universities considering the program for 2010 entry.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) will subsidise universities' participation in the pilot by providing funding for universities to test up to 20,000 students, as well as providing up to \$10,000, for each university, to promote the scheme.

The pilot of uniTEST will provide universities with additional information on prospective students and provide alternative pathways to university for some students who may otherwise have not gained a university place.

uniTEST assesses candidates' generic reasoning and thinking skills, which are considered necessary for successful university study. The results are then combined with their academic achievement scores to help determine their suitability for university study.

ACER's chief executive Professor Geoff Masters says the test is not designed to replace the current university admission system, but to complement it.

"Selecting suitable candidates for highly sought after university places is a difficult and time consuming process. Choosing candidates based solely on academic results can be restrictive."

"uniTEST will allow universities to select candidates based on their general ability as well as their academic achievement. This will assist in identifying candidates with the potential to succeed in university study who may otherwise have been overlooked. This may include candidates with an ENTER score just below the usual course requirement or those from groups typically under represented in the student population such as students from poorer backgrounds."

Further information about uniTest is available on the ACER website at <http://unitest.acer.edu.au/>

*****ENDS*****

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